Internet Governance Forum 2021

Parliamentary track: Legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space

Katowice (Poland), 7-8 December 2021

Programme

CONTEXT

From 6 to 10 December 2021, the Government of the Republic of Poland will host the United Nations 16th Internet Governance Forum (IGF 2021) under the overarching theme *Internet United*. Participants from around the world are expected to take part in this event in Katowice, Poland and online.

At IGF 2021, a parliamentary track will take place on 7–8 December 2021 on the theme *Legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space*.

Drawing upon the online preparatory sessions held in October and November 2021 as well as the discussions to be held in December, the main messages from the parliamentary track will be captured in an outcome document that will be presented at the closing session of IGF 2021 on 10 December.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

All sessions, as well as the parliamentary reception, will be held at the IGF 2021 venue – the **MCK International Congress Centre** in Katowice.

Parliamentary events at IGF 2021 | 7–8 December (Katowice & online) Times are in CET (UTC+1)	
6 December, 19:00 – 20:00 & 20:00 – 21:30	**Ceremonial music concert & Cocktail reception**
7 December, 10:00 – 11:30 Plenary room	**IGF 2021 Opening Ceremony**

7 December, 14:00 – 15:30 Auditorium	**Parliamentary session 1 | Privacy and data protection legislation in the digital age: challenges and approaches** With public and private entities relying on personal data and behavioural information to provide digital services (with varying degrees of transparency), and with surveillance tools increasingly used outside of rule of law frameworks, protecting privacy and personal data in the digital space is an increasingly complex matter. This complexity poses challenges when it comes to defining and implementing relevant legislation. Outlining data subject rights and establishing responsibilities for their protection, clarifying meaningful consent for data processing, and setting conditions for international data transfers are some of the key issues that legislators around the world have to unpack when devising legal frameworks. And while such frameworks have been or are being put in place in many countries around the world, the reality is that there is still a patchwork of different legal approaches to protecting privacy and personal data. How do these many legal approaches work together in the framework of a borderless digital space? What is still missing?
7 December, 16:15 – 17:15 Plenary room	**IGF 2021 Parliamentary roundtable | Legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space** ***This Parliamentary roundtable will be open to all participants at IGF 2021.*** Legislation relevant for the Internet and the broader digital space covers many areas, from security and human rights, to competition and intellectual property. Having such legislation in place is an important element in addressing risks, protecting rights, and ensuring a level-playing field for market actors. But this also comes with challenges. For instance, how to balance the different rights and interests at stake when developing legislation to address harmful content or protect copyright? How to devise regulations to tackle risks that advanced technologies may pose without unduly harming innovation? And how to minimise the risk that legislation adopted at the national and regional level could threaten the global, interoperable, and unfragmented nature of the Internet? As we consider these and similar questions, is there a toolkit of principles that legislators need to keep in mind to ensure that the rules and regulations they define achieve their objectives without creating unintended consequences?
7 December, *time tbc*	**Parliamentary reception**
8 December, 09:30 – 11:00 Auditorium	**Parliamentary session 2 | Balancing freedom of speech and the fight against harmful content** Diversity of opinion and freedom of speech form the core of democracy. The Internet has made it easier to exercise these rights, but it has also created new opportunities for abuse. Harmful content is now easily spread online, sometimes with dire consequences for democracy itself and for human rights. As Internet platforms and

	regulators devise mechanisms to address such challenges, several questions are raised: Where does the responsibility of Internet platforms start and where does it end when it comes to tackling harmful content? Should platforms be left to determine on their own what is harmful content and how to deal with it? Or should legislators step it and establish clear roles and responsibilities? And if laws are adopted, what are the key principles that they need to embed in order to ensure that a proper balance is achieved between fighting harmful content and protecting freedom of speech and other human rights?
8 December, 11:30 – 13:00 Auditorium	**Parliamentary session 3 | AI governance: What do we regulate and how?** Artificial intelligence (AI) is now at the core of multiple digital services and products, from guiding our online experiences and powering smart devices, to shaping the decisions others make about us (e.g. in the context of recruitment processes, financial services, or the judiciary system). Beyond its promises, AI also comes with pitfalls; for instance, algorithmic decision-making could result in discrimination, harmful stereotypes and wider social inequality, while AI-based systems may pose risks to human safety. Some jurisdictions around the world have started working on regulatory frameworks to address such pitfalls. But what is it about AI that needs to be regulated? To what extent do we need new laws and how do existing ones apply to AI? How should regulations for AI be developed, and what principles should they embed? And to what extent can regulations developed in some jurisdictions serve as inspiration for others?
Parliamentarians are also cordially invited to participate in other IGF 2021 activities.	