

## **The Czech Republic input for OHCHR's thematic report on UNHRC Resolution 47/23 on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights**

The Czech Republic hereby sends reactions to the following questions selected from the OHCHR call for input questionnaire.

- *New and emerging technologies – their impact on HR; related risks and opportunities*
- *What are duties and responsibilities of standard setting organizations and their stakeholders in effectively integrating human rights consideration in technical standard-setting processes for new and emerging digital technologies?*
- *Which standard-setting processes and organizations are particularly relevant for safeguarding and promoting human rights in the context of new and emerging digital technologies?*
- *What are common obstacles to effectively integrating human rights considerations in technical standard-setting processes for new and emerging digital technologies?*
- *What are the challenges faced by various stakeholders in their meaningful and sustainable participation in technical standard-setting processes for new and emerging digital technologies?*

The digital domain is the extension of our physical existence, with many of our private, civic and consumer activities being or going to be transferred into the digital space. With the massive volumes of data being produced, stored, processed, and utilised, topics like encryption and anonymity have become key enablers for the implementation of human rights framework.

Thus, we are convinced that it is necessary to apply human rights-based approach during the whole life cycle of telecommunication/ICT technologies, including design, development, deployment, use and disposal, as part of a human-centric vision of the digital transformation, including in international standard-setting processes. Therefore, we believe it is necessary that UNHRC is effectively involved and continues updating its agenda with respect to this new dimension of human existence.

We also strongly hold that the question of human rights in the new and emerging digital technologies is an initiative that should involve and interconnect stakeholders across the whole UN system. Silos of individual and separate entities need to be broken down. New shared processes and UN entities teaming together should be considered, as removing duplicities brings about higher efficiency, effectiveness, and synchronisation within the UN System in general, and fosters the spirit of collaboration between nations in a very real and practical way. It also has the potential to remove major concerns about the limits of the mandates of different UN entities that has lately hindered effective collaboration within global organizations. Technically oriented entities (such as the ITU) need to concentrate on technical aspects as the complexity of new technologies and their societal impacts are growing exponentially. The environment they are able to build with respect to human rights aspects of the standardization of new technologies will always be very limited if done only internally.

While talking about standard setting processes, we should keep in mind that not only we need to safeguard and promote human rights in the context of new technologies but also that new technologies can help to protect human rights. Therefore, it is necessary to update and/or create new standard-setting processes and standards, either technical and/or legal, on the regional and international level.

Growing complexity of technologies and their societal impacts also requires, and at the same time provides, the opportunity that the whole society be involved in the standard-setting process to maintain broad relevance of this process and enable the broad adoption of its outputs.

Unfortunately, both in developing and developed world, we face a problem of low involvement of academia, private sector including SMEs, non-governmental organisations and in some cases even government experts, in these processes . Therefore, relevant UN entities might consider launching a programme or building a platform to encourage and facilitate greater involvement of all sectors of society. Single place for information, directory of points of contacts and perhaps a space for joining public consultations should be considered.

Another aspect is that the lack of transparency and knowledge of how UN-level processes can have impact on their business is a major barrier for companies to be able to see any real benefits in their participation in this kind of processes. It is necessary to ensure that the opportunities, benefits, and possible ways of being involved in these processes are clearly communicated to the private sector, so that their business strategies continue to be both profitable and respectful to the societies/consumers.