

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) is an intergovernmental coalition established at the inaugural Freedom Online Conference in The Hague, the Netherlands, in December 2011. It has expanded from 15 founding members to 41<sup>1</sup> member states spanning Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. FOC Member States are committed to the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to upholding their respective obligations under the international human rights treaties to which they are a party. Members work together to promote a rules-based, democratic, and inclusive world in which the use of the Internet and digital technologies upholds human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

FOC Member States coordinate their positions and strategies on Internet freedom and digital technologies through informal consultations, conferences, and intergovernmental meetings. They engage collectively in multilateral forums such as the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council, UNESCO, the OECD, and the OSCE, supported by diplomatic networks based in Geneva, Paris, New York, and Vienna.

Coalition Members issue statements on priority themes—including artificial intelligence, disinformation, surveillance, and freedom of expression—which outline joint positions for diplomatic advocacy, shaping national policy positions, and fostering inter-ministerial coordination. Most recent examples include the Joint Statement on Protecting Human Rights Online and Preventing Internet Shutdowns in Times of Armed Conflict (June 2025), and the Joint Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (June 2025). The FOC also issues country-specific statements in response to serious human rights violations, such as the 2022 statement on Internet shutdowns in Iran.

To enhance multistakeholder engagement, the Coalition established the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) in 2018. The FOC-AN advises on the Coalition's aims and activities and contributes regularly to its events and strategic discussions. The Coalition also operates multistakeholder sub-entities to address specific issues; for example, in 2025 the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights is advancing the development of rights-respecting AI technologies. The FOC also periodically convenes the Freedom Online Conference and other multistakeholder events to facilitate dialogue on the opportunities and challenges of the Internet and digital technologies, and their impact on social, cultural, and economic development. These forums enable governments, civil society, the private sector, technical community and other stakeholders to share information, coordinate strategies, and collaborate towards a human rights-based Internet.

At a time when digital policy issues are prominent on the international agenda, the FOC has a vital role to play in promoting democracy and human rights, in cooperation with the FOC-AN and external stakeholders.

## Swiss Chairship of the FOC

Switzerland continues to position the FOC as a central forum for like-minded governments to address the intersection of technology and human rights in an increasingly complex global digital landscape. As Chair, Switzerland guides the Coalition's work on the following priority areas, as outlined in the 2026 Program of Action:

### 1. Navigating and shaping global digital governance processes

Strengthening the FOC's diplomatic engagement and coherence across major multilateral, and multistakeholder tracks, such as the implementation of WSIS+20 outcomes, and the Pact for the Future and the GDC, including the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance..

### 2. Addressing ongoing challenges to Internet freedom

Building on previous FOC work to advance rights-respecting technology governance, from AI and DPI to information integrity, through coordinated statements, capacity building, and multistakeholder collaboration.

### 3. Operationalising multistakeholder approaches

Demonstrating how inclusive participation enhances legitimacy and outcomes in digital policymaking, with a focus on improving engagement of under-represented stakeholders and outreach to Global South governments and non-governmental actors.

For further information on this year's activities, visit the FOC website via the link below.

<sup>1</sup> Currently, the FOC consists of: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of Maldives, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United Kingdom. Observers of the Coalition include: Taiwan