

H. G. Wells predicted that *“the whole human memory can be, and probably in short time will be, made accessible to every individual”*. This famous English paints a prophetic picture; a picture which seems familiar to most of modern citizens and refers to the Internet, probably the most important invention ever.

Doesn't Internet, a condition sine qua non of modern societies, pose the most pressing concerns in International Human Rights Law nowadays? It does, not only online, but offline as well. Blocking of the access to Internet, hate speech, fake news, killing and blackmailing of journalists, violation of private life, surveillance, profiling, cyber-attacks and online criminal activities remain phenomena of a daily basis, but still the cyber world is not regulated enough with a view to ensuring that human rights are respected and develop the appropriate “legal force” in this context.

It still remains unanswered if Internet itself is a human right. As a prerequisite to exercise all fundamental rights online, the access to Internet is of critical importance, but it is uncertain among various stakeholders if States hold an obligation to ensure it to their citizens. There are countries that have already adopted policies that render access to Internet available to more and more individuals, while others insist in imposing unreasonable restrictions. But we shall not neglect that the question of the existence of a right to Internet access constitutes the beginning of any discussion concerning the promotion and protection of human rights in cyberspace and of human rights in general.

Moreover, the exercise of the “traditional” rights may face a lot of obstacles, when these rights are exercised on the net. Free dissemination of ideas, opinions and information are all promoted at the free cyberspace for sure, but the uncontrollable speech often leads to the violation of other rights, as well as to the development of hate speech, fake news and other suchlike phenomena. At the same time, privacy is facing newfound challenges in the digital environment as the search, process and storage of personal data is easier than ever due to the social media, while cybercrime, one of the fastest growing areas of crime due to the phenomenal growth of the Internet and its users, is getting more and more sophisticated. As every growth renders both positive and negative effects, it is clear that cybercrime is probably the most dangerous side effect of Internet usage, which often raise rule of law and human rights concerns.

Last but not least, human rights' supporters should not neglect the potential of the Internet to promote and protect human rights. New technologies could contribute to the amelioration of education, the promotion of the democratic principal and the effectiveness of justice.

Various states and international organizations (such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union), namely the main subjects of international law, are trying to tackle the aforementioned challenges by establishing specialized international conventions, issuing policy recommendations, adopting new strategies for capacity building of the States and raising awareness of the users. But the effectiveness of the measures and the appropriate implementation by States are highly questioned, while the lack of regulation is expanded into a great extent.

What makes Internet one of the greatest concerns when it comes to the current status human rights' protection is that Internet itself is not only a “new” threat, but it constitutes a whole new platform, an expansion of the “space” where human rights exist, are exercised and are violated.

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