Secretariat: Contribution to World Summit on Information Society

IRIS 2003-3:1/4

Tarlach McGonagle
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam

In December 2002, the Council of Europe submitted its Contribution to the 2 Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society.

The Contribution sets out the Council's priorities vis-à-vis the future development of the Information Society, in the hope that they will inform the preparations for the World Summit, and ultimately the Summit itself. As regards human rights protection, these priorities include: guaranteeing freedom of expression and information in the on-line environment; combating cybercrime; ensuring the protection of personal data; establishing self- and co-regulatory frameworks ("as opposed to outright state regulation") and balancing intellectual property rights with society's need for access to information and culture. Priority objectives for improving communication between public authorities and citizens include: multi-channel access to official information, social services and justice; public institutions that are transparent and accountable; the participation of citizens in public affairs, including voting and the formulation of public policy; the enhancement of democratic structures and practices at the regional and local levels. E-inclusion, for its part, should involve efforts to bridge the digital divide by educational initiatives, such as the promotion of media and Internet literacy. It should also involve harnessing the full potential of ICT for the benefit of the elderly, people with disabilities and the seriously ill. These priorities largely reflect existing (legal) standards of the Council of Europe and ongoing deliberations within the organisation.

The World Summit on the Information Society is an initiative that is being spearheaded by the International Telecommunication Union (in a leading organisational role) and the United Nations. It will take place in two phases, the first in Switzerland at the end of 2003 and the second in Tunisia in 2005. Both phases of the Summit itself and the preparatory processes will involve the participation of, inter alia, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, civil society and the private sector. Among the tasks of the 2 Preparatory Committee for the World Summit, which is due to meet in Geneva in February 2003, is the consideration of a draft Declaration of Principles and Action Plan. The intention is to submit these drafts to Heads of States for their approval at the Summit in December 2003.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the Information Society, Contribution by the Council of Europe to the 2nd Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society, Doc. WSIS/PC-2/CONTR/32-E of 9 December 2002

http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc2/c/S03-WSISPC2-C-0032!!PDF-E.pdf

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026