Message to the post-IGF Round Table in Minsk
convened on Monday, 20 September 2010 in Minsk / Belarus

Dear colleagues and friends

First of all, I want to apologise again that I had to cancel my participation at your today's IGF Round Table for medical reasons. Your remarkable event is another link in a chain of several Internet Governance related meetings before (beginning of September in Kiew/Ukraine) and after the 5th IGF in Vilnius – these days there are similar foras in Helsinki/Finland and Riga/Latvia. And these regional meetings are part of the success story of the global Internet Governance Forum.

As you may recall, the IGF was a sort of compromise by the international community at the end of a difficult negotiation process at the 2nd World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in November 2005 in Tunis. And it marks the beginning of a new area of international relations based on a multi-stakeholder approach, including different stakeholders like governments, the private sector and civil society in their respective rolls and interests. The short history of the IGF from 2006 to 2010 is on its best way setting new standards not only for the complex field of Internet Governance but for other areas and challenges as well.

The global IG Forum is setting the scene around key issues like Critical Internet Resources, Access and Diversity, Security, Openness and Privacy and Internet Governance for Development (IG4D). Such important and conflicting policy fields need to be reflected by various stakeholders to find and define common principles for the governance of the Internet. The IGF and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) are not competing entities but complementary: ICANN stands for the administration and technical regulation of the Domain Name System (DNS), the IGF for the adjustment of broader and related policy fields. Their common interest is to guarantee the stability, security and interoperability of the Internet what is the key element of nowadays information age.

As the European Regional At-Large Organisation (EURALO) among the ICANN constituencies, it is our role to represent the interests of the Internet end users at ICANN. Internet literacy and empowerment are key factors for the inclusion of the user side and the representation of their interests in complex Internet governance processes. Governments and the private sector are strongly represented already on both levels – ICANN and the IGF – civil society must still find its role and voice to strengthen the user perspective and the public interest.

We are confident that Round Tables and similar open discourses like today in Minsk are best opportunities to bring diverging groups and interests together to find a common understanding and to develop appropriate solutions for Internet governance. The next opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives will be the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) at the end of May 2011 in Belgrade to bring the national initiatives together. We wish you all the best for your today's Round Table in Minsk. The Belarus viewpoint on Internet governance is welcome and needed on the European and international level.

Wolf Ludwig, Chair of EURALO