

Congress on Privacy & Surveillance, Sept 30, 2013, EPFL Rolex Learning Center Forum

15:00-16:00: Richard Hill, "Internet Freedom, Snowden, and Dubai"

Various proposals for treaty provisions to increase international cooperation to improve cybersecurity and to combat spam were opposed by various countries (in particular the United States) during the ITU's 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12) in Dubai, primarily on the ground that such provisions could be invoked by non-democratic states to impose censorship and restrict freedom of expression. Such arguments seem strange today, in light of the recent revelations regarding US and other countries' pervasive surveillance of electronic communications. Be that as it may, a large block of developed countries did not sign the treaty approved in Dubai. This situation creates uncertainty regarding cooperation with respect to security issues and can lead to a continuation of unilateral, and extraterritorial, assertions of national powers, including surveillance and cyberwarfare. Yet there are continued calls for cooperation, in particular at the bilateral level. It is suggested that international cooperation would be a more appropriate way forward, and that it should be based on specific principles that are based on universally recognized human rights.