STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS ON THE UN IGF MULTISTAKEHOLDER HIGH LEVEL BODY PROPOSAL (ROADMAP PARAGRAPH 93A)

3 MARCH 2021

In the course of the Consultation on paragraph 93(a) of the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation European stakeholder discussed during a EuroDIG Extra the need and function of a Multi-Stakeholder High Level Body (MHLB) and its relationship to the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG).

The aim was to come up with a shared view in order to make a contribution to the questioner that was prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

We did focus on Q1 of the survey and discussed the function of the MHLB and it's relationship to the MAG. Thereafter we summarised the discussion in two short paragraphs (one on the function and one on the relationship to the MAG) and invited for comments on our Commenting Platform.

No further comments were was received until the deadline 8 March 2021.

Read the transcript of the session: https://www.eurodig.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/20210303-EuroDIG-Extra-0900UTC_final-transcript.rtf or listen to the recording (https://youtu.be/gICpTvKmFmY).

Around 40 participants coming from all stakeholder groups and across Europe participated in this session. The discussion was engaging.

Main messages

i. Functions of the new body

- There was broad agreement among the EuroDIG Extra participants in support of the rationale for creating the MHLB to undertake specific functions as outlined in Paragraph 93a of the UNSGs Roadmap, in particular coordinating follow-up actions and relaying proposed policy approaches and recommendations to decision-making fora.

- None of the MHLB's activities should draw attention away from the IGF or undermine its bottom-up, multistakeholder nature.

- By creating a table at the IGF for decision-makers from all stakeholder groups to have high-level discussions, the MHLB would serve to bridge the gap between discussions and decisions.

- There were tentative expressions of support, subject to further clarifying discussion, for the MHLB to address specific "urgent issues" as stated in Paragraph 93 A. This should be undertaken in full consultation and coordination with the MAG.

- There was support for the MHLB providing strategic inputs with the aim of helping to shape the IGF programme and long-term strategy. Participants emphasised, however, that the MAG should continue to have full authority and responsibility for the IGF's programme development.

ii. The MHLB's Relationship with the MAG

- There was general agreement on the need for the MHLB to have a strong linkage with the MAG rather than being a separate body.

- Differing views were expressed on how this linkage should be achieved, either as a single combined body (the smaller MHLB being part of the MAG), or by creating a layered governance structure with the MHLB supporting the MAG. There were several expressions of support for one or more of the three options developed by the MAG Working Group on Strengthening and Strategy, as providing the basis for a final decision.

- Participants agreed that it would be essential to ensure multi-stakeholder accountability and transparency for the MHLB's membership nomination.

Individual proposals and comments worth recording

- The Chairs of the MHLB and the MAG should sit on both groups. The Technology Envoy should also have a seat on the MHLB. (DE)

- The MHLB should draw on the IGF's extensive repository of expertise and knowledge when formulating its advice. (G. Mazzone).

- The accountability of the MHLB would be established by building on the MAG's nominations system (Telefonica and CH).

- In order to ensure full diversity of geographical and constituency representation, the size of the MHLB's membership needs to be 15-20 high ranking people with appointments made on a rotating basis (CH)

- The MHLB would have a valuable role in addressing specific major crises and emergencies and major global challenges such as climate change, and informing the Tech Envoy's engagement across the UN system on these issues (Amali De Silva-Mitchell).

Mark Carvell
Moderator

3/3/21