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World Summit on the Information Society
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Towards an Information Society respecting civil and political rights of citizens, as well as their economic, social and cultural rights

IRIS Recommendations for the Summit Agenda

We live in a society where communication is considered as a global merchandise. It is also entirely controlled, the stake being the ownership of both the infrastructure and the contents of the communication. The dangers of this liberal logic, from an economic point of view are augmented by those of security policies going as far as criminalizing citizen movements and social movements.

The role of the States and the supranational authorities is to protect the citizens against this market society intended for the sole profit of the dominant economic and financial interests. The role of the civil society is to contribute to the emergence of a world citizenship respectful of the cultural identities and caring to balance the terms of trade in order to reduce social and regional inequalities.

We thus should build together an information and communication society respectful of the civil and political rights of the citizens, as well as of their economic, social and cultural rights. International instruments exist for that, adopted by the United Nations for more than one half-century.

The resulting rights relate to **freedom of expression, freedom of communication, freedom of information, the right to protection of privacy and personal data, the right to human dignity, the right to education and knowledge, as well as the right to decent working conditions.**

We propose that this Summit be the occasion to precisely translate these rights within the specific framework of information and communication, in order to build a common vision of this society.

As an example, we think that the **right to education and knowledge** implies, in an information and communication society, precise guarantees:

- Everyone must be able to acquire basic information and electronic education, in order to be able to master social transformations in all their practical and civic aspects;
- The respect of intellectual property should not prevail on the right to education and knowledge. This right must indeed be exercised through the concept of fair use, i.e. use for non-commercial purposes, education, and research;
- Intellectual work and ideas, including programming methods and algorithms, should not be patentable. The production and use of free and open software and content must thus be encouraged and covered by public policy;
- Access to public data without charge is a necessary condition so that everyone has the means to exercise his citizenship;
- Access to infrastructure under acceptable economic conditions must be guaranteed, by supporting the possibility of being a provider as well as a consumer of information. This guarantee implies the negotiation of agreements for the contractual connections between the areas of the world and the States of these areas, whose cost must equitably be shared. This also implies the existence and the perennity of local telecommunication operators.

Like the right to education and the knowledge, other rights must find their translation in the information and communication society. The United Nations World Summit on the Information Society is a unique occasion to achieve this objective.

In order to meet this historical opportunity, our common objective should be the definition of an information and communication society respecting the civil and political rights of the citizens, as well as their economic, social and cultural rights.

Putting this essential thematic of the Human Rights in the Information and Communication Society on the agenda of the World Summit will appear to us as the sign of your political willing to achieve this goal together with the civil society.

Annex: About IRIS

IRIS (Imaginons un réseau Internet solidaire) is a non profit French NGO founded in October 1997. IRIS objectives are the promotion of a public service infrastructure for permanent connectivity to the Internet, the action in favor of Free speech and privacy, and the promotion of a non-commercial Internet. In France, IRIS is a member of the DELIS coalition (Droits et libertés face à l'informatisation de la société: www.delis.sgdg.org), and of the R@S (Réseau associatif et syndical: www.ras.eu.org). At the European level, IRIS is a founding member of the EDRi federation (European Digital Rights: www.edri.org). At the international level, IRIS is a member of the GILC coalition (Global Internet Liberty Campaign: www.gilc.org). IRIS is active at the national level (institutional hearings and consultations, raising awareness of NGOs and trade-unions with regards to political and social stakes of the Internet, publishing analyses and reports, participating in conferences,...), at the European level (working groups of the European Commission on illegal and harmful content and on cybercrime) and at the international level, mainly through the GILC coalition. More information are available on IRIS web site.