

## Internet Governance Strategy 2016-2019

*The Strategy went through a first leap at the TC-INF of the 25 February (see TC-INF synopsis<sup>1</sup>). A revised version was then released (available on the CM web portal) the 9 March and is scheduled for adoption on the next TC-INF the 17<sup>th</sup> of March.*

### 1- What is internet governance?

Internet governance became a political priority after it was introduced by the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005. This was reaffirmed by the WSIS+10 year review in New York in 2015. It is to be recognised that governance of the Internet is a relatively recent phenomenon which can be considered unchartered, technical, and not the sole responsibility of governments and IGOs.

Since 2006, the UN and its agencies have given considerable attention to the challenges of the Internet notably with the UN HRC resolution on freedom of opinion and expression (2009), appointments of successive UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression (2011 and 2014), UN HRC resolution on human rights on the Internet (2012), UN special rapporteur on right to privacy in the digital age (2015).

Work at the global level on Internet governance is facilitated by the work of regional organisations like the Council of Europe which plays an important role in responding to the digital challenges ahead.

### 2- Key characteristics of the (draft) strategy

The CoE's unique mandate to address core values online – bringing together human rights, rule of law, and democracy online in a coherent and people-centred way – is in the core of the strategy. The governance of the Internet as a shared responsibility (i.e. multi-stakeholder) which involves state and non-state actors including the private sector, civil society, the technical and academic communities;

three main pillars of action:

1. Building democracy online, framed by inter alia online participation and inclusion for all, as well as understanding its public service value. This includes 6 key actions relating to the World Forum for Democracy, no hate speech campaign, media and information literacy, digital citizenship in school education, multilingualism, online participation of youth, and digital culture.
2. Ensuring safety and security for all, framed by the need to address terrorism committed via the Internet, online abuse, and also the balance between (i) measures taken to protect users as well as in the interests of national security, and (ii) the conditions and safeguards needed for the protection of human rights. This includes 7 actions relating to the global promotion of the Budapest Convention and Convention 108, cybersecurity, mass surveillance, violent extremism and radicalisation via the Internet, monitoring online abuse.
3. Respecting and protecting the human rights of everyone in the digital world, framed by the freedom of expression and access to information online, the need for effective remedies online, as well as reference to the challenges ahead such as the Internet of Things, anonymity and encryption and so on. This includes 7 key actions relating to the promotion of a network of national institutions to guide and assist Internet users who seek redress and remedies, triennial reporting on data protection and privacy in Europe, the responsibilities of Internet intermediaries, the CoE platform on the safety of journalists and the protection of journalism, the annual reports of the Secretary General, a platform for dialogue between governments and major Internet companies on their respect for human rights online, and the challenges of mobile and electronic health.

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<sup>1</sup> [TC-INF\(2016\)CB1E / 01 March 2016](#)