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Event | 01.10.2015

Internet as a Commons

Public Space in the Digital Age

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This conference is organised in cooperation with Commons Network and Heinrich Böll Foundation. **INTRODUCTION** The Internet as a whole has become an important part of our global public sphere. Internet provides access to a wealth of information and knowledge, and the possibility to participate, create and communicate. This public space made up of internet infrastructures is increasingly threatened from two sides; by the centralization and commercialization through the dominant positions held by giant telecom and Internet companies, as well as by an increasing trend in state regulation and censorship of the net. This poses important questions about how we choose to organize and regulate our digital societies, and how Internet governance models can be developed and implemented to ensure fair and democratic participation. When it comes to the future of the Internet, a key discussion is one of infrastructures; who owns, runs and controls them. The question of regulation, and who oversees the regulators, is made complicated by the transnational nature of the net. As much as people expect a broadly and equitably accessible Internet open to diversity, we are, slowly but surely, moving away from it. Monopolization of Internet infrastructures and services by companies such as Facebook and Google has gone hand in hand with privacy intrusions, surveillance and the unbounded use of personal data for commercial gain. As we all interact in these centralized commercial platforms that monetize our actions we see an effective enclosure and manipulation of our public spaces. Decentralization and democratization of the Internet infrastructure and activities is essential to keep a free, open and democratic Internet for all to enjoy equitably. But can the “small is beautiful”-idea be compatible with the building of state-of-the-art successful infrastructure in the future? The debates around net neutrality, infrastructure neutrality and Internet monopolies reflect the important choices that are to be made. It is essential the EU formulates a comprehensive vision on the internet that addresses the protection of civil liberties such as free speech and privacy, but also the growing commercialization of our digital public spaces and the commodification of personal data with the effect of the market encroaching on all aspects of our daily lives. Only then can it make relevant interventions regarding the Internet and its governance. Let´s discuss how to re-decentralize and reclaim the Internet for all. **PROGRAMME**

15:00-15:30
Introduction
With opening remarks from
Michel Reimon, Greens/EFA Group
Sophie Bloemen and

professor **Yochai Benkler**, Professor at the Harvard Law School and co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University

15:30-16:45
1st panel, The big picture

What, if anything, in the current model of Internet Governance is clashing with a decentralized, resilient internet viewed as a common good? And what steps should be made by policymakers to foster the best environment for decentralized, community managed projects to grow?

Participants:
Renata Avila, Human rights lawyer and Open Internet Aktivist
Aral Balkan, Designer and Social Entrepreneur
Jennifer Baker, EU Tech Policy Correspondent at the Register
Nicole Dewandre, European Commission, DG Connect
Moderator: **Max Andersson**, Greens/EFA Group

16:45-17:00
Coffee break

17:00–18:15
Decentralised infrastructure: Examples

What examples of local and decentralized projects do we have today and what are the obstacles they face?

Participants:
Edmon Chung, Director of DotAsia Organisation
Robbert Mica, Enterpreneur, Pager & Outernet
Olivier Schulbaum, Co-Founder of Goteo.org
Leandro Navarro, Professor Computer Network at University of Catalunya, community network activist
Estelle Massé, Policy Analyst at Access
Moderator: **Julia Reda**, Pirate Party / Greens EFA Group

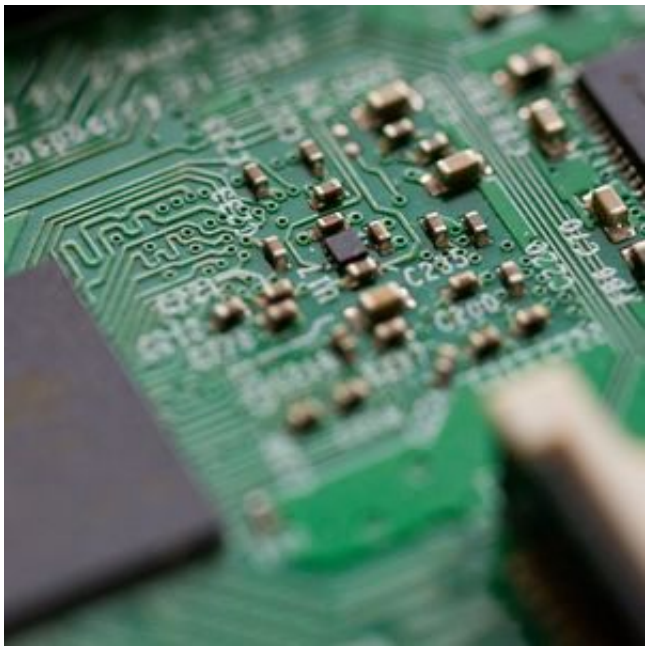
18:15–18:30
Conclusions and final remarks

18:30
Reception

Interpretation: English – French - German

Recommended

chris-ried



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Redek Kozak



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