Joint Statement from the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament on Internet Governance

At this year's Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Kyoto, Japan, which has just concluded, representatives of the European Union reaffirmed our strong commitment to the multi-stakeholder process.

The participation of European Commission Vice-President Věra Jourová and Members of the European Parliament (Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Ivan Štefanec, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Brando Benifei, Irena Joveva, Morten Løkkegaard, Sergey Lagodinsky, Niyazi Kızılyürek and Marie Dauchy) emphasised the EU's investment in addressing issues such as digital equity, disinformation and the need to ensure a central role for the stakeholder community in the proper governance of disruptive technology developments such as artificial intelligence.

Vice President Jourová's high-profile participation ensured that the EU's stance on these issues is clearly articulated and that it actively contributes to shaping global solutions. During her visit, as well as the Opening Plenary sessions, Jourová participated in debates that included the Leaders session addressing the challenge of misinformation and disinformation, and the session on the Declaration for the Future of the Internet. Additionally, the Vice President had a series of bilateral meetings including with Mr Junji Suzuki, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan and Mr Taro Kono, Japan's Minister for Digital Transformation, as well as discussions with significant civil society and technical community stakeholders.

The European Parliament delegation had an active role at the Parliamentary track of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and met with organisations such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the US delegation, APING and the Youth Internet Governance Forum. They also hold bilateral meetings with Mr. Takuo Komori, Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister, and Ms. Karoline Edtstadler, Austria's Minister for the EU and the Constitution, and member of the IGF 2023 High-Level Track.

Together, the presence of such a strong delegation from the EU at the IGF underscores our shared vision of a digital future that is inclusively shaped, collectively governed, and firmly anchored in democratic values and human rights. At a time when digital technologies and services are deeply intertwined in our societies and economies, the EU representatives were able to reconfirm our commitment to an Internet that is open, free, secure, global, reliable, inclusive and interoperable; an Internet that not only kindles innovation but also upholds democratic values and universal human rights.
They also reasserted the EU’s rejection of any attempts that lead toward its fragmentation.

United, the EU delegation showed support for the inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance and reiterated the EU’s support for the IGF as the primary multi-stakeholder venue for coherent and inclusive Internet policy discussions.

With an eye toward the future, VP Jourova and the delegation of MEPs committed to undertaking collective efforts to ensure the success of IGF activities going forward, which involves fostering collaboration with stakeholders from the entire spectrum of national, regional, and global communities.

This also underpins the EU’s commitment to the Declaration for the Future of the Internet and its foundational principles. Implementing the declaration extends cooperation to a wider community of countries that also support democratic values, including those in the Global South.

Much of the focus of the EU delegations’ various dialogues in Kyoto focused on the journey towards the UN Global Digital Compact, identifying the need to build upon the successes of the IGF and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process, with the common goal to propel open, free, and secure global digital societies into the future.

Equally, there was consensus with other stakeholders to prepare collaboratively and spearhead the forthcoming discussions on the WSIS+20 review process in 2025, which includes invigorating multi-stakeholder participation and engagement.

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