

PRESS RELEASE

UNESCO and media regulators form global network to coordinate regulation of digital platforms

Paris, 19 June 2024 – Media regulators from around the world gathered for the first time this week in Dubrovnik, at the invitation of UNESCO and Croatia. This unprecedented meeting resulted in the creation of a global network of regulators, to be hosted by UNESCO, which will coordinate the international response to the challenges posed by digital platforms.

"Faced with global platforms, we need global responses. Thanks to the creation of this global network of regulators, hosted by UNESCO and already supported by participants from 124 countries, we will meet the major challenges posed by digital technology at the scale needed. This joint action will be based on one guiding principle: to protect freedom of expression and human rights", said **Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO.**

The creation of this network is a direct response to the first-ever global [Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms](#) released by UNESCO in November 2023, a roadmap for governments, regulatory bodies, digital companies and citizens to define and implement balanced and effective measures. In 2023, several [major regional and global regulators called for](#) the development of consistent approaches to regulation worldwide, aligned with UNESCO's objectives to safeguard freedom of expression and access to information in the context of digital platform governance.

The three-day forum, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and organized by UNESCO and the Croatian Agency for Electronic Media, brought together participants from 124 countries, including representatives from 87 national and regional networks of regulators, as well as digital platforms, governments, think tanks, self-regulators, electoral managerial bodies, and civil society.

They committed to working together to implement the UNESCO Guidelines by co-funding a *Global Forum of Regulators*, hosted by UNESCO, which will meet regularly, along with civil society, to coordinate their efforts for better governance of digital platforms. With panel discussions and side events dedicated to countering disinformation and hate speech, protecting human rights, equipping the public with media literacy skills, and the technical challenges related to regulation, the Dubrovnik meeting was a key first step in allowing regulators to learn from each other's experiences and to plan their implementation of the UNESCO Guidelines in their jurisdictions.

Tackling online disinformation and hate speech

Despite the many benefits of social media, multiple UNESCO studies have demonstrated the serious risks posed by the spread of online disinformation and hate speech, as well as new forms of harassment and violence, and a decline in young people's mental health.

At the same time, social media has become most people's daily source of information, surpassing print, radio and TV. In November 2023, UNESCO unveiled the findings of an [opinion survey](#) commissioned from IPSOS of 8000 people in 16 countries due to hold elections in 2024, representing all regions of the world.

87% of survey-respondents were worried disinformation would have a major impact on the upcoming elections in their country, and 67% had encountered hate speech on social media. 89% of respondents agreed that “governments and regulators should be able to require social media platforms to put in place trust and safety measures during election campaigns to protect the integrity of elections”.

The UNESCO [Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms](#) aim to prevent these risks. They were the product of an unprecedented world-wide consultation that received over 10,000 comments from stakeholders.

About UNESCO

With 194 Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization contributes to peace and security by leading multilateral cooperation on education, science, culture, communication and information. Headquartered in Paris, UNESCO has offices in 54 countries and employs over 2300 people. UNESCO oversees more than 2000 World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks; networks of Creative, Learning, Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; and over 13 000 associated schools, university chairs, training and research institutions. Its Director-General is Audrey Azoulay.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed” – UNESCO Constitution, 1945.

More information: www.unesco.org

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