

## Good news

- We no longer need to discuss whether freedom of expression (art. 19) applies to internet – at least at the formal level.
- Reaffirmation by OHCHR, WSIS, CoE, EU etc.
- More global examples of using internet to realize online freedom of expression (blogging, issue networking, civil society campaigning, FOIA being applied).
- More state commitments (WSIS)



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“The internet is arguably the most powerful tool we possess for safeguarding freedom of expression and other human rights”.

Viviane Reding, Information Society and Media Commissioner  
(European Commission, June 2005)

Let us remember that information and communication technologies are not only means of exchanging and disseminating information, but crucial tools to improve the enjoyment of human rights such as the freedom of expression, the right to seek, receive and impart information; the right to privacy; the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to education; the right to health; and the right to development.

Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand Ramcharan, Geneva Summit 2003



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## Current challenges

- Information a crucial resource, communication an essential part of development -> critical questions:

Who owns information resources

Who can access

Who can use

Who can control / restrict

- Negotiations on freedoms at many levels; technical, political, legal



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## An example: Internet service providers

- Manage the online public space
- No democratic legitimacy
- Liable ?
- Self- or co-regulation / code of conducts ?
- Privatized police agency ? (IP/ harmful content / data retention)
- Human rights protection –> duty of the state / rule of law



## What to do..

- More active use of HR system (notion of effective protection)
- Right-based approach to all CS activities in this arena
- Get the issues into the national reports to UN, EU, CoE
- Measure compliance
- Get knowledge on HR standards into education system and into local capacity building
- Be more concrete / “translate” the HR standards to specific policy issues



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## More

- Rikke Frank Jørgensen rfj @ humanrights.dk
- Danish Institute for Human Rights  
[www.humanrights.dk](http://www.humanrights.dk)
- Digital Rights [www.digitalrights.dk](http://www.digitalrights.dk)
- European Digital Rights [www.edri.org](http://www.edri.org)
- WSIS HR Caucus:  
<http://www.iris.sgdg.org/actions/smsi/hr-wsis/>



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