United Nations: Human Rights Council urges Member States to improve internet security

IRIS 2014-8:1/1

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On 20 June 2014, following the meeting of stakeholders held in Sao Paulo, Brazil on 23 and 24 April 2014, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution tabled by Brazil, Tunisia, Nigeria, Turkey, Sweden and the USA. The resolution calls on States to increase their efforts to improve Internet security in order to comply with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The resolution reflects the UN Human Rights Council's concern, following the NSA affair, to protect fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and data protection on the Internet. It builds on a declaration made in 2012, in which the Council stressed that citizens' rights must be protected "online" as well as "offline". Since many audiovisual media services are distributed via the Internet nowadays, the issue of better Internet security is also relevant to the audiovisual sector.

The key message of the new resolution is that human rights that are guaranteed "offline", i.e. in real life, must also be protected on the Internet, i.e. "online".

The UN Human Rights Council notes that the exercise of human rights on the Internet is particularly important because the rapid pace of technological development is enabling individuals all over the world to use this technology. As a driving force for economic, social and cultural development, the Internet must be respectful of human rights if it is to remain global and open in nature.

Prompted partly by the NSA affair, the Human Rights Council therefore considers it important to build confidence in the Internet with regard to human rights so that its potential for development and innovation can be realised. This is particularly true in view of the Internet's role in promoting the right to education.

In order to achieve these objectives, States are urged to facilitate access to the Internet. By taking steps to improve security and clearly allocating responsibility, they must also ensure that human rights are effectively guaranteed "online". Through transparent processes involving all stakeholders, the UN Human Rights Council calls on States to formulate Internet-related public policies that protect the Internet and give priority to objectives such as universal access and enjoyment of human rights in cyberspace.

UN Human Rights Council resolution, 20 June 2014

http://www.computerundrecht.de/A_HRC_26_L24.doc

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