

## IGF 2017

**- Session Title:**

WS #230 – Youth Participation in Internet Governance

**- Date:**

Wednesday, 20 December 2017

**- Time:**

16:40

**- Session Organizer:**

Ruxandra PANDEA – Council of Europe (Youth Department)

Gisella GORI – Council of Europe (Children’s Rights Division)

**- Chair/Moderator:**

Ruxandra PANDEA

**- Rapporteur/Notetaker:**

Irina DREXLER – No Hate Speech Movement Romania

**- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:**

**Corina CALUGARU** – Ambassador, Permanent representative of the Republic of Moldova to the Council of Europe

**Gisella GORI** – Council of Europe (Children’s Rights Division)

**Milosh RISTOVSKI** – Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

**- Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):**

1. The definition of youth participation used by the Council of Europe, applicable in Internet Governance processes as well, is linked to the preamble of the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, stating “participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election... it is about having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in action and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.” (RMSOS model)
2. Youth Participation in Internet Governance is not necessarily secured and clear, youth organizations and the youth sector in general (including the Ministries of Youth) not being invested in Internet Governance to a great extent.
3. The Council of Europe organized in October 2017 a seminar on Youth Participation in Internet Governance, which resulted also in a list of recommendations that could be split into four subgroups: recognition of young people as a stakeholder, capacity building, national and regional IGFs, support measures needed.
4. When speaking about Youth participation in Internet Governance it is important to refer also to young people coming from minority backgrounds, so as to make the process inclusive for all.
5. When speaking about Youth participation in Internet Governance it is important to have in mind also getting existing youth structures on board.
6. Formal education should be updated to cover current topics under discussion, including Internet Governance.
7. Teachers should be taught themselves about matters related to the Internet and Internet Governance.
8. Adopting universal treaties/norms faces the challenge of these standards not being applied the same outside Europe, evolving further into something that would not be applicable back to Europe any longer.
9. Translating Internet Governance concepts and relevant documents is needed, so as to work in the mother tongue and reach large audiences.
10. All IG opportunities should be brought into one single place, for young people to refer to it.
11. Mentorship programmes for both mentees and mentors (how to keep people involved) are needed.
12. A Youth Declaration is needed at the end of IGF, to gain momentum and to commit to a set of shared principles, views and proposals of ways forward.
13. Investing, as a starting point, in youth that can volunteer could help advance Youth participation in Internet Governance.
14. Who sets the criteria for national and regional IGFs, and how can young people get involved in IG?
15. Many panels are not youth inclusive.
16. All standards should be applied including by companies.
17. Council of Europe Draft Recommendation on Internet Intermediaries is to be launched early 2018.

18. Council of Europe Guidelines to respect, promote, fulfil children's rights in the digital environment are to be adopted early 2018.
19. Council of Europe has developed the system of co-management, through which representatives of youth organizations and governments work together on the formulation and implementation of the Council of Europe youth policy – a system that could be used in Internet Governance processes as well.

**- If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:**

### **1. Ruxandra PANDEA**

She started with a short overview of what the Council of Europe stands for and how the youth sector is a core element in the work of the organization, and presented the aims of the seminar on Youth Participation in Internet Governance organized by the Council of Europe in October 2017 in Strasbourg, France, and some of the recommendations that resulted at the end of the event.

The Council of Europe is a human rights organization, working on setting standards and on capacity building for both governments and civil society, working closely with the European Court of Human Rights, monitoring the respect for human rights in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe that have ratified the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Council of Europe has a history of more than 40 years of working in the youth field, youth participation being traditionally a core element in the work conducted by the organization, through standard setting and capacity building. There are many levels of Youth Participation that the Council of Europe has observed, the organization being concerned with decision making at local, national, regional and international level. The definition of Youth participation used by the Council of Europe, applicable also for Internet Governance processes, is linked to the preamble of the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, stating "participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election... it is about having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in action and activities so as to contribute to building a better society."

Referring to Council of Europe's experience on Youth Participation in Internet Governance, Ruxandra Pandea mentioned the co-management system (through which representatives of youth organizations and governments work together on the formulation and implementation of the Council of Europe youth policy), the No Hate Speech Movement campaign (involved directly in IG dialogues since 2013) and the seminar on Youth Participation in Internet Governance organized in October 2017 in Strasbourg. The Council of Europe has also an Internet Governance Strategy and several departments are contributing to achieving the goals set in this document.

The seminar on Youth Participation in Internet Governance lasted for three working days (more than IGF sessions on Youth Participation in Internet Governance), focusing on reaching a common understanding of what Internet Governance is, having minimal criteria for successful Youth Participation in IG, resulting in some good recommendations, most of which could be divided into four groups: recognition of young people as a stakeholder, capacity building, national and regional youth IGFs, support measures needed.

### **2. Menno ETTEMA**

He added the necessity of making Youth Participation in Internet Governance accessible for all young people, including those from minority groups. Getting existing youth structures on board to advance Youth Participation in Internet Governance has also been discussed.

### **3. Corina CALUGARU**

She began her presentation by referring to the fact that our future depends on the young generation and by referring to the relation between the Internet and governments, Internet providers and society (young people, teachers, students, etc.). Convention 108 on Cybercrime was also mentioned.

On 8 November 2017 the Council of Europe signed an agreement, in the form of an exchange of letters, with representatives of eight leading technology firms (Apple, Deutsche Telekom, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Kaspersky Lab, Orange, Telefonica) and six associations (Computer & Communications Industry Association – CCIA, DIGITALEUROPE, The European Digital SME Alliance, the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association – ETNO, GSMA and the multi-stakeholder Global Network Initiative - GNI), thus strengthening its cooperation with the private sector in order to promote an open and safe Internet, where human rights, democracy and the rule of law are respected. Additional agreements could be signed with other partners in the future.

By spring 2018 a Draft Recommendation on Internet Intermediaries is expected to be adopted, stating rights and obligations, understanding all responsibilities (to avoid misusing the Internet).

### **4. Gisella GORI**

She presented the work of the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe on the Guidelines to respect, promote, fulfill children's rights in the digital environment and the Division's experience with child consultations in the process of drafting

these Guidelines. The Recommendation on the Participation of Children and Young People Under 18 was also mentioned. States are asked to create the right, means, space, opportunities and support (RMSOS) for children to participate.

The Division has been working intensively on a set of Guidelines to respect, promote, fulfill children's rights in the digital environment. They will be adopted, hopefully, at the beginning of 2018, and will include topics such as access to digital environment, privacy and data protection, right to education, right to protection and safety for children, risks in digital environment and so on. These Guidelines are for governments and companies, and such initiatives are considered useful by member states, because they offer a background to be included. The Guidelines will also be available in a user-friendly language. In April 2017, 17 consultations with children took place in 8 countries in Europe, involving 200 children based on the age group up to 12 years old, and based on their belonging to a vulnerable group and being aged 12 to 18. An implementation package with templates was provided by the Council of Europe to the consultants involved. Report: "It is our world! Children's view on how to protect their rights in the digital environment."

The work of the Council of Europe in this area has been innovative and with good results.

## **5. Milosh RISTOVSKI**

He spoke about the co-management system of the Council of Europe, consisting of the Steering Committee on Youth (governmental) and the Advisory Council on Youth (civil society), who make decisions together (including the support of the Council of Europe to send 35 young people at the IGF 2017 in Geneva).

Through partnerships with National Youth Councils, the European Youth Forum and youth NGOs the voice of young people in Internet Governance processes could be ensured.

Following the Council of Europe's Strategy on Internet Governance and speaking more about IG through the co-management system, young people could participate more meaningfully in IG.

### **- Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):**

The session began with an overview of the work of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights offline and online, especially in the youth sector and in connection to youth participation in Internet Governance. The RMSOS (rights, means, spaces, opportunities and support) model of youth participation has been introduced, as well as the model of co-management the Council of Europe is operating with in making decisions together with young people. Part of the recommendations resulting at the end of the seminar on Youth Participation in Internet Governance organized in Strasbourg in October 2017 have been presented to the participants, who have been invited to split into four groups and come up with more recommendations on: recognition of young people as a stakeholder, capacity building, national and regional youth IGFs, support measures. After the groups presented their ideas, the panel was invited to contribute to the discussions from their respective positions. (see above)

During the questions and answers session it was recommended that participation of the young generation at IGF should be formalized by a declaration, consisting of concrete proposals: which field would young people like to be more active in? Where do young people think their voice would be more important?

It was also recommended that Internet Governance should be mainstreamed to youth organizations, so as to help the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council on Europe to further advance IG on the institutional agenda. The Programming Committee on Youth (both government representatives and non-governmental youth organizations, establishing priorities and monitoring the activities implemented within the European Youth Foundation) can decide to prioritize Youth Participation in Internet Governance processes and plan money in advance for this purpose.

References have been made to the many manuals and many recommendations the Council of Europe has already published, the long experience the organization has in Youth Participation at European level being used and open for further use by other regions as well, translated for their contexts.

It was also mentioned by a participant that developing countries are struggling financially, being at the beginning in the field of IG. However, it was stressed that given the fact that many people meet many other people during events such as IGF, one does not need a large amount of money to start doing at least something small on Youth Participation in Internet Governance in these countries.

Participants have also been invited to contribute to the development of the Toolkit on Youth Participation in Internet Governance.

**- Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways (3 paragraphs):**

- Young participants at IGF to develop and adopt a joint declaration on Youth Participation in Internet Governance.
- Introduce IG courses in the formal educational system (school curricula – primary, high school, university level).
- Teach teachers themselves about the Internet and Internet Governance.
- Translate IG documents and principles in highly used languages in several regions (not in all existing languages in those regions), so as to reach larger communities.
- Involve young people that can volunteer, so as to advance Youth Participation in Internet Governance processes.
- Involve youth outside the tech field as well, thus enhancing access as well.
- Encourage all genders (especially girls and young women) to participate, by creating also dedicated mentorship programmes.
- Create mentorship opportunities both offline and online, focusing on the sustainability of such initiatives as well, for instance by stating a requirement for mentees to become mentors themselves.
- Organize training sessions for mentors as well (how to keep mentees still engaged).
- Consider peer mentoring (and means to motivate young people to get involved in such initiatives).
- Create welcoming spaces, for young people to express themselves safely, make mistakes and learn more about IG.
- Create a universal platform for sharing documentation, adding initiatives and successful projects involving youth in IG.
- Create and update a database of youth experts and young people active in Internet Governance, for experts to know where to find them.
- Set youth IGFs and also involve young people in existing IGFs at national and regional level.
- Use social media to reach large numbers of young people, maximizing the budget spent.
- Make panels more youth inclusive.
- Pedagogical/educational experts of the Council of Europe to coordinate youth events at IG conferences such as EuroDIG and IGF, so as to make sure complex topics are understood.
- Enhance the understanding of Youth Participation for many stakeholders (by regions, age etc.).
- Invest in research on youth.
- Invite people from other regions to see for themselves successful projects on IG in Europe.

**Gender Reporting**

**- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session:**

35

**- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session:**

15

**- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?**

It was mentioned during the group discussions, with recommendations coming from participants to invest more in dedicated mentorship programmes for girls and young women to get involved in IG processes.

**- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:**

One recommendation made was to encourage all genders (especially girls and young women) to participate, by creating also dedicated mentorship programmes.