



## ***“Global discussion on the future of the Internet – outcomes and implementation”***

### **Message by Krzysztof Szubert**

High Representative of the Prime Minister for European Digital Policy  
and Republic of Poland Plenipotentiary for UN IGF 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Last year I had the pleasure to talk at the EuroDIG and to invite everyone to Katowice, Poland where in December 2021, within the 16<sup>th</sup> United Nations Internet Governance Forum, the global multi-stakeholder community discussed the future of the Internet.

In person as it was, Katowice IGF provided a fully hybrid format for over 300 sessions that were held. We had a record number of almost 10,400 registered participants from 175 countries in all continents of the world. It was our honour to host over 2,700 participants onsite in Katowice. We were joined by nearly 200 ministers, parliamentarians and other high-level leaders from the private sector, civil society, the technical community, and others.

Looking back now, I am proud that we made it possible for numerous policymakers, entrepreneurs, representatives of academia and non-governmental organisations, lots of the youth, thousands of people from all over the world to meet and to debate the opportunities and challenges posed by the Internet, as well as ways to fully exploit Internet's potential.

The Forum accommodated 7 dedicated high-level sessions in the High-level Leaders track that focused on the role of digitisation during the pandemic and its impact on the economic development of the world.

To underline the importance of Internet related laws at national levels, IGF 2021 included a parliamentary track which was a direct continuation of the parliamentary roundtables held at previous IGFs.

Parliamentarians exchanged views on key digital policy challenges such as privacy rights and legitimate use of personal data, balance between freedom of speech and the fight against harmful online content, as well as the governance of artificial intelligence.

**IGF listens to and works with the world's youth.** The aim of the Global Youth IGF Summit held in Katowice was not only to build on the experience of previous editions but also to move one step forward. **Voice of the youth was very well heard and incorporated into the conference outcome.** After all the youth will shape the Internet of the future.

We wish for every discussion, regardless of the level, to have its outcomes that can be put into practice. A positive vision for the future of the Internet must combine fundamental values such as human rights, access and openness, as well as economic considerations - this is just one of the conclusions included in the **Katowice IGF Messages** - a final document issued after last year's Forum. It is a toolbox of guidelines and approaches to Internet governance and digital policy issues.

Ensuring that all people have a meaningful access to the Internet is a global priority and I think we all support this message. On the other hand though, stakeholders need to reflect how people will be able to use the connectivity once they get the access.

The global digital environment changes very rapidly and there is a demand to strengthen the multilateral approach to realistically respond to citizens' needs, build trust and meet the demands within platforms regulation.

The world needs to combat and adapt to climate change and the digitisation provides tools and devices enabling us to use the digital technologies to assess the consequences of actions already taken and to develop new ones.

The development and implementation of cybersecurity standards should take place not only in high-level fora. We need to ensure that the process remains multilateral and multistakeholder at all times.

We must emphasize the human rights-based and multistakeholder approach to cybersecurity which leads to better results, and the key to the success is transparency and inclusion. Responsible use of artificial intelligence algorithms will ensure the protection of human rights.

To support the idea of the open Internet and the worldwide digital dialogue, we need to engage even more in activities that promote multilateralism and a multistakeholder approach. Personally, I use every occasion to bring the Katowice IGF Messages to the attention of decision makers at international fora, as the IGF outcomes and decisions are crucial within other major global initiatives. All these are to support countries and communities to use digital technology to drive down inequality, help inclusivity, tackle climate change, and open-up economic opportunities. **To support these efforts, we need to create strong partnerships between agencies and organisations with a global or regional reach.**

While carrying out tasks or implementing guidance included in the global discussion outcomes, we must ensure that **the technology will always exist and serve the human kind and not vice versa**. In other words, human rights must always be emphasized as of the paramount importance in the global digitization process, which is often called for by the European Union.

To make the world digitally better we need to foster collaborative relationships and boost partnerships between entities that have been created and supported in pursuit of common goals.

Implementing policies resulting from the global discussion outcomes requires **sustainable financing sources – an indispensable element stimulating global digital growth and cooperation**. We need to encourage investments in connectivity solutions and affordable Internet access in developing countries. This can be done by creating funding programmes focused on bringing digital technology to citizens, public administrations and businesses worldwide. There is a need for promoting and supporting co-investment cooperation in high-tech projects and start-ups with research, development and innovations elements in the scope of universal access and meaningful connectivity.

In the contemporary world that constantly moves forward, **we must make sure that no one is left behind**.

It is crucial that we look for a common ground and focus on strategic and vertical activities like building a complementary matrix of actions based on issue areas related to **strategic and vertical directions like infrastructure and connectivity, e-services and open goods, skills, competencies and inclusion, cybersecurity and digital trust, international cooperation and investment and funds**.

Last but not least, it seems impossible not to mention the current situation in Ukraine. The war takes place, to a significant extent, also in the digital sphere. Therefore, it is extremely important to have a coherent, multistakeholder and responsible vision of the future of the Internet as well as a vision for the development of all kinds of Internet-related technologies, both for the benefit of people and the world.

Should you wish to contact me to discuss some issues further please use this link  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/krzysztofszubert/>.

Thank you.