



RIPE NCC's input ahead of the Joint Communication on the European Union's external digital strategy

We thank the European Union for the opportunity to contribute to its external digital policy strategy. Our input focuses on aspects related to Internet governance and digital diplomacy, where the RIPE NCC brings longstanding expertise and a commitment to safeguarding the open, global, and interoperable Internet.

The RIPE NCC is one of the five Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) that allocate and register Internet number resources in the form of IP addresses and Autonomous System Numbers (ASNs). We are a not-for-profit membership organisation with over 20,000 members in 76 countries across Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia.

We welcome and support the EU's efforts aimed at safeguarding the interoperability, availability and integrity of the global Internet, especially in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society review (WSIS+20) taking place throughout 2025¹.

As part of WSIS+20, the EU can reinforce its support for bottom-up multistakeholder governance by ensuring that the WSIS Action Lines remain technology-neutral and inclusive. Strengthening collaboration with Internet technical bodies in shaping the post-WSIS agenda will help advance the EU's strategic goals for a secure, open, and globally interoperable digital future.

Strengthening the EU's multistakeholder approach to Internet governance

As the backbone of digital transformation, the Internet must remain a stable and unified platform. Preserving its core architectural elements is essential for enabling digital innovation, advancing Human Rights and achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

WSIS+20 provides the opportunity to reflect on, and reinforce, the foundational principles of the Internet and its open, distributed, and globally interoperable architecture, which has enabled innovation and connectivity for billions of users. To safeguard these principles, Internet governance must be truly inclusive, integrate bottom-up processes, and guarantee the impartiality and interoperability necessary to ensure a well-functioning Internet globally.

We also encourage the EU to support the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), an institution created by WSIS, as a stable and inclusive platform for continued dialogue and shared responsibility, which will allow for strong alignment across relevant frameworks such as the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and SDGs. To this end, we call on the EU to support a renewed and permanent mandate for the IGF with a sustainable funding model, alongside a reinforced UN mechanism aligned with the technology-neutral WSIS Action Lines.

¹ RIPE NCC has published a ['WSIS+20 Fact Sheet'](#) and ['Our Vision & Contribution'](#) gathering key insights and recommendations.

Building strategic partnerships through diplomacy and capacity-building

The RIPE NCC supports the EU's efforts and aspirations to become a leader in digital innovation and enhance its security and competitiveness on the global stage.

For this, we encourage the EU to further align its regulatory policy approach and digital diplomacy tools with these strategic goals. We also support the strong emphasis placed by the EU on public policy principles and objectives geared towards respecting and promoting human rights, enhancing information security and privacy, and fostering economic development and social inclusion.

With this in mind, we encourage the EU to prioritise engagement and capacity building with key international partners and organisations, including well-established and community-led technical bodies such as the IETF, ICANN, and the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) that develop the standards and run core functions underpinning Internet infrastructure.

Additionally, strengthening the technical community's role and collaboration with governments can help foster evidence-based and informed decision-making at the national, regional and international levels. It will be instrumental in ensuring digital policies are technically sound and future-proof. This can be achieved by improving information sharing and direct collaboration, particularly between technical community experts, governments, and public sector entities.

Supporting the Internet's technical development in underserved regions through capacity building, measurement tools, and infrastructure development is essential to closing the digital divide. The RIPE NCC's outreach and partnerships in these areas could complement the EU's global cooperation goals.

Promoting norms and standards in collaboration with the technical community

Fragmentation of the digital and Internet governance landscapes poses a significant risk of fragmenting the Internet itself. In an era where digital protectionism and Internet fragmentation are gaining ground, the EU's leadership is crucial for defending the global, end-to-end nature of the Internet. We encourage the EU to actively counter initiatives that lead to fragmentation by reinforcing its support for globally coordinated, interoperable technical governance frameworks.

Promoting inclusive and open engagement is one way of mitigating these risks, essentially stemming from the multiplication of state-led initiatives, misaligned policies, conflicting standards, and uncoordinated frameworks that threaten the seamless interoperability and global nature of the Internet.

To ensure that the Internet continues to serve as a catalyst for innovation, growth, and empowerment worldwide, we encourage the EU to strengthen its multistakeholder approach and prevent governmental initiatives that would undermine the foundational principles of an open, inclusive, and secure Internet. Finally, recognising the role of, and enhancing collaboration with, established Internet standards-setting and policy development bodies will be key to strengthening the EU's endeavour and leadership in Internet and digital governance on the global stage.