

Brussels Declaration on Trade and the Internet

February 22, 2016

We are an expert group of stakeholders representing Internet users, consumers, innovative businesses, cultural institutions, and scholars. We recognize the considerable social and economic benefits that could flow from an international trading system that is fair, sustainable, democratic, and accountable. These goals can only be achieved through processes that ensure effective public participation.

Modern trade agreements are negotiated in closed, opaque and unaccountable fora, that lack democratic safeguards and are vulnerable to undue influence. These are not simply issues of principle! the secrecy prevents negotiators from having access to all points of view and excludes many stakeholders with demonstrable expertise that would be valuable to the negotiators. This is particularly notable in relation to issues that have impacts on the online and digital environment, which have been increasingly subsumed into trade agreements over the past two decades.

The procedural deficits that define modern trade agreement negotiations have resulted in instruments

