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Seminar

**Youth Participation in Internet Governance**

European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France

24–26 October 2017

**CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

The seminar *Youth Participation in Internet Governance* brought together 30 young participants involved in Internet Governance processes at national and international level to discuss what should be the aims, criteria and means for a meaningful and inclusive youth participation in Internet Governance. The seminar was held in the framework of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign, and took into account the specific experiences and concerns of the campaign, notably on what concerns digital citizenship and human rights online.

The hereunder list of conclusions and recommendations are the result of proposals formulated by participants in working groups and plenary sessions. They are to be understood as guidelines for future policy and action and do not represent the official view of the Council of Europe.

## **1. Recognition of young people as a stakeholder in Internet governance processes**

- a. Prioritise youth participation in Internet Governance in youth, education and children policies as one of the areas that increasingly affects the life of young people
- b. Develop criteria for what meaningful youth participation in Internet Governance entails, together with young people
- c. Advocate for a youth representative to be part of the preparatory team of Internet Governance conferences
- d. Advocate for all national delegations to include young people consistently
- e. Include a youth representative in every panel in the Internet Governance conferences, as a way of recognizing youth as a stakeholder, and a starting point for youth participation in Internet Governance
- f. Support coordination between various youth groups and organisations involved in IG and develop youth position papers on topics of interest. Ensure a core group and invest in transfer of learning, as the continuity is threatened by always having new young people coming in
- g. Ensure meaningful and structured means of participation and consultation online bearing in mind questions of accessibility of main events
- h. Establish a 'code of conduct' for any representatives of young people, stating they would have the obligation to inform, and that they should have a certain level of expertise
- i. The Council of Europe could commit to having one Young Ambassador/Youth Representative to attend international events on Internet Governance
- j. Work with UN Youth Ambassadors, who could work on youth engagement at the IGF as well in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Youth.

## **2. Capacity building to ensure youth participation in Internet Governance**

- a) Capacity building for young people involved in Internet Governance should include developing skills such as presentation, writing, debating, advocacy and lobby, consultation
- b) Invest in awareness raising and training of teachers and parents on matters connected to the digital environment affecting young people
- c) Map, update and raise awareness on the participation pathways for youth in IG processes

- d) Develop manuals/toolkits/education materials on:
  - i. Youth participation in Internet (CoE upcoming toolkit)
  - ii. Develop with Global Internet Policy Observatory (GIPO)<sup>1</sup> or similar initiatives information spaces for young people on themes of interest and on various level
  - iii. Tools for peer educators/trainers/teachers/educators on Internet Governance that could facilitate introduction to the topic
  - iv. treaties/regulations of relevance for Internet Governance (similar to Human Rights of Internet users publication of the Council of Europe)
  - v. Map what spaces for participation are already available
  - vi. The link between Internet governance and the connection with daily lives of young people.
- e) Develop support measures or tools, for instance through gamification, to softly show problems related to human rights online and means of resolving them
- f) Embed Internet Governance into basic digital literacy courses (i.e. ECDL)
- g) Support young people to act as peer educators with of other young people
- h) Include a dedicated youth point at the IGF secretariat
- i) Provide mentorship opportunities for young people to learn about the IG and how it works, so that they can decide to get involved (and how to do that).

### 3. National and regional IGFs

- a) Governments should ensure that young people can exercise their right to participate in the policy development, therefore should support the creation and existence of national youth IGFs
- b) Develop support tools for the creation and development of national youth IGFs
- c) Involve national youth councils and other organisations in the development of Youth IGF
- d) Create a network of coordinators to support (not organize) young people who want to initiate and develop IGFs in their countries
- e) Mobilise national institutional partners and youth organizations, especially National Youth Councils, to advocate for youth participation and support measures in IG
- f) Encourage young people to participate in IG, by introducing/exposing them to all the ways of traditional and non-traditional participation
- g) Conduct research on how/if various international regions coordinate youth participation in IG
- h) Reach out to young individuals (instead of just youth structures) interested/active on related topics (gaming, e-commerce, digital rights, youth, hack-a-thons, start-ups ...) and get them involved in existing structures.

### 4. Support measures

- a) Council of Europe's IG experts to coordinate EuroDIG's Youth School (YouthDIG), with the involvement of the Advisory Council on Youth
- b) Ensure Advisory Council on Youth makes Internet Governance a priority; advocate that the European Youth Forum makes Internet Governance a priority

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<sup>1</sup> Global Internet Policy Observatory  
<http://giponet.org/en>

- c) Advocate for the European Youth Foundation to support projects/initiatives on Internet Governance
- d) Recommend research on Youth participation in IG to be conducted in the framework of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership
- e) Host an expert meeting or study sessions on IG in the European Youth Centres
- f) Organize meetings of youth coordinators/participants in IG events, to help facilitate better coordination of the youth sector as a stakeholder of its own in IG processes
- g) Reduce the bureaucracy in getting reimbursed after participating in an offline event
- h) Resolve language barriers through using “youth-friendly language” in documents and Media
- i) Create a list of support means (including businesses other than Facebook and the rest of the communication platforms, regional IGFs, ISOC, ICANN etc.) for funding on the field
- j) List, on the platform (the virtual space for continuing the dialogue between offline events suggested – see ‘Space’, above) available support mechanisms for participants in various IGFs – link to various existing communities
- k) Develop and run a campaign on issues related to Internet Governance at the European level, referring to how IG affects young people as well, and how their participation is needed
- l) Expand Ambassador programs and scholarships (such as ISOC’s and ICANN’s)
- m) Reach out to the private sector (Internet companies) to support youth initiatives on IG.