

The FSFE's role with the United Nations

Internet Policy is made at global level

In the global village called "World Wide Web" there is not much that can be limited to only one nation state. Therefore, the nation states consult with each other already at the United Nations level. These consultations lead to "directives" of the European Union and the nation states are largely forced to adopt these decisions as national law.

FSFE regards it as important to stand up for the preservation of freedom not only here in the different states, but also on the international level during the decision-making processes.

"World Summit on the Information Society"

Patents, copyright and trademarks (PCT) were important issues at the "World Summit on the Information Society". Each can be misused by proprietary software and media corporations to threaten digital freedom and the exchange of knowledge and access to the information society.

Representing civil society within the German government's delegation, FSFE's president brought forward important arguments, which would not have received this attention otherwise - being able to choose Free Software over proprietary software is important culturally and in economic terms.

FSFE fights against the digital divide at IGF

The Internet Governance Forum's (IGF) main task is to foster the formation of opinion - there are no decisions

made in this forum. Rather, as many stakeholders as possible, representing economic or social interests, should have their say. There is a wide variety of topics. Apart from patents, the topics of copyright, trademarks, Open Standards, spam, and law enforcement are on the agenda.

Here, FSFE helps again and again with technical knowledge, such as when the "rights holders" try to enforce their interests unilaterally against the interests of the developing countries. In our opinion, this would not only increase the digital divide, it would also be unethical to prevent these people, mostly in the southern hemisphere, from learning.

"Intellectual wealth" instead of "Intellectual property"

Until now, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has concluded 23 international agreements on patents, copyright, or trademarks on the basis of the public-political dialog. The attitude behind these is based on the extension of monopolies and control. We object to this attitude. Together with other civil society organisations, we recommend to recreate WIPO to form a World Intellectual Wealth Organization (WIWO). This forthcoming global organisation should be committed to research and the spread of knowledge. Artificial monopolies should only be created when they are of use to society. The social use of these should be examined neutrally and cannot be assumed in blind faith.