

Conclusions of the Seminar on Youth Participation in Internet Governance (October 2017) – Council of Europe

The seminar brought together 30 young participants involved in Internet Governance processes at national and international level coming from Europe to discuss what are the aims, criteria and means for a meaningful and inclusive youth participation in Internet Governance.

Below are some of the main conclusions of the seminar.

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

- a. Give priority to 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. (e.g. EuroDIG 2018; IGF 2019).
- d. Advocate 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, starting with EuroDIG 2018 and IGF2019.
- 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. Have 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. Council of Europe could commit to having one Young Ambassador/Youth Representative to attend international events on Internet Governance (all costs covered), receive training on current IG and youth policy developments and so on.
- j. Work with UN Youth Ambassadors, who could work on youth engagement at the IGF as well. They should push the IGF Secretariat for youth as stakeholders. Council of Europe's Youth Department and/or the Advisory Council on Youth could collaborate with UN Youth Ambassadors and other UN youth structures. The Council of Europe could help organize these structures.

2. Capacity building to ensure youth participation in Internet Governance

- a) Capacity building for young people involved in Internet Governance should also 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)¹ 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) Young people can act as peer educators and volunteers in raising awareness of other young people; however this should not be exploited.
- 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 have to 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) Mobilize the 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, even though they might not be or think they are experts yet;
- g) Conduct research on how/if various international regions coordinate their youth work vis-à-vis IG, keeping in mind the need to find a balance between maintaining their autonomy and having a coordinated approach;

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

- 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 then try to 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;
- 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 session on IG in the youth centers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and Budapest;
- 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 (the faster, the easiest for young people);
- h) Resolve language barriers;
- 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, creating an intermediary support network for filling in forms;
- j) Financial and institutional support from governmental bodies (but not limited to them), moral support from experienced youth workers and experts in Internet Governance;
- k) 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.
- l) 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.
- m) Expand Ambassador programs and scholarships (such as ISOC's and ICANN's);
- n) Reach out to the private sector (Internet companies such as Google) to help support youth initiatives on IG;