United States Mission to the OSCE

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
Promotion of Pluralism in the New Media
Session III:
Internet regulation in the OSCE area

As delivered by the U.S. delegation in the
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We would like to thank our moderator and introducers for beginning this discussion. The United States supports a free and open Internet environment with minimal regulation by State actors. All OSCE participating States have committed themselves to the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act. These same universal rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, should be protected online as they are protected offline.

Some participating States, however, still restrict, control, manipulate and censor content disseminated via the Internet in a manner that is incompatible with their obligations under international human rights law and OSCE commitments, and creates a broad "chilling effect" on the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression.

Regulation of the Internet should be limited only to instances as allowed by international law, such as those allowed for in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Such instances would include restriction of activities such as incitement to imminent violence or child pornography, copyright infringement, or terrorist activity.

By limiting restrictions on the Internet, we protect this diverse forum where individuals can exercise their freedoms of speech, association, and assembly. The United States supports initiatives for participating States to reaffirm our commitments to these fundamental freedoms, including their exercise on the Internet and in other forms of new media. We trust that participating States will build on the work we have done here these last two days and continue the effort at the Vilnius Ministerial.

Thank you.