

**UK STATEMENT – WORKING SESSION 3 – CHALLENGES TO THE ENJOYMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AGE OF NEW ICT, INCLUDING THE RESPECT FOR PRIVACY**

We fully support the statement made this morning by The Netherlands on behalf of the European Union delivered in this morning's session and would like to make some remarks in our national capacity.

The digital age has revolutionised how we express, share and explore our ideas. Art, commerce and journalism have all been fundamentally changed by the internet in less than a generation. The UK has been at the forefront of this revolution with pioneers like Alan Turing, Ada Lovelace, Charles Babbage and Tim Berners-Lee. The UK continues to champion and benefit from this revolution today, where the innovation of British companies continues to help shape the digital age.

The UK remains committed to ensuring that all people can access an open and free internet. We want to avoid excessive control by states or international organisations which would stifle innovation and restrict opportunities to benefit from the information society. We seek to promote and protect rights online, seeing them as indistinguishable from rights offline. People have rights to expression, association and privacy regardless of whether they are exercised across the internet or in the street.

We see the current, multi-stakeholder model of internet governance as the best way of promoting innovation, and thereby economic growth and social development, and of supporting democracy, access to information and public participation in decision making.

The internet is also a vital component of how we tackle serious crime and ensure our citizens' security. We work with industry and civil society groups to minimise online threats. We also equip our police and intelligence agencies with tools to tackle organised crime, child pornography and terrorism online just as we do offline.

In recent years we have seen appalling terrorist attacks and bitter civil wars. Intelligence helps governments respond to those challenges. The choice between privacy and security is a false one; the purpose of the state is the protection of liberty, not the erosion of it. That is why actions of the state should be constrained by the rule of law, subject to rigorous and robust oversight by judges and parliament just as they should be offline.

The UK has one of the strongest systems of checks and balances and democratic accountability for intelligence anywhere in the world. This work is carried out in accordance with a strict legal and policy framework which ensures that activities are authorised, necessary and proportionate.

The UK has a vibrant and diverse media in part due to a long history of welcoming foreign investment and ideas. The famously free British press has benefited greatly from this approach being able to combine its world leading journalism with investment from around the world. I stress this because, this morning, the Russian Federation claimed that the UK does not permit foreign ownership of the media. We do. We welcome it.

The internet is arguably the greatest invention of human kind; it is our library, our forum, our concert hall and market place. It connects us, and allows us all to share in our common inheritance: our culture, our knowledge, our global community. It can help us maximise our prosperity, our creativity, our liberty and our security.