The international governance of the internet

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Introduction

The internet is a relatively new and growing aspect of international political-economic affairs. The last 10–15 years have witnessed the frequently controversial emergence and development of a new global(ising) institutional landscape for Internet governance. An actor keen on expanding its presence on the international political stage, the EU has shown itself keen to develop a prominent position in the international institutional landscape of the Internet. This chapter provides an outline of some of the main findings of a recent body of academic research aimed at explaining the role and significance of the EU as an international actor in Internet governance.

Inevitably, the EU’s ability to exert its preferences and influence on internet governance has shown mixed results. The literature suggests that policy activity is most clearly evidenced in three contexts. The first context is a general one: as the internet has increased in global political importance, the EU has made a number of general strategic statements outlining its position on the evolving landscape and, in the process, establishing itself as an important commentator on internet policy matters. Whilst not exclusively for ‘external’ consumption, these statements set out key approaches – and actions informed by them – that the EU is likely to pursue in the short to medium term future. The second and third contexts are institution-specific. The EU has engaged to a very significant degree with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), one of the earliest – and arguably the most high profile – global governance body for the internet to have emerged to date. The EU’s presence has also been noteworthy in the newer Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a multi-stakeholder deliberative body formed in 2005 and whose performance and potential continuation were reviewed in 2010.

The chapter is structured as follows. The next section outlines a number of key concepts in the literature which have been utilised to provide a better understanding of the role of the EU in the evolving international institutional landscape of the internet. Thereafter, brief treatment is given to explanatory work which has emerged in respect of the some of the most prominent Internet policy activities with which the EU has engaged at the global level. Here focus is trained on three areas: early action taken by the EU to establish itself in an unfamiliar institutional and policy landscape; the degree to which the EU has been able to develop coherent policy positions on internet governance; and the extent to which its involvement in the international
institutional context of internet governance has impacted on it ‘domestically’. The final section of the chapter draws together some of the main findings of the research conducted to date and suggests a number of areas around which a future research agenda might be formulated.

**Review of theoretical approaches**

Whilst there is a plethora of work on the role of the US in international regimes and institutions, this has not been the case until very recently for the EU (in terms of the quantity of work, anyway). There is even less work on the role of the EU in international internet institutions; mainly because of the relative newness of the EU’s activity in this area compared to more established regimes and institutions, although much work does exist on how the EU has shaped the different dimensions of the global and regional information society agenda (Venturelli, 2002; Jordana, 2002); including telecommunications (Thatcher, 2001, Humphreys, 2002; Humphreys and Simpson, 2005, 2008; Simpson, 2009; see Singh, 2008 for a comparative analysis of the EU and US) and broadcasting (Humphreys, 1996, 2009; Harcourt, 2006). There is also now an abundance of work on the internet more broadly and in particular in relation to its governance and the actors shaping the internet governance milieu (Franda, 2001; Mueller, 2002, 2010; Kleinwächter, 2008; Benedek et al., 2008; Mathiason, 2009; Drezner, 2004, 2007; Massango, 2008; Paré, 2003; Kogut, 2002; Goldsmith and Wu, 2008; Bernstorff, 2003).

Initial work on this topic focused more generally (less theoretically) on the EU’s role in shaping the early global internet architecture or it provided a comparison between the EU and US positions on the internet (see Biukovic, 2002; Leib, 2002; Kielbowicz, 2002; Werle, 2002). Works that followed made an attempt to build on this (Halpin and Simpson, 2002; Christou and Simpson, 2007a) through utilising the regulatory state and governance literature in order to answer the question of what the EU was promoting in internet governance at all levels, including that of the international realm. To this end, it did not theorise or conceptualise the EU’s role as such, but how the internal dynamic and external context impacted on the EU’s internet governance initiatives and more specific directives (e-commerce) and regulations (dot eu).

Subsequent work (Christou and Simpson, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b) sought to add to ‘what’ the European Union is promoting normatively and develop ‘how’ and ‘why’ the EU has acted, and indeed how international institutions have impacted on the EU in its construction of internet governance policy and execution of process. *Inter alia*, this work drew extensively from the International Relations (IR) literature that has explored: strategic norm manipulation in international institutions (Schimmelfennig, 2003) and the broader literature that has emerged which conceptualises EU actorness (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006, 2008); the EU’s role in international regimes (Smith and Elgström, 2008) and international organisations (Jørgensen, 2009); and the EU as a strategic actor in international politics (Smith and Xie, 2009). It has also utilised frameworks that conceptualise how (i.e. resources, mechanisms and tools available) international organisations implement policies, rules or codes of conduct on regional bodies and nations states (Joachim et al., 2008); and indeed, literature that has sought to theorise how international organisations can shape EU norms, thus focusing on downloading rather than uploading (Costa and Jørgensen, 2010, 2012). We briefly elaborate on each of these dimensions below.

**Governance and regulation**

In analysing the EU’s promotion of governance in international internet governance institutions, the focus has been on drawing out and attempting to characterise the type of governance the EU has favoured. Analysts have, in particular, sought to sketch out and provide a conceptual map that encapsulates different forms of public and private governance (see Table 24.1 from
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| Governance: Where the state sets both formal and substantive conditions for rule-making | Governance: Where state involvement is limited to setting formal conditions for rule-making with private actors then shaping the content. | Governance: Involves industry-setting, monitoring and enforcing standards in the knowledge that if it fails, state intervention could be imminent, that is, self-regulation in the shadow of the state | Governance: Self-regulation can occur in a purely voluntary way with no direct state stimulus or intervention |

Christou and Simpson, 2009) in order to capture and uncover the nuance in what the EU has promoted over time, and indeed to ascertain if and how the EU’s projections have changed over time, and in what direction.

In doing this, scholars have drawn from a variety of sources on governance, regulation and self-regulation (Börzel 2010; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006; Eberlein and Kerwer, 2004; Jachtenfuchs, 2001; Newman and Bach, 2001; Ronit, 2005; Price and Verhulst, 2000, 2005) specifically, and in the International Political Economy (IPE) literature more broadly on the regulatory (Jayasuriya, 2001; Scharpf, 1996, 1997, 1999; Thatcher, 2001; Moran, 2002; Majone, 1994, 1996) and post-regulatory state (Scott, 2002, 2004). This has proved a fruitful avenue for both understanding and explaining the basis of the EU’s actions within international organisations (in identity as well as material terms), and indeed why it has promoted certain ‘models’ (co-regulation/sub-contracting) over others within these organisations.

The EU as an actor

In order to understand and explain the EU’s ‘actorness’ and thus influence in the global telecommunications and internet sectors (Christou and Simpson, 2010a), scholars have utilised a broad analytical framework that draws on the literature on EU actorness (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; 2008) but also more specific work on the EU in international organisations (Jørgensen, 2009, forthcoming 2012) and the EU as a strategic actor (Smith and Xie, 2009). Thus they have attempted to unravel the context within which the EU is acting and more specifically, to investigate the opportunities that have enabled or constrained EU influence in the external environment of events, ideas and power; the capability of the EU to act (formulating and agreeing policy) in terms of the EU internal context and by virtue of its own identity, and finally; flowing from opportunity and capability, the EU’s ability to influence and shape (or not) governance in relation to the internet and telecommunications.

EU modes of engagement

Analysis of the EU’s modes of engagement in global internet governance institutions has drawn from theories in IR which have sought to analyse actor behaviour in international institutions and more specific work that theorises how the EU behaves in international regimes. Both, essentially, draw on the ‘institutionalism’ literature (rationalist, historical and sociological), and have, in general, focused on the following concepts in providing a basis for analysis:

- **Strategic Mode** – whereby the EU acts through a logic of consequences (bargaining mode and hard power). Such an approach is focused on enhancing actor information, reducing uncertainty and mediating preferences. Rules are then established through negotiation, which members are expected to adhere to, with ‘the possibility of defection if the calculus shifts or if conditions in the broader global arena make this apparently profitable’ (Smith and Elgström, 2008: 6). Much work on principal-agent dynamics in international organisations has been underpinned by the rationalist logic, with a focus in particular on the control and cooperative aspects within this relationship; and especially the extent and conditions under which ‘agents’, such as the European Commission, can act as policy entrepreneurs.

- **Normative Mode** – whereby the EU acts through a logic of appropriateness (problem-solving mode and soft power). This approach takes the focus away from the simple projection of preferences by actors and how such preferences can be secured through rational calculus, to ask questions of ‘the terms on which actors enter into regimes, the ways in which they
construct them or construct themselves within them, and the ways in which regimes may lose their strength because of an erosion of underlying principles such as trust, legitimacy and shared expectations among their members' (Smith and Elgström, 2008: 10). Also significant is the transformative effect of institutions – again neglected by rationalist approaches with a focus on institutions as management or regulatory devices and where preferences remain fixed. Here, much work has focused on how actors can use international fora and other arenas to advocate, legitimise and diffuse alternative norms through communicative rather than coercive action (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

- **Rhetorical Action** – where the EU can operationalise the instrumental use of argument to persuade others of its claims. Rhetorical action, therefore, involves a process of rationally driven norm manipulation. Very importantly, those actors with preferences which are in line with, but not identical to, institutional norms have a chance to ‘add cheap legitimacy to their position’ (Schimmelfennig, 2001: 63).

**The role of the EU (leader/mediator/bridge-builder)**

Analysis of the EU’s role has focused predominantly on the EU as a leader, mediator, and bridge-builder. A leadership role can be defined as the ability of an actor to shape and direct others towards its desired goal over a period of time (Underdal, 1994: 178; see also Young, 1991). Important in terms of leadership traits is the leader’s vision and ability to persuade others (followers) of that vision in the appropriate institutional context. This latter point is significant as the role the EU plays, as already stated, is contextually determined with actors ‘behaving in the way they think is appropriate in the particular context at hand’ (Smith and Elgström, 2008: 17).

The EU can also play the role of mediator or bridge-builder in international fora, the main traits of which are an ability to build trust and consensus in order to arrive at solutions that cannot be found if other actors are left to their own devices. In this sense, the EU does not necessarily have to be a leader to be effective; it can also be successful as an actor that can offer alternatives on which others can compromise (Smith and Elgström, 2008: 18–19; Elgström, 2003, 2006, 2007).

**The impact of international organisations on the EU**

The work on policy implementation focuses on how IO’s can enforce rules, legislation and codes through several means. First, in terms of coercive means such as monitoring and sanctions; second, and from a managerial perspective, through problem solving and capacity building, rule interpretation and transparency. The dominant mode here is that of actors engaged in a cooperative venture, in which performance that seems for some reason unsatisfactory represents a problem to be solved by mutual consultation and analysis, rather than an offence to be punished’ (Chayes and Chayes, 1995: 303; 1993); third, through normative means, where the authority of IOs is a vital resource. Power is, thus, not a matter of material but rather of intersubjective factors. The authority of IOs flows from the control over information and expertise (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999: 708) but also because of the fact that IOs are perceived as rational, neutral and impartial (see also Boli, 1999). The perception that IOs are rational and impartial actors can in part be attributed to the laws, rules, procedures that form the basis of their existence but is also reinforced by IOs themselves who ‘present themselves as impersonal, technocratic, and neutral – as not exercising power but instead of serving others’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999: 708).

Finally, the work on the influence of international institutions on the EU utilises conceptual work (see Costa and Jørgensen, 2010, and forthcoming 2012) on mechanisms of influence and
facilitating conditions, as well as measuring impact, the latter of which draws heavily from the well-established Europeanisation literature which posits four main types of impact: inertia (lack of influence by the international institution), absorption (some influence of the international institution on the EU, but only up to the point of adaptation), transformation (indicates a deeper influence of international institutions on the EU, both in terms of policies, policy making, behavior and institutions) and retrenchment (is a situation in which the EU reacts against a particular international institution, at least for some time) (Radaelli, 2002: 116).

Locations, performance and explanation

*Early international institutionalisation of internet governance – establishing the EU’s presence from a ‘standing start’*

The growth of the internet until the mid to late 1990s took place, for the most part, under the EU’s international ‘policy radar’. A number of reasons lie behind this. First, and most obviously, the internet emerged outside the EU. Whilst there is strong evidence that the EU was monitoring carefully developments in US audiovisual and telecommunications policy, not least the global ambitions of both, the development of the internet was arguably viewed with passing, rather than strategic, interest (European Commission, 1994). This quickly changed by the late 1990s, by which time negotiations on what eventually came to into being as ICANN were in full swing. Second, the EU’s technological perspective on future electronic communications networks was articulated in projects around so-called Integrated Broadband Communications, whose protocols were different from those that underpinned the internet’s functionality (Leib, 2002). Third, the EU had concentrated a considerable degree of policy energy through the 1980s and early 1990s on its own internal internationalisation project in electronic network communications, focused on broadcasting (see Harcourt, 2006; Humphreys, 1996) and, in particular, telecommunications (see Thatcher, 2001; Goodman, 2006). The ‘EU-isation’ of both these areas was a far from uncontroversial project which highlighted many of the core issues at the heart of the wider European integration project.

In the process leading to the creation of ICANN, the EU was, therefore, something of an outsider. An illustration of this was the rejection, by the US government, of the International Ad-Hoc Committee’s proposal for a global internet addressing body to be headquartered in Switzerland, largely due to the presence of the International Telecommunication Union. The proposed IAHC arrangement would arguably have presented the EU with a considerably less challenging institutional environment than the one that eventually transpired. Here, in the subsequent negotiations that led to the US headquartered ICANN, the EU, despite significant lobbying efforts, played a minor role compared to the US government and US-based internet technical interests (see Mueller, 2002). Two exceptions to this were the creation of a Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to ICANN and a Uniform Dispute Resolution Procedure (the latter drawing on the practice of the World Intellectual Property Organization), both of which the EU was in favour. Once established, however, the EU made strong efforts to create a prominent presence and position of influence for itself in ICANN. These efforts proved to a considerable degree successful. The EU drew on its growing international policy reputation in electronic communications, producing a landmark statement on internet governance which declared dissatisfaction, *inter alia*, with the perceived dominance of US interests in ICANN and urging close monitoring of the private interest governance of the Corporation that was taking shape operationally (European Council of Ministers, 2000). However, rather than reject ICANN, the EU took significant pains to engage with it. In this process, there is evidence that
the EU employed rhetorical action to manipulate key ICANN norms for its own strategic benefit (Christou and Simpson, 2007b).

First, in respect of ICANN’s self-regulatory modus-operandi accompanied with an advisory-only presence for states exercised through the GAC, the EU argued for a shift in the direction of co-regulation. It is important to stress that, by this, the EU did not wish to replace self-regulation by joint state internet regulation at the global level. Rather, it wished to see a techno-functional system in place, whose fundamental public policy parameters were guarded and guided by joint state action through a more influential, though still relatively light touch, GAC. As the first decade of ICANN proceeded, this has indeed transpired, though for more prosaic reasons than the arguments and suasion of the EU. Most clearly, the realisation among ICANN’s technical elite of the public policy and political ramifications of the Corporation’s work and the political complexity arising thereby explains the change.

Second, at a much more functional level, at the inception of ICANN, the EU moved quickly to secure for itself a legitimate presence on the GAC through putting forward a proposal to create its own internet top level domain, dot eu. Through this action, the EU aimed to manipulate, though not radically, the existing naming system norm of ICANN where domains were either ‘generic’ (related, broadly speaking to organisational entities and activities of various kinds) or ‘country code’ (based on single nation state identities). Through securing strong support from its own ‘domestic’ business community, and complying, for the most part, with the governance modus operandi of TLDs prescribed by ICANN, the EU was able to secure dot eu as the first ‘internationalised’ country code TLD. As a consequence, the European Commission obtained a ‘legitimate’ presence on the ICANN’s GAC, creating something of a ‘policy bridgehead’ to try to influence the evolution of the Corporation thereafter (see Christou and Simpson, 2006).

The EU as a coherent policy actor in the internet’s international institutional landscape

The EU’s considerable policy activity in the internet’s international institutional landscape has, its achievements aside, also shown up the distinct difficulty which it has faced in securing and presenting a coherent policy position on internet governance matters. The EU’s intra-institutional mechanics provide the route to understanding the problem (Christou and Simpson, 2010a). At Council of Ministers level an important early landmark was the establishment of the Internet Informal Group (IIG), influenced to a considerable degree by the European Commission’s then Information Society Directorate-General. The IIG contains member state GAC members and is chaired by the Commission. Importantly, it serves as a discussion and information sharing forum only. More formally, the EU created the High Level Group on Internet Governance (HLGIG) to develop strategic policy positions among member states. However, it is important to note that the HLGIG is under no formal procedural requirement to coordinate member state positions. In practice, the HLGIG has acted in instances where it considers it important that the EU aims to put forward a single coherent position. Key policy examples here have been in respect of the creation of the Joint Project Agreement (JPA) in 2005 between the US government and ICANN and the 2010 review of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) (authors’ interview, 2010). This lack of legal remit has created both internal coordination and external perception problems for the EU. The HLGIG has ‘always been wary of the Commission driving the internet agenda’ (authors’ interview, 2010). For EU negotiating partners and observers, there has frequently been difficulty in establishing precisely what the official EU position is on a particular internet policy matter. A further complication arises from the intervention of the EU presidency, which has articulated the official EU position at key junctures, such as at the 2005
World Summit on the Information Society and in respect of the recently agreed Affirmation of Commitments between the US government and ICANN, effectively replacing the aforementioned JPA. The EU’s lack of coherence has also meant that there is no formal EU representative on ICANN’s GAC. Interestingly, the European Commission sits on the GAC in respect of its responsibilities related to the governance of dot eu only (authors’ interview, 2010). The GAC also contains representation from individual EU member states, creating further scope for the articulation of divergent opinions, unlikely to serve the interests of presenting a single EU message to institutional counterparts.

Impact of the internet’s international institutional landscape on the EU

A key aspect of the EU’s engagement with the international institutional landscape of the internet concerns the degree of impact which has occurred on the development of the EU’s own perspective on the internet. Very much an under-researched area of EU internet policy, a significant finding has been that the degree of impact of an institution and its policies developed at the global level tends to be in part a function of the degree to which the EU has been able to assert itself in the policy context in question: impact is thus a dialectical process (Christou and Simpson, 2010b). The European Commission has also been a key entity in any processes of policy absorption that the EU has been involved in. On the one hand, it has been able to act as an amplifier of international internet policy agendas ‘domestically’. Through its work in proposing new policy positions and in producing regular assessments of the development of the internet governance landscape, the Commission has functioned as a promoter and an ‘educator’, internally and externally. On the other hand, the Commission has played a key role as a policy filtration agent, in the process allowing the EU to adapt, where it felt necessary, global policy agendas to the idiosyncrasies of its own domestic governance system. This is clearly illustrated in the case of the dot eu TLD, whose system of governance, as noted above, bears the key hallmarks of ICANN’s not-for-profit, private interest self-regulation but is also framed by a set of public policy rules, the guardianship of which lies with the Commission acting in the public interest (Christou and Simpson, 2006).

Two further relatively prominent examples illustrate the significant impact of the international institutional landscape of the internet on the EU. First, as noted above, once particularly wary of the modus operandi of the GAC in respect of its relationship with the ICANN board, evidence suggests the EU is now much more comfortable with the idea that ICANN undertakes the day-to-day running of the internet and the GAC gives policy advice to it when appropriate. This has no doubt been helped by the fact that ICANN is much more willing to defer to the GAC’s position on internet governance matters with a strong public policy dimension (Kleinwächter, 2008). This notwithstanding, there is also some evidence of an ongoing difference of opinion between the European Commission and the HLGIG on the matter (European Commission, 2009 and authors’ interviews, 2009, 2010), the Commission being much more critical of the GAC.

Second, there is considerable evidence that the multi-stakeholder model of the IGF has been accepted, and to a significant degree adopted domestically, by the EU. It is important to note that multi-stakeholderism does not have any real policy roots in the EU political landscape. Yet, the HLGIG, in its 2009 Hearing on the Future of Internet Governance, expressed support for the continuation of the IGF, after the 2010 review of the latter. The European Parliament has called for the creation of a European IGF. Though the latter has not as yet been created, there is some evidence of institutional mimicry of the IGF within the EU. The European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) is a multi-stakeholder platform for the discussion of internet governance matters. At national level, France, Germany and the UK have established national level IGFs.
Conclusions

Work on the EU and internet governance is still to a considerable extent in its infancy. This chapter has illuminated a large and growing number of contributions to understanding the EU’s internal policy-making and related performance in the relatively new international institutions that aim to assert some kind of influence on the ways the internet is governed. Evidence suggests that whilst the EU has, through its projections and communications on internet governance, promoted itself as a leader, its performance has pointed to real constraints in fulfilling such a role.

The EU was not able to develop any kind of coherent position on the internet before it became a high profile global communications policy matter. However, through the European Commission, in particular, in the early period of the institutionalisation of ICANN, the EU was astute and purposeful in exploiting policy opportunities which arose. Nonetheless, uncertainty married to the perceived need to react quickly to policy developments which were viewed with some degree of concern, left the EU and its member states ‘on the back foot’.

Since the late 1990s, the EU has aimed to articulate and establish its interests in relevant global institutional contexts from a position of relative weakness, certainly compared to that experienced in other parts of the electronic communications sector. A major constraint has been the relative power differential and key policy differences experienced *vis-à-vis* the US. Paradoxically for the EU, this has developed at a time when it has also aimed to demonstrate, where possible, its agreement with US positions on internet governance making the articulation of clear policy lines difficult. More recently, there are signs that the two parties, in particular with the new Obama Administration, have more closely aligned preferences for future internet governance than in the past. The EU has gained policy ground, assisted by significant uncertainty and some turbulence in the development of global internet policy agendas, which has involved contestation of ICANN in particular and, lately, the IGF.

That the EU has struggled in the past to project a clear, cogent message on internet governance is due in significant part to the informal nature of its internal policy process for constructing positions on internet governance, and the opportunities this afforded those in the Commission with their own political agenda to influence global proceedings. The result was often multiple messages, multiple EU representatives in different global fora and confusion over what the ‘real’ EU position was. This did not imbue the EU with the visibility or credibility required to be as influential as it desired to be in many instances. More recently, the newly appointed Information Society and Media Commissioner, Neelie Kroes, has adopted a less singularly assertive role than her predecessor, Viviane Reding. With the agreement of the Lisbon Treaty, an internal mechanism, conducted through the HLGIG, for the formulation of policy positions has been agreed that is resulting in more consensus policy-making and the projection of coherent EU positions in matters of crucial importance for the future of internet governance (the IGF and the AoC). However, the lack of legal mandate underpinning this policy process still provides scope for individuals and EU institutions to project their own autonomous positions without participation in the HLGIG mechanism. The lack of formal EU representation on internet governance matters will also be problematic if the EU has the ambition to be taken seriously as a ‘leader’ and coherent actor beyond its own self-projections. Action to clarify the ‘official’ EU position on a relevant internet policy matter (and the process through which it is constructed) and who speaks and negotiates for the EU on internet governance is therefore needed.

Academic research on the role of the EU as an international actor in internet governance, though growing, should be extended in five key areas. First, more work is needed to illuminate the perceptions of non-EU parties, both European and non-European, on the EU’s role, performance and influence in internet governance. A key matter is the extent to which the
EU, for all its efforts, is considered to be a leader within the international internet policy milieu in which it operates and the core reasons behind this. A second line of inquiry should explore in more detail than hitherto the nature of informal governance and how this impacts on the construction and projection by the EU of negotiating positions in the global internet institutional context. In particular, the extent to which the EU’s performance and leadership ambitions are affected by this mode of decision-making suggests difficulty but may also serve as a useful vehicle for the articulation of a variety of positions internally. The challenge for the EU is to channel this into agreed coherent strategies in the external policy environment, something which has not been achieved evidently in internet governance to date. Unearthing the reasons for this could serve as useful backdrop to a third potentially fruitful research avenue: the problematisation of negotiation and diplomacy in internet governance. In particular, it is important to consider, in methodological terms, how researchers might move beyond a consideration of negotiation ‘modes’ to an exploration of specific tactics employed by EU actors in key institutional contexts.

Fourth, a potentially fruitful research agenda could centre on the application of work on policy learning and transfer in the EU to the global policy context of the internet. There is some evidence already of institutional mimicry in internet governance in the EU, notably in respect of the IGF structure. It would be interesting to consider the extent to which the normative values and modus–operandi of the IGF, encapsulated in the idea of ‘multi-stakeholderism’ have been adopted in recently adopted national and European level variants of the IGF. Finally, and more broadly, further work could be developed on the role of the EU as an international actor in the broad and evolving landscape of global electronic communications governance as a whole. This agenda could compare the performance of the EU in the audiovisual and telecommunications sector with the internet, according to the parameters of the existing research agenda highlighted in this chapter as well as the above areas for further exploration. Such a comprehensive study, through producing empirical findings as well as an analytical framework for future application could lay the ground for a further authoritative cross-sectoral exploration of the EU as an international institutional actor.

**Interviews**

Conducted face-to-face and by teleconference with officials from the European Commission (DG INFSO) and members of the informal High Level Group on Internet Governance between July 2009 and April 2010.

**References**


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