IGF 2017 Reporting Template

Session Title: "Digital Switzerland" Strategy – Creating networked transformation processes through dialogue

- Date: 18 December 2017

- Time: 12.20-13.20

- Session Organizer: Federal Office of Communications Switzerland   (OFCOM)

- Chair/Moderator: Jaques Beglinger, Swissholdings

- Rapporteur/Notetaker: Lorenzo Garovi, OFCOM

- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:

Director General of OFCOM Switzerland: Mr Philipp Metzger
Representative of Digital Switzerland: Edouard Bugnion, École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne EPFL
Representative of Civil Society: Roxana Radu, Chair ISOC-CH, Geneva Internet Platform
Representative Ct. Geneva: Alexander Barclay

- Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):

- Although Switzerland has started from a rather comfortable point of departure, there is a call for action.
- In order to be able to successfully tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities associated with digitisation, transformation processes must be crosssectoral, interdisciplinary and networked.
- There is collective engagement in Switzerland by different stakeholders acting on different levels

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

Mr Metzger presented the Swiss Government Strategy "Digital Switzerland". The strategy provides guidelines for government action and indicates where and how authorities, academia, the private sector, civil society and politics must work together in order to shape the transformation process for the benefit of everyone. According to Mr Metzger, creating trust in digital technologies is a prerequisite for seizing opportunities. Furthermore, there is a need for space for digital experiments. However, there is clearly a case for (collective) leadership to bring Switzerland forward. Given all the uncertainties surrounding the future path, it is key that the strategy is regularly adopted to changing realities. To this end, the government has started a dialogue trying to increase engagement by stakeholders. The National Conference that took place in November 2017 was a first important highlight of this dialogue process. In a next step, the government will investigate what new measures are required for further development of the Federal Council's "Digital Switzerland" Strategy.

Mr Bugnion talked about the association "digitalswitzerland", a private nationwide cross-industry initiative. The initiative focuses on the need to strengthen the Swiss economy in the context of digitisation. It is organized around five pillars. They want to promote and help shape political conditions and regulatory frameworks that are conducive to the development of new technologies, new business models and the respective influx of capital and talent. Second, there is a need to train and retrain the workforce. Support for start-ups constitute another pillar. Furthermore, the association wants to communicate broadly within society about the topic. To this end, it organized for example the "National Digital Day" and brought digitisation to the forefront of the entirety of the Swiss population. The last pillar is about thought leadership.

The association regularly organises challenges around specific topics bringing together and connecting different players.

Mr Barclay provided a short overview of GenèveLab, the innovation laboratory of the Canton of Geneva. Its main goal is to support the public administration in its digital transition. One way of action is to organize events where they discuss emerging technologies and use cases for the administration. The collaborators of GenèveLab also link the right people for specific undertakings or offer training to administrative staff. The Lab is also a place for experimentation where emerging technologies are explored. Mr Barclay presented some of their projects more in details such as a digital platform for tax declarations or workshops on how to communicate with generation z. The Canton of Geneva is also experimenting with the blockchain technology. On a more strategic level, the Canton of Geneva is currently developing its own digital strategy.

Ms Roxana Radu shortly touched upon the ISOC Switzerland activities and model of governance. Ms Radu welcomed the fact that the Strategy "Digital Switzerland" is creating a constant dialogue. The current changes are disruptive and it is probably time for discussing the pillars of our future society. Despite the rapid pace of change, we now need time and room for this important discussion. ISOC Switzerland are running a set of public workshops over the next years called "the values of internet technologies" where the participants are invited to bring in their concerns and ideas. Ms Radu underlined the importance of providing a safety net for everyone to feel that their rights are not threatened in any way. To safeguard the individual rights online as well as offline might be the main challenge. Discussing the way forward, it is important to constantly have a look at examples from other countries. It offers a great source for inspiration and learnings. Ms Radu suggested for example to consider more sustainable ways to consume technology as an integral part of the revised strategy.

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

The main topic discussed and put forth by a participant was the problem of manipulative forces endangering the proper functioning of the political system. According to Mr Metzger, there are already a number of laws and rules in place in Switzerland that, when applied properly, can have a stabilizing effect. In addition, we can still count on trusted independent sources of information when it comes to informed decision making. Looking at the technological developments and democracy from another, more constructive perspective, it opens the room for new forms of participation in political processes. However, one should not underestimate the threat, added Mr Bugnion. Today, the forms of manipulation are extremely sophisticated. What makes it even more complex is the immediate impact that new and barely understood technologies have on our societies. One of the major issues is strengthening international enforcement cooperation, since digital space does not stop at national borders.

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

Gender Reporting

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 50

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 20

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?
Not discussed in particular.

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