



The European Dimension of Internet Governance: Perspectives on Multi-Stakeholder Participation and Human Rights in the Information Society

Workshop

Preliminary outline and call for papers

Outline: What is the specificity of the European approach to internet governance? Where is the European information society heading in the framework of the post-WSIS process? And as Time Magazine has named the global citizen as “Person of the Year” because he “controls the Information Age”, we have to ask: is that really so? Or are there, rather, other actors who influence the development of information society – and, more specifically, the evolution of internet governance in Europe? What implications do the WSIS and the IGF processes have on European internet governance?

The Internet Governance Forum, which met in 2006 for the first time, has highlighted some of the areas of concern of the international information society and internet governance. Multi-Stakeholder participation and human rights, for instance, do not always receive the attention they deserve. Different actors – international governmental organizations, states, non-governmental organizations, civil society and networks of academics – have developed their approaches to internet governance and have come to different conclusions in relation to its future. So have Europe on the one hand, and other regions of the world on the other hand.

In January 2007, in the context of a four-year project on the legal implications of information society, the University of Graz organized a workshop on “The Global Dimensions of Internet Governance. The Role of Multi-Stakeholderism”. A second workshop aims to shed light on the European dimension of internet governance and the issues related to it. Eight international and Austrian experts shall be invited to discuss the topic. Together with contributions of the first workshop, their presentations will be published in a book on internet governance.

Date: Monday, 14 May 2007, 9.00 am to 18.00 pm

Venue: University of Graz, Austria

Proposed topics:

The following five thematic fields should give an idea of the ground that the present workshop aims to cover.

I. The European dimension of internet governance

What is happening in relation to internet governance on the European level? What are the activities of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe?

Topics may include activities of the Commission (i2010 Initiative, eEurope, technological aspects (IPv6, the Broadband Gap), the Safer Internet (plus) Programme); and of the European Parliament (e.g. outcome of the 2006 conference on Internet Governance and the Role of the Civil Society; efforts of MEPs (e.g. in the context of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy) in relation to internet governance); and, in relation to the CoE: the experience of the Cybercrime Convention Committee; the project on good governance in the Information Society; and the development of Council of Europe standard-setting instruments in relation to information society.

II. Multi-stakeholder approaches to European internet governance

The perspective of academia: How can human rights be safeguarded in the European information society and in European internet governance approaches?

The experience of NGOs: What are the implications of European information society?

The experience of business: What do European companies expect from internet governance?

The experience of registries: Which insights can European registries contribute?

The experience of governments: What are the experiences of governments, e.g. the Austrian government, with governance issues of the European information society?

III. The way forward: the challenge(s) of European internet governance

What conclusions can be drawn? What can we learn from the conceptual differences at WSIS? How can Europe ensure that its impact on defining internet governance will be felt? What will be the European contribution to the next Internet Governance Forum and to global internet governance?

General information:

The final topics will be agreed upon in consultation between the organizers and the experts. This procedure ensures that the topics presented reflect the latest developments in relation to the European dimension of information society. Thus, presentations will be able to give valuable insights into the status quo and future of European information society.

Each expert will give a lecture of 20 minutes to be followed by a discussion. The contributions of the speakers will form part II of a publication on internet governance which will be published in early 2008. Written versions of the presentations should be received by 1 July 2007.

Contact details:

Mag. Matthias C. Kettemann
Research Assistant

University of Graz
Institute of International Law and International Relations
Universitätsstraße 15/A4
8010 Graz
Austria

Tel.: +43 316 380 6711 and +43 676 70 17 175

Fax: +43 316 380 9455

Mail: matthias.kettemann@uni-graz.at