Joint statement by the ICT sector on the proposed ICT4Society Platform

As trade associations and initiatives representing a considerable proportion of the value chain of the ICT industry, we consider that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is of the utmost importance for Europe and European companies. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to DG CONNECT's assessment of the need for a specific multi-stakeholder initiative or platform in this field for the ICT sector, following the recent EC communication on the new EU policy on Corporate Social Responsibility.

We firmly believe that CSR is a powerful tool to create value by increasing trust and confidence in the markets, and boosting competitiveness. The economic crisis has strengthened the need for companies to foster CSR. These two elements, trust and competitiveness, are essential for European companies today.

Conscious of the impact of their products and services on the overall society, our members have placed CSR at the heart of their business strategies, developments and stakeholder relations. Our continued support for innovation and growth is an example of our strong commitment to generate socioeconomic benefits for our users and society as a whole. CSR represents an opportunity of increasing Europe's competitiveness on the global scene.

We strongly believe in the Internet as a platform for innovation, growth and creativity, supporting the full realisation of citizens' fundamental right to freedom of expression and access to knowledge, as well as an engine of social development for society as a whole. To this end, our members are committed to the availability of electronic communications services to all, without discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, political, philosophical or religious beliefs, or affiliation with a trade union or other lawful association. We have therefore pledged to uphold the rule of law in the digital environment, defending the rights of users to access communications except as constrained in specific cases by a fair and properly constituted legal process, prescribed by law and subject to the fundamental principles of human rights.

At the moment, companies and other stakeholders within the ICT sector face sectorial issues that are either considered as risks (e.g. privacy and freedom of expression; relations with governments in the cases of natural disasters or other events; energy consumption; use of raw materials such as coltan), or market opportunity with a high social impact (e.g. social innovation; green ICT; promotion of entrepreneurship; youth employability).

Our commitment to corporate social responsibility further translates into engagements ranging from initiatives to empower users to protect themselves from risks to themselves and others, especially children, through educational initiatives and the provision of tools and other technical means; to initiatives to enhance digital inclusion; to a progressive reduction in the environmental footprint of products, services and operations and the provision of solutions that can help citizens and other industries to reduce their own environmental footprint.

These risks and opportunities led to the creation of well-recognised multi-stakeholder initiatives at national, European and global levels to which our respective members belong and that they are actively promoting. Examples of innovative CSR initiatives involving stakeholders from within and outside the ICT sector are contained in the appendix of this statement.

DG CONNECT's ICT4Society platform should be seen in this global context and avoids overlaps with other multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Internet Governance Forum.

As trade associations of the main players of the ICT industry, we believe that the proposal for a new sector-specific multi-stakeholder initiative could contribute further to industry CSR programmes as a knowledge centre, but should focus on the following objectives:

- giving greater visibility and recognition to CSR initiatives already undertaken by the ICT industry;
- providing opportunities for additional debate and exchange of best practices;
- facilitating sector-wide cooperation.

Additionally, this process should be carefully assessed in order to avoid overlaps with existing programmes, and not limit flexibility and incentives for enterprises to innovate in CSR. The new platform should not create additional burdens and costs in this period of economic crisis.

We would welcome the involvement by the Commission of all the trade associations of the ICT industry in this process in order to complete the overview of CSR initiatives in place today. We hope DG CONNECT will carefully consider our comments and look forward to further contributing to the evaluation of the need for such a multi-stakeholder platform and its possible establishment.

Signatories of this joint statement include:

Cable Europe	ECTA	ETNO
EuroISPA	GeSI (The Global e-Sustainability Initiative)	GSMA

Examples of CSR initiatives by the ICT sector[1]

ICT Sector Guidance to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Product Standard

The Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI) is collaborating with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), World Resources Institute (WRI) and Carbon Trust on developing a tool for ICT companies to measure the carbon footprint of their products and services. The project to develop an "ICT sector supplement" to the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Product Accounting and Reporting Standard also engages the European Commission, ITU, MIT, Gartner, CDP and other stakeholders through an open and consultative multi-stakeholder approach. GeSI is playing a leading role in bringing ICT companies on board and in promoting the initiative within and beyond the ICT industry. A number of major global ICT companies are actively contributing to the development of the ICT sector guidance including Alcatel-Lucent, BT, Capgemini, Cisco, Deutsche Telekom, EMC, Ericsson, Fujitsu, HP, Microsoft, NetApp and Telstra. It is expected that the new supplement will encourage ICT companies to measure, report, and reduce the carbon footprint of their products and services, thus contributing to global emission reductions. It is due to be published in 2013.

Link: http://www.ghgprotocol.org/feature/ghg-protocol-product-life-cycle-accounting-and-reporting-standard-ict-sector-guidance

ICT and Human Rights

During 2011 many activities and events occurred around business and human rights, and ICT and freedom of expression, and earlier this year the Global e-Sustainability (GeSI) formed a working group to address such issues. The objectives of the GeSI Human Rights Working Group are to:

- Create a broader understanding of the ICT value chain among human rights and freedom of expression stakeholders;
- Share information on latest developments in business and human rights with particular emphasis on privacy and freedom of expression;
- Discuss practical means of implementing the new UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the ICT sector;
- Coordinate GeSI's involvement and position in the European Commission's project to develop human rights guidance for the ICT sector;
- Build on GeSI's success in the areas of conflict minerals and e-waste, to create a broad, multi-stakeholder group that can openly discuss challenges and solutions to ICT and freedom of expression issues.

The working group currently brings together ICT companies with external stakeholders representing Digitale Gesselschaft e.V., BSR, European University Institute, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Global Partners and Associates and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

GeSI also holds a seat on the European Commission's ICT Sector Advisory Group that is leading the development of human rights guidance for the ICT sector. Several GeSI experts having given stakeholder interviews on the issue of human rights for an issue paper developed as part of the project.

Extraction of metals

NGO campaigns such as MakeITFair and Enough have highlighted social, environmental and humanitarian issues associated with the extraction of certain metals used in components of ICT equipment. Mining of coltan (a tantalum-bearing ore), tin, tungsten and gold in conflict regions such

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[1] The CSR initiatives mentioned in annex are examples of initiatives by the sector. The list is not exhaustive and they do not involve nor represent the position of all signatories associations

as the Democratic Republic of Congo is a particular concern. US Dodd Frank Law, in force since 2011, requires companies publicly traded in the US to disclose whether their products contain any these minerals.

Mining activities that fuel conflict are unacceptable, but it is currently very difficult to be certain that products do not contain conflict minerals due to the complexity of the ICT supply chain. The joint GeSI and EICC Extractives Work Group is working to increase the transparency and traceability of these materials in the supply chain and explore how ICT companies can effectively influence social and environmental issues associated with mining.

The work group is taking a three-pronged approach to improve the transparency and traceability of mineral sourcing, focusing on key stages in the supply chain:

1. Tracing minerals from the mine to the smelter by supporting a 'bag and tag' in-region sourcing program run by the ITRI Tin Supply Chain Initiative (iTSCi) – 3,000 tonnes of minerals were tagged in a three-month pilot in 2010;
2. Identifying and validating conflict-free smelters for suppliers to source metals from through a Conflict-Free Smelter Program developed through a multi-stakeholder process;
3. Supporting relevant stakeholder efforts such as the Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade, a joint initiative between governments, companies, and civil society to support supply chain solutions to conflict minerals challenges in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of Central Africa.

Both GeSI and the EICC continue to work in this area with a broad range of stakeholders, including non-government organizations, government agencies and industry sectors such as electronics, mining, mineral processing and others. For example, in the development of the Conflict-Free Smelter Program, GeSI and the EICC have held five workshops with members of the tantalum and tin supply chains. We also were one of the few end use industries that participated in the development of the OECD Due Diligence Guidance on Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas.

Links:

http://gesi.org/portfolio/project/15

http://www.resolv.org/site-ppa/

GeSI and StEP e-Waste Academy

To build capacity for e-waste management, particularly in developing countries, the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI), Solving the E-waste Problem (StEP) and the United Nations University Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP) co-organised the first ever GeSI and StEP E-Waste Academy on 25-29 June 2012 in Accra, Ghana. The objective of the event, co-sponsored by GeSI, NVMP Association and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), was to share existing knowledge and research into effective e-waste management and regulation with policymakers, recyclers and other stakeholders from the West Africa region. To build on this year's event, organisers plan to conduct an e-waste academy in a different world region in 2013. Several national governments have expressed interest in hosting the event.

Link: https://sites.google.com/site/ewasteacademy/

Joint Guidelines on Human Rights for ISPs of EuroISPA and Council of Europe

Developed by the Council of Europe in close co-operation with the European Internet Services Providers Association (EuroISPA), these guidelines provide human rights benchmarks for internet service providers (ISPs). While underlining the important role played by ISPs in delivering key services for the Internet user, such as access, e-mail or content services, they stress the importance of users' safety and their right to privacy and freedom of expression and, in this connection, the importance for the providers to be aware of the human rights impact that their activities can have.

Link: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Doc/H-Inf(2008)009_en.pdf

ETNO Corporate Responsibility Charter

The ETNO Charter embodies its signatories' commitment to corporate responsibility via a sustainable provision of ICT based solutions with significant environmental, social and economic benefits, with a particular focus on enabling the reduction of environmental impacts of other industry sectors and society at large and improving citizens' quality of life. ETNO Charter signatories are also determined to integrate into business activities environmental, social and economic responsibilities, minimizing, where practicable, any negative impact these activities may generate. Through its Corporate Responsibility Report, ETNO regularly reports on the collective performance of signatories.

As part of its overall commitment ETNO has established a Working Group on Corporate Responsibility that ensures proper follow up to Charter commitments and promotes cooperation on CSR issues among ETNO member companies, and specialized task forces that have the mandate to investigate, share best practices on and identify sustainable solutions to issues such as energy management and reduction of CO_2 emissions and protection of children and minors from the threats they may be facing when online. Link: http://www.etno.be/home/topics/corporate-responsability

Mobile Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Content

The Mobile Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Content was founded by an international group of mobile operators within the GSMA to work collectively on obstructing the use of the mobile environment by individuals or organisations wishing to consume or profit from child sexual abuse content. The Alliance's aim is to help stem, and ultimately reverse, the growth of online child sexual abuse content around the world. Through a combination of technical measures, co-operation and information sharing, the Alliance seeks to create significant barriers to the misuse of mobile networks and services for hosting, accessing, or profiting from child sexual abuse content.Governments also should ensure they have the resources and processes in place to combat the spread of digital child sexual abuse content, alongside delegated international organizations.
Link: http://www.gsma.com/publicpolicy/myouth/mobiles-contribution-to-child-protection/mobile-alliance/

GSMA Disaster response

The GSMA Disaster Response Programme supports the mobile industry in improving network resilience and coordination with humanitarian agencies and governments to ensure that customers are able to access life-saving communications in times of crisis. As part of this programme, the GSMA has issued a landscape document that examines relations between mobile operators and the public sector, including governments from both developing and developed nations, international bodies and regional authorities. The report highlights the opportunities for these actors to leverage the expertise of the private sector effectively in order to integrate ICT tools into their response strategies. Link: http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/programmes/disaster-response/

About signatories

Cable Europe (www.cable-europe.eu), the European Cable Communications Association, is based in Brussels and groups all the leading European cable TV operators and their national trade associations throughout Europe. The aim of Cable Europe is to promote and defend the industry's policies and business interests at European and international level. The European cable TV industry provides digital TV, broadband Internet and telephony services to more than 70 million customers. Contact: Caroline van Weede, Managing Director (+3225211763/ caroline.vanweede@cable-europe.eu)

ECTA (the European Competitive Telecommunications Association - www.ectaportal.com) is the pan-European pro-competitive trade association that represents more than 100 of the leading challenger telecoms operators across Europe. For over a decade, ECTA has been supporting the regulatory and commercial interests of telecoms operators, ISPs & equipment manufacturers in pursuit of a fair regulatory environment that allows all electronic communications providers to compete on level terms. Our members have been the leading innovators in Internet services, broadband, business communications, entertainment and mobile. **Contact:** Federico Poggi, Senior Manager Public Affairs (+32 2 290.01.03 / fpoggi@ectaportal.com).

ETNO is the voice of the leading voice of European Telecommunications Network Operators since 1992. ETNO's 38 member companies and 12 observers represent main telecoms operators and equipment manufacturers from Europe and beyond. They account for an aggregate annual turnover of more than €600 billion and employ over 1.6 million people. ETNO companies are the main drivers of broadband and are committed to its continual growth in Europe. For more information, see: www.etno.eu or contact Thierry Dieu, Director for Communications and Public Policy (+3222271082/ dieu@etno.be)

EuroISPA is the world's largest association of Internet Services Providers (ISPs) representing the interests of more than 1800 ISPs across the EU and the EFTA countries. EuroISPA is a major voice of the Internet industry on information society subjects such as cybercrime, data protection, ecommerce regulation, EU telecommunications law and safe use of the Internet (www.euroispa.org). Contact: Andrea D'Incecco, Head of Policy (+32 2 503.22.65/ andrea@euroispa.org)

The Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI) is a strategic partnership of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector and organisations committed to creating and promoting technologies and practices that foster economic, environmental and social sustainability. Formed in 2001, GeSI's vision is a sustainable world through responsible, ICT-enabled transformation. GeSI fosters global and open cooperation, informs the public of its members' voluntary actions to improve their sustainability performance, and promotes technologies that foster sustainable development. GeSI has 32 members representing leading companies and associations from the ICT sector. GeSI also partners with two UN organizations - the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) - as well as a range of international stakeholders committed to ICT sustainability objectives. These partnerships help shape GeSI's global vision regarding the evolution of the ICT sector, and how it can best meet the challenges of sustainable development. For more information, see www.gesi.org.

The **GSMA** represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide. Spanning more than 220 countries, the GSMA unites nearly 800 of the world's mobile operators with more than 230 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset makers, software companies, equipment providers and Internet companies, as well as organisations in industry sectors such as financial services, healthcare, media, transport and utilities. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as the Mobile World Congress and Mobile Asia Expo. For more information, please visit the GSMA corporate website at www.gsma.com or Mobile World Live, the online portal for the mobile communications industry, at www.mobileworldlive.com