

Rome, 8<sup>th</sup> March

Beyond Dubai: A New Global Agenda for the Internet

Luigi Gambardella Keynote

- First of all, I would like to welcome our foreign guests to Italy and the city of Rome, which is a beautiful backdrop for our debate this morning as I am sure you will all agree. Thank you also to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting us, to L'Alleanza per Internet and Key4Biz for their organization of this event and to all our distinguished speakers and participants. I am very much looking forward to our discussion on this very interesting and topical issue – the post-WCIT environment and the need for a new global Internet agenda.
- ETNO, as many know, participated in the WCIT last year, being a long-standing sector member of the ITU and having submitted a proposal which attracted a lot of attention. As has been well documented, ETNO's proposal was intended to address an issue which is fundamental for the future of our economy and society and for which we have long been campaigning – the sustainability of the Internet ecosystem. However, I do not propose to elaborate further on the details of that proposal, as our intended focus this morning is to take a look at the post-WCIT landscape, with an eye to what happened in Dubai but more importantly, with a view to what lies ahead for us in terms of the Internet agenda and Internet governance at large.
- **My very positive take-away from Dubai was that WCIT served to awaken the interest of many in the Internet governance landscape and the issues that arose as a result of the Treaty talks.** This can only be a good thing – increased stakeholder participation, more voices, ideas and better awareness will help move this debate forward in a positive way.
- Addressing the outcome of Dubai, I think it is fair to say that **we are all still in a process of digesting what happened and assessing the impact of the WCIT.** Within Europe, much discussion is taking place, not only with the European Commission but also at national level. Several European countries are conducting legal reviews and consultations on the final Treaty text. It is very possible that some countries may choose to sign up to the Treaty at a later stage as a result. I am quite sure that the various ITU regions across the globe are also undertaking their own reviews to assess the position some find themselves in, whereby they see a split in signatories. Also, it would be important to fully understand the validity and force of the revised Treaty amongst the ITU countries, be they signatories or not. In this respect, I wait with a great interest the outcome of a series of assessments that have been launched also by the EU Commission by way of example on the consistency of the Treaty to the EU acquis.. **Why might later accession to the Treaty occur?** Well, some would argue, and in some respects it is my personal view too, that **the Treaty text is not as harmful as**

**has been depicted by some media outlets.** A careful review of the actual wording will show that there are many positive provisions. Let me highlight a few:

- As regards mobile roaming, Member States are now asked to foster measures to ensure that authorized operating agencies provide free-of-charge, transparent, and accurate information to end users on international telecommunication services. Member States must promote competition in the provision of international roaming services. International roaming of a satisfactory quality is encouraged for visiting users, as is cooperation to avoid and mitigate inadvertent roaming charges in border zones. As is the case with many of the Treaty provisions, the language was carefully crafted to allow sufficient flexibility to Member States to manage national conditions.
- Through other provisions, Member States are encouraged to adopt energy-efficiency and e-waste best practices and to promote access for persons with disabilities. Member States are also invited to introduce a globally harmonised national number for emergency services.
- The point being – **there is much to be proud of in this Treaty text** and few could deny that these provisions would help bring about a better environment and facilities for consumers. For this reason, Dr Touré and the ITU team should be congratulated for their efforts.
- Clearly, the US (and indeed some countries within the EU) had a fundamental issue with an extension of scope of this Treaty and the inclusion of the Internet – or any words alluding to Internet functions – in the final text. That’s not to say that I necessarily share these concerns – you should know that the definition of telecoms in the EU clearly covers IP interconnection and given that the telecoms environment is clearly moving that way, we feel that this was **a missed opportunity** to address the associated issues and concerns. We cannot be blind to the **political undertones** of the WCIT debate – for the US, the Internet is an important national resource which is used globally and delivers great economic benefits, and we must respect the US position of defending that.
- We cannot deny that all of this has left us in a somewhat difficult position and some issues remain to be addressed. **ETNO continues to believe that the Internet sustainability issue is one of tremendous importance for our sector** and we need to find common solutions. However, in line with Commissioner Kroes’s statement of last week, I would tend to push back on this notion of a **digital cold war** – a dramatic and provocative phrase that gets us nowhere. If nothing else, if one were to accept this state of affairs, where would we go from there? It’s a dead-end alley and I feel we have to be more optimistic than that.
- Of fundamental importance is the **need to respect the fact that national differences exist, political regimes differ and there are varying levels of competition in our markets. Indeed, industry does not speak with one voice**, as we saw at the WCIT. Acceptance of that fact is the first step. We do not all think as one and no one region

can impose their views on another. Nor should we demonize those countries that have signed the Treaty. For some of the signatories, the benefits (some of the positive things in the Treaty about which I spoke) simply outweighed the negatives and we should respect that. That does not make those countries 'the enemy'. I know for example that Brazil, a signatory of Treaty, felt strongly about the positive impact of the roaming provisions.

- **In terms of moving forward**, some of this debate will carry over to the ITU World Telecoms Policy Forum in May when Internet governance issues are clearly in scope. I would hope however that we can all come to that meeting with **open minds** and that every stakeholder has the opportunity to play a role in the debate – Governments, industry and civil society. Another positive takeaway from the WCIT was that the role of civil society played an important part – the ITU made excellent strides in opening up its debate to that segment of stakeholders, let's continue to build on that and ensure that their voices are heard as full transparency and engagement in the discussion is paramount. Indeed, there has been **a growing acceptance of the need for multi-stakeholder dialogue and enhanced co-operation over recent years and that is good progress.**
- **I believe that the ITU plays a very positive role in many areas of the telecoms/Internet policy debate** and it does important work that should not be overlooked – spectrum is one such example. The experience built up over its long history is a key asset of the organization, as is its strong leadership under Dr Touré. I am often amazed at the breadth of issues that the ITU covers, the global reach that it has, the positive strides it has made in helping to bridge the digital divide, to encourage broadband growth in the regions and particularly within developing countries. No other organization matches that breadth, although we know that ISOC does excellent work too in some of those areas. Therefore, the ITU should continue with its good work, supported by the Member States. If anything, the WCIT helped to define the role of the ITU – I refer to, for example, the distinction drawn between the ITU and ICANN and underlined by both Fadi Chehade and Hamadoun Touré at the meeting.
- WCIT was a learning experience for us all and I sincerely hope that we can all come to forthcoming meetings - WPTF and beyond – with a greater understanding and acceptance of different opinions, and that we can find ways to work more closely together to resolve our needs.
- I have not lost hope, as I am a positive person, that constructive dialogue can be held and solutions can be found. **The Internet is an important asset for us all and we must find ways to allow all actors to continue to have a role and to benefit from its growth and success.**