

How our governments got to promise to promote and protect US digital companies

[May 15, 2020 | The US government has founded the G20 group comprising of the most important economic nations. It plays a key role in setting its agenda. US corporations dominate the World Economic Forum and the most important international industry associations and regulators. If they all work together to take advantage of a global crisis, the result is an almost bizarre self-commitment by governments to fulfill the wishes of the corporations.](#)

The World Economic Forum, the World Bank and the US development agency US-Aid have set up a variety of programs to connect less developed countries to the US-controlled Internet. The desired control and commercial accessibility of all people even in the remotest and poorest corners of the world is elegantly disguised by the unsuspecting sounding term "Bridging the Digital Divide."

As no good crisis should go to waste, the Corona Pandemic is currently being used to push forward the digital agenda with all might. Any and all diplomatic possibilities that a government of global leadership has are being employed. And the influence of its digital companies has come to full bloom.

On March 26, 2020 the G20 governments, under the prudent leadership of the torture and dismemberment regime in Riyadh, agreed to a commitment to "leverage digital technologies" in order to fight Covid-19.

Immediately, the World Economic Forum, the lobbying vehicle of the largest multinational corporations, set out to develop, together with the World Bank, the GSMA and the ITU, an "[accelerated action plan](#)" to "leverage digital technologies during the Covid-19 pandemic for the betterment of citizens, governments and businesses". The effort is supposed to continue after the crisis ("and beyond").

Governments and approximately 900 companies are members of the UN regulatory body ITU, the International Telecommunications Union. Microsoft is one of its "Platinum Partners". The GSMA is the global industry association of mobile communications providers and manufacturers of network infrastructure and mobile phones.

The "action plan" turned out to be a wish list of benefits for telecom and digital companies, including reduction of regulations, granting tax breaks and subsidies, promoting the digital economy, digital education and healthcare and cashless payment. The head of the ITU, Houlin Zhao, was allowed to present these demands to the G20 ministers responsible for the digital realm. He concludes [his report](#) as follows:

I told the Ministers that the industry has highly appreciated the support of public authorities during this crisis and are willing to take on more challenges, but that they also count on their support and expect more favorable investment environments and more flexibility to use limited resources, including spectrum resources.

In line with the wishes of the companies, the digital ministers adopted the following self obligation on April 30, 2020:

- To work with the (mostly US; N.H.) telecommunications and Internet companies to improve connectivity for undersupplied regions and vulnerable groups,
- To harness the power of data and artificial intelligence,
- To promote mobile working and the development of digital skills in businesses, public institutions,

Money and more

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- schools and universities,
- To promote remote care of the sick through virtual care, telemedicine and chatbots,
- Exchange of mass data with each other,
- To use the high performance computing capacities that are available (especially at Microsoft and Amazon; N.H.)

Translating this voluntary commitment from the diplomatic into normal language, one reads, in addition to the clearly understandable promises of support, that the EU and the 19 most important industrialized countries, including Germany, have self-committed to refraining from any more regulatory obstacles in the way of US telecom and internet companies for the foreseeable future, which would have been data protection procedures or investigations into the abuse of market power, and to opening the flood gates for the flow of data from citizens and companies to the USA.

Addendum (May 7, 2020): Almost as a confirmation, today the Handelsblatt published a report ([in German](#)) on how the EU Commission intends to tame digital companies. Surely not by forcing them to pay taxes or to comply with European data protection rules, God forbid. No, by putting more pressure on them to remove unwanted content quickly, aka censorship.

Addendum (May 15, 2020): [Opendemocracy.net has reported](#) on a large scale handover of NHS-data to us IT companies: "US tech giants Amazon, Microsoft, and Google – plus two controversial AI firms called Faculty and Palantir – are apparently assisting the NHS in tracking hospital resources and in providing a “single source of truth” about the epidemic, in order to stem its spread. Whitehall sources have described the amounts of health data funnelled into the new datastore as “unprecedented.” Yet the government has released virtually no detail about the deals."

Translated from German by Viviane Fischer with support of www.DeepL.com. My thanks go to both. The original German blogpost appeared on May 2.