

**The Director**

DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION

25 March 2015

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### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I am writing this note in support of CSISAC, the Civil Society Information Society Advisory Council. CSISAC is the organisation which convenes civil society groups to provide expertise and advice to the Committee on Digital Economy Policy (CDEP) of the OECD.

The expanding reach of the Internet into the day to day lives of individuals highlights the need for expertise on the impacts of policies on end-users. While business and labour have long been regular contributors to OECD work in this area through the Business and Industry Advisory Committee and the Trade Union Advisory Committee, the formation of CSISAC has enabled the growing number of civil society actors to bring their expertise in areas like privacy, security, freedom of expression and transparency, access to knowledge, and net neutrality to OECD work on the digital economy.

The creation of CSISAC in 2009 responds to a recommendation by OECD Secretary-General to formalise the participation of civil society in the work of the OECD on the digital economy. The Secretary-General's recommendation came as part of the 2008 Seoul Ministerial Conference on the Future of the Internet Economy. Through a process concluding with decisions taken in 2009 by the OECD Council and the CDEP, civil society has joined business and labour and the Internet technical community at committee meetings to assist government officials in grappling with many of the key policy issues raised by Internet governance and policy today. The mandate of OECD's Committee on Digital Policy formally recognises this role.

The topics contributed to by CSISAC cover a range of issues essential to the sustainable and inclusive development of the digital economy, including: the social and economic benefits of an open Internet and the risks of fragmentation, data-driven innovation, open access to data, ICTs and the environment, the protection of privacy online, cybersecurity strategies, identity management, digital content, among others.

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CSISAC regularly sends representatives to participate in formal meetings, workshops and Conferences of the CDEP as well as its three working parties:

- Working Party on Security and Privacy in the Digital Economy
- Working Party on Communications Infrastructure and Services Policy
- Working Party on Measurement and Analysis of the Digital Economy

It also contributes to the work via participation in a number of more informal expert groups working by email and the web to prepare work for discussion by the working parties.

As I understand it, CSISAC's participation in our work has benefited from funding from the Markle Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the EPIC Public Voice Project, among others, and we are appreciative of the opportunities this funding has provided to our civil society colleagues to participate, since the OECD does not have a budget to provide this kind of support directly.

We understand that CSISAC is seeking additional funding to support the liaison function, substantive work and the travel of members for official meetings in the coming years and we are writing in support of this effort. As Director responsible for the Committee on Digital Economy Policy and its working parties, I find the contributions of CSISAC invaluable to the Secretariat and our member countries. I certainly hope CSISAC will be able to continue to contribute meaningfully to our work, especially as we are preparing the next OECD Ministerial on the Digital Economy to be held in June 2016 in Mexico. I would be happy to provide additional information if useful to help enable this outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew WYCKOFF