Geneva Internet Platform

Cybersecurity at the top of agendas for 2015

Geneva, 15 January 2015: Cybersecurity is expected to dominate the agendas of Internet-related issues in 2015, within the context of the latest cyber attacks (such as the Sony case) as well as the terrorist attacks in Paris. The Geneva Internet Platform organised an event today embedding cybersecurity issues in a strategic framework, with a specific focus on the Finnish approach to cyber defence.

More than 100 participants attended the event organised by the Geneva Internet Platform in co-operation with the Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN, DiploFoundation, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the University of Geneva, DCAF, and ICT4Peace. Among the speakers were prominent Finnish representatives, including Mr Arto Räty, Chairman of the Security Committee of Finland, the Finnish cyberambassador Ms Marija Rislakki; Mr Timo Kotilainen, Chairman of the Finnish Information Security Cluster; and Ari Knuuti, Director of Codenomicon. Other speakers included Ambassador Theodor Winkler from DCAF, Michele Coduri from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and Tomas Lamanauskas of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as well as DiploFoundation's Vladimir Radunović.

The speakers shared their views on current cybersecurity challenges, highlighting the following facts and challenges:

- Cybersecurity has come to the forefront of the news headlines. Modern society has become irreversibly dependent on cyberspace – including critical sectors, such as energy and traffic. Cybersecurity is steadily rising on political and diplomatic agendas. Some institutions, such as the Geneva-based ITU and the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF), have been working on cybersecurity for years, while others — such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – have recently prioritised it. More and more countries and regional and international organisations are expected to seriously focus on analysing the threats, sharing information and best practices, and developing institutional capacities and cooperation mechanisms to prevent and respond to cyber-attacks.
- The threats emerging from cyberspace are asymmetrically high comparing to financial investment and awareness about cyber-threats. Cyberweapons are readily available and attacks can be carried out with few specific skills or resources, be they financial, technical or human. However, institutions, organisations, and corporations must invest in developing awareness, capacities and skills, equipment, and organisational policies in order to mitigate the risks, initiate adequate rapid response plans, and address any consequences appropriately. This asymmetry is particularly present in awareness – potential attackers are far more aware of the opportunities to misuse cyberspace than their potential targets, who often know little about the risks in involved, the protection needed, and the appropriate response required.
- Recent developments related to terrorist attacks, online freedoms, surveillance, and privacy concerns demonstrate a close link between cybersecurity and other areas of Internet governance and digital policy.
- An efficient comprehensive approach to national, regional, and global cybersecurity requires the full cooperation of different stakeholders – from government to industry, and from academia and the technical community to civil society – but must maintain a solid balance with human rights and the economic aspects of policy and regulatory frameworks in order to preserve an open and free Internet as a driver of development in society.
  Efficient public-private partnerships, which have worked so well in the Finnish approach to cybersecurity, are essential. Mr Timo Kotilainen pointed out that 80% of Finnish cybersecurity

capacity is in the hands of the private sector. The Finnish model also stresses the importance of education and training strategies. Finland supports emerging cyber diplomacy and has appointed a cyber ambassador, as have a number of other European countries.

Event background is available at: http://giplatform.org/events/cybersecurity-strategic-view

A photo gallery is available at: http://diplo.smugmug.com/Geneva-Internet-Platform-/Cybersecurity-Day-Finland/

ENDS/

Press contact: Tereza Horejsova, Coordinator, Geneva Internet Platform, terezah@diplomacy.edu, 022 907 36 33 or 079 85 84 496

The Geneva Internet Platform is an initiative of the Swiss authorities operated by DiploFoundation.