



Ref.: Pol-10-381.70/13  
Note No.: 15/2017

### Note Verbale

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Office of the United Nations and to the other international Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and refers to *OHCHR's Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective*, dated 30 November 2016.

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany has the honour to transmit herewith the responses to the questions three, four, five and six provided by the Federal Government of Germany:

With its Digital Agenda 2014 – 2017 Germany has drawn up a comprehensive strategy for guiding and shaping the ongoing process of digitization ([http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Broschueren/2014/digital-agenda.pdf;jsessionid=0AAC9E3468F351A5775590C29897517C.2\\_cid373?\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Broschueren/2014/digital-agenda.pdf;jsessionid=0AAC9E3468F351A5775590C29897517C.2_cid373?_blob=publicationFile)).

The Agenda is focused on three core areas:

- To further explore and exploit the innovative capacity of Germany in order to enable further growth and employment;
- To support the nationwide expansion of high-speed networks and enhance digital media literacy across all generations in order to improve access and public participation;
- To improve the security and safety of IT systems and services in order to increase trust among the public and the business sector.

To the

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Palais Wilson

Geneva

The flexibility of digital environments offers huge potential in the area of Germany's equal opportunities policy, such as better reconciling family and working lives on a partnership basis, new forms of political participation and fresh opportunities for men and women to enter atypical gender areas of activity and thus break with gender role stereotypes. With its Agenda Germany is set to address this challenge and advance online equality as a topic in its own right.

The digital revolution affects all areas of society. This offers many opportunities, but also involves numerous challenges, such as protecting freedom and the individual's right of self-determination on the Internet as well as ensuring the security of IT systems and digital infrastructures. The Federal Government acknowledges the necessity of ensuring widespread access to high-performance broad-band networks. These networks are essential to ensuring equal living conditions and equal access to the opportunities afforded by digitization, which open up new possibilities for action and participation, and new qualification pathways for all. The prerequisites for this participation should be established during childhood education. Under the banner of the Digital Agenda, Germany will renew its efforts to redress existing deficits.

Germany equally places high priority on clarity about the applicable „international network law“ to protect the prevailing fundamental rights and civil liberties in the digital world and augment opportunities for democratic participation in the global communications network. The right to privacy, freedom of information and free speech must also be enforced in the digital age. To this end, Germany is embarking on a multi-stage process to create recommendations for elements of an „international network law“. Important elements include the report presented by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the fourth round of the government experts process at UN level. Moreover, Germany is actively supporting the discussion processes in the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly (including a German-Brazilian initiative entitled „The right to privacy in the digital age“). Germany is also engaged in the [www.freedomonlinecoalition.com](http://www.freedomonlinecoalition.com) and the „Internet and human rights round table“ with civil society and the private sector.

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Office of the United Nations and to other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 11 January 2017

