



**Report on the Activities of the Chairperson-in-Office
918th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 21 June 2012**

- The Dublin Conference on Internet Freedom took place in Dublin Castle on Monday and Tuesday this week, and it provided an excellent opportunity for debate and dialogue among the 280 registered participants from participating States, civil society, academia, and the ICT industry.
- Following an address by the Chairperson-in-Office Eamon Gilmore, there was a high-level panel discussion on how to ensure the internet remains open global and public forum for exercising human rights and fundamental freedoms. Panelists included OSCE RFoM Dunja Mijatovic, Frank La Rue (UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression), Nils Muiznieks the new Council of Europe Commissioner for Human rights, Thomas Melia (US Dept of State) and the Dutch Human Rights Ambassador Lionel Veer.
- The working sessions contained expert panelists in order to have a broad ranging debate on issues such as challenges to freedom of expression and freedom of the media, Internet governance and human rights, and the use of social media and social networks.
- In the organisation of the event, we experimented with a slightly different format to the usual OSCE roundtable discussion. The sessions contained five or six expert panelists who engaged in a debate and took questions and comments from the floor as well as from a live twitter feed that was visible from the hall. The conference was live streamed over the internet and a recorded version will appear on the conference website in the coming days. Our objective was to create an environment which would allow for a free-flowing and well-informed exchange of opinions between the multiple stakeholders that are involved in Internet freedom issues, and I think that we achieved that goal. Indeed some of the ideas could be considered in the context of the Review of human dimension events.
- One message that emerged very strongly from the debate is the clear recognition that our OSCE commitments apply across all mediums and regardless of technologies. Indeed in PC Decision 633 we have already committed to ‘take action to ensure that the Internet remains an open and public forum for freedom of opinion and expression, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’.

- I would like to thank all participating States for engaging in this complex and often confusing subject which nevertheless demands the closest attention due to the centrality of the internet to the way we now live our lives.
- June Zeitlin, the Special Representative of the CiO on Gender Issues is in Kazakhstan this week attending an expert workshop on national human rights institutions and gender equality, and will also meet with government officials and parliamentarians. She will be visiting Turkmenistan on a country visit next week (23rd to 28th June 2012).