

# European Digital Rights founding meeting

## 8.-9.6.2002 in Berlin

*Mikko Välimäki, EFFi*

Present as the founding member representatives:

Andy Mueller-Maguhn, CCC (DE)  
Lutz Donnerhacke, Fitug (DE)  
Simon Davies, Privacy International (UK)  
Ian Brown, FIPR (UK)  
Erich Moechel, Quintessenz (AT)  
Andreas Krisch, Vibe (AT)  
Maurice Wessling, Bits of Freedom (NL)  
Tanja Krabbe, Digital Rights (DK) – Sunday 9.6.only  
Mikko Välimäki, EFFi (FI)  
Meryem Marzouki, IRIS (FR)

There were also a couple of observants present who participated in the discussions.

### Saturday 8.6

**History.** Maurice Wessling opened the meeting and went through the events so far. First meeting was held more than a year ago in spring 2001. After HAL 2001 eff-europe mailinglist was started by Tom Vogt, which resulted in a meeting in Berlin during Chaos Communications Congress 2001. In January 2002 the discussions went further in Amsterdam meeting, where it was agreed on basic principles: the association will be founded as a cooperative body of national organization. The statutes of the new association were drafted during the following months. Ville Oksanen from EFFi participated actively in drafting. It was agreed that the association to be founded according to Belgium law. It would also open an office in Brussels to ensure efficient communications to the EU. So, the focus would be therefore EU-level issues. According to Belgium law only natural persons can found an association so we needed one more founding meeting...



**Statutes.** Then, the draft statutes were discussed. There was no real discussion about the name, which would be the originally proposed European Digital Rights (EDRi). Domain name edri.org was already secured. Objectives of the association created more discussion. Andy Mueller-Maguhn argued strongly against a drafted goal to "promote fair use of intellectual property", which I supported. In between the debate Andy for example made me a provocative question if I wanted to live in a world where someone is able to own information. A trick question. There were also suggestions to add the promotion of human rights and references to UN agreements to the objectives. The debate ended up Andy drafting such a fundamentally different version of objectives that we returned to the original draft with minor changes including the replacement of the intellectual property clause with "access to information". And we got further.



*Discussion continued for four hours...*

Means generated also some discussion. The roles of board and general assembly were not defined that clearly. Maurice explained how the governance between board and general assembly works according to Belgium and other laws. But we found out that it is not realistic that member delegates in the general assembly and the members of the board would always be different persons. In practice the member organizations form the general assembly so it is only a technical detail who is their representative.

**Signing.** The rest of the clauses needed only minor modifications. After four long hours the statutes were ready for signing.



*Finally names on the paper!*

## Sunday 9.6

**Practical matters.** The schedule on Sunday morning was much more flexible compared to the previous night. We drafted a press release, talked about EDRI's website, how to attract new members and funding, relations to other organizations, activities and in general how to proceed from here. A temporary board consisting of Maurice as president and Andy and Meryem as members was elected to file founding papers, workout internal regulation, start setting-up Brussels office and complete other running tasks until the first general assembly in early 2003. Membership fee was suggested to be 100 EUR per year. Ideas were thrown about a European yearly conference similar to CFP in the United States and participating in various joint projects with other organizations.

**Final remarks.** EFFi was the only founding organization whose name includes 'EF'. At least Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Italy have also active EF associations but they were not present at the founding meeting though Sweden and Norway participated in the preparing email discussions. The position of EFFi is not to promote any competing EU-level user rights organizations and to encourage all national user rights organizations sharing same goals to join EDRI.



*Time for late night celebration.*