Building an Internet capable of hosting the next billion users was the theme of three roundtable discussions at the EGENI conference in June 2008. The meeting, which was organized by the Internet Society France Chapter and the European Chapters Coordinating Council (ISOC-ECC), brought together nearly 200 participants to discuss issues related to Internet governance and regulation. A special issue of the professional letter of the Sociétés de l’information is available in French at http://www.egeni.org.

The Internet Society Poland Chapter petitioned members of the European Parliament to ensure that an upcoming piece of telecommunications and media regulation in Europe does not put Internet access under administrative control. An online petition to the Polish government yielded support from more than 2,000 Polish Internet users within a few days. As a result, there has been a significant shift in voting patterns among Polish MEPs throughout the year. The Chapter has worked together with ISOC France and the European Chapters Coordinating Council regarding possible adoption of the “three-strikes” law (HADOPI) in France.

In December 2008, a new law for the prevention of spam became effective in Israel. The Internet Society Israel Chapter (http://www.isoc.org.il)—also known as the Israeli Internet Association—which acted to promote the law in the Israeli legislature, opened an area of its Web site devoted to understanding the new law and its implications with regard to recipients of spam, advertisers who are concerned about sending advertisements by e-mail, and parents who want to protect their children from spam.

In 2008, the Internet Society Australia Chapter (http://www.isoc-au.org.au) made a submission to the Senate committee that was selected to oversee the provision of a national broadband network in Australia. Both the Chapter director and executive director appeared before the Senate Committee, giving evidence based on its submission. The Chapter also met with the Australian Computer Society and other interested groups to respond to the government’s policy on Internet filtering. As part of the government’s policy, the regulator is charged with conducting trials on Internet filtering. The Internet Society Australia Chapter set out to provide a user perspective on filtering and, with its technical expertise, explain the benefits and limitations of Internet filtering.

The Chapter was part of a working group that led to the creation of a new peak telecommunications consumer organization called the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) (http://www.accan.org.au/), and its executive director was named a member of the ACCAN initial board. In addition, in 2008, the Chapter made two submissions on policies impacting the Internet. The first was to the Australian Domain Name Administrator—auDA’s review of competition policy in the Domain Name System. The second was to a Senate Committee on broadband provision in Australia.
With Internet use in Ghana at a mere 2.7 percent, the Internet Society Ghana Chapter, in collaboration with the Ghana Journalist Association, took the initiative in 2008 and organized a press conference with nearly 60 media outlets to call on government and other stakeholders to speed up their efforts to make the Internet more accessible to Ghanaians. Chapter representatives asked government leaders to institute a framework that would encourage greater Internet usage in the country.

Throughout 2008, the Internet Society Italy Chapter worked to familiarize the Italian-speaking community with key themes of Internet governance, which included the release of a new publication, Towards the Constitution of IGF [Internet Governance Forum] Italy—Think Globally, Act Locally. The publication reported on the main sessions of the Internet Governance Forum in Brazil in 2008 and provided a collection of documents to promote the establishment of the local IGF in Italy. The Chapter made a presentation to the new Italian government to raise awareness of achievements on various Internet policies in collaboration with past Italian governments, including specific sections related to ICANN policies. A permanent online forum was created to facilitate national dialogue about Internet governance issues, as well as a public consultation, titled The Internet System: Towards the Constitution of IGF Italy, which was held in Rome in May.

Italy’s minister of public administration and innovation supported a statement introduced by ISOC Italy Chapter about the public value of the Internet and the Internet Governance Forum, and he stated that the government would support the Internet governance process in a manner similar to that of previous governments. The first Italian Internet Governance Forum (IGF Italia) was held in October 2008 in Cagliari, Sardinia, with ISOC Italy taking a leading role.

The Internet Society Sierra Leone Chapter was instrumental in getting its government to appoint a National Information and Communications Technologies Task Force, with members of the Chapter working closely with the office of the president throughout the year to determine the composition of and representation on the task force. Chapter members met with Sierra Leone’s president Ernest Bai Koroma in early 2008 to press for the formulation of a national ICT policy and to emphasize the need for ICT to be adopted by the government. It produced a concept paper that outlined the terms of reference and standing orders of a national ICT task force. Technical appointments were drawn from the Chapter’s membership.

The Internet Society’s European Chapters Coordinating Council (ISOC-ECC) made an important contribution in 2008 to lawmakers of the European Commission by debating changes to intellectual property law. ISOC-ECC described the analogous discussions in the European parliament as a “disproportionate response to the objective of developing creative content online.” The aide-mémoire was based on a position paper originally developed by Charles Simon for the Internet Society France Chapter. The response warned that the unintended consequences of the law could include cutting off citizen access to essential services, such as tax filing, online banking, and even education.

The aide-mémoire was endorsed by 14 of the Internet Society’s European Chapters, including Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Wallonia.

INTERNET SOCIETY EUROPEAN CHAPTERS COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Internet Society Europe’s Chapters Coordinating Council (ISOC-ECC) is a coalition of the Internet Society’s European Chapters. Headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, the ISOC-ECC promotes discussion among European Chapters on topics of mutual interest. The group also fosters European cooperation in Internet projects while promoting dialogue among European parties involved in Internet-related issues. In addition, it serves as a forum for collaboration on projects and activities supporting the Internet Society’s global mission. For more information about the ISOC-ECC, see http://www.isoc-ecc.org.