



Press release

May 30th 2011, Paris.

After two days of intense discussion in Paris, a delegation from the e-G8 Forum traveled to Deauville (France) for a dialogue with leaders of the G8 nations.

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For the first time in the history of international summit meetings, the Internet and related issues were placed on the agenda of a meeting of Heads of State and government by France, the presiding country of the G8-G20. Present in Deauville were Angela Merkel (Germany); Stephen Harper (Canada); Barack Obama (United States); Nicolas Sarkozy (France); Silvio Berlusconi (Italy); Naoto Kan (Japan); David Cameron (United Kingdom); and Dmitry Medvedev (Russia).

President Sarkozy had placed the Internet on the agenda of the G8 summit meeting, and had requested that stake-holders of the Internet take up the responsibility of organizing a Forum, in order that all the relevant stake-holders could debate the salient topics before the meeting with the G8 Heads of State and government.

On Thursday May 26th, this ambitious process culminated in a one-hour meeting in Deauville between the G8 leaders and a delegation from the e-G8 Forum. The delegation was led by Maurice Lévy, the Chairman and CEO of Publicis Groupe and Chairman of the e-G8, and comprised Hiroshi Mikitani, CEO of Rakuten; Yuri Milner, CEO of Digital Sky Technologies; Stéphane Richard, CEO of France Telecom-Orange; Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Google; and Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook.

The two-day e-G8 gathering was an opportunity for debate and collective reflection on a wide number of key themes involving the Internet. They included support for innovation; future development of the Internet; freedom of networks; protection of personal data from cybercrime; protection of minors; and, more broadly, the practical impact of virtual and digital applications on fields as varied as economic growth, job creation, democracy, government administration, education, news and health.

The Forum's six plenary sessions and nine workshops featured free and wide-ranging debate. Even when opinions were strongly held, the discussions that ensued were sincere and respectful. The e-G8 Forum adopted the Internet spirit of cooperation and consultation; thus all pre-conditions were united so that reason, as well as imagination, could be placed at the service of the digital future.

"I want to thank all those who worked to make this e-G8 Forum a success, including of course the major world leaders who shifted their schedules in order to attend, the sponsors who graciously accepted to finance it, and all those who showed, by their presence and their contribution to the debates, their interest in the future of the Internet," said **Maurice Lévy**, Chairman of the e-G8. "Those who feared that this first e-G8 had been organized exclusively in order to regulate or restrict the Net have been disproven. Our debates have been open, rich and constructive. Given this success, I think I can say that there will be a second e-G8."

Maurice Lévy requested that the process of preparing the message to be delivered to Deauville by the Forum's delegation should be completely open and transparent. The closing plenary gathering thus reviewed the work of all the sessions that took place during the Forum and defined a number of fundamental themes. The members of the delegation used this as their basis when they drafted their message for Deauville.

From the outset of their discussion with the G8 leaders, members of the delegation emphasized that the Internet is a powerful vector of individual fulfillment, free expression and personal development. Moreover, as a collective tool, the Internet is a positive force for change, capable of renewing the way in which groups and organizations cooperate and act; this was spectacularly confirmed by the movements of the Arab Spring.

The Internet is also a strong economic locomotive, creating wealth and jobs. It has led to a profound reconfiguration of the way in which modern economies function. This digital transformation of every economic sector has been accompanied by a net creation of jobs: for every job that is eliminated, 2.6 new ones are created. Thus the delegation emphasized that in every sector of society, energies that are ready to invest in digital technology need to be freed up to do so.

In order to maximize these benefits, the delegation invited the G8 leaders to ensure proactive policies regarding investment, or regarding the support and encouragement of investment, in order to guarantee all citizens access to an Internet that is free, rapid and safe.

The delegation spoke openly about the existence of unresolved debates among Forum members regarding regulation. These were notably a feature of discussions on intellectual property, software patents, protection of personal privacy, and cybercrime. The key notions of the discussion that the first e-G8 Forum sought to engage and to structure were: protect, without constraining; regulate, without adulterating the fundamental liberty on which the Internet has been built.

The delegation also stressed that exponential growth in the flow of information, and the increasing interconnection of networks, call for action by public authorities in order to ensure the stability, security and development of the physical infrastructure without which the Internet could not exist.

The G8 leaders made very positive comments regarding the e-G8 gathering itself and the main results achieved to date. In their statements about the delegation's messages, the Heads of State and government recognized the Internet's exceptional achievements in terms of economic growth and social change, and its potential for positive impact on democratic processes, government administration, and education.

The first e-G8 Forum was organized at extremely short notice, with a lead time of barely eight weeks. Grasping the importance and the challenge of the meeting, over 1500 stakeholders of the digital ecosystem made the journey to Paris, where they began to work together and to sketch out possible improvements to a future Forum, in order to put the e-G8 fully at the service of the Internet and the digital economy.

The possibility of a second, future e-G8 Forum was discussed; this echoed calls that were made in Paris during the Forum itself.

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