



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
STATE AGENCY FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

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Sofia, 17 May 2009

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my greatest pleasure to congratulate everyone on the occasion of 17 May, the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, a day that every year marks the founding of the International Telecommunication Union in 1865 and commemorates its important role in ensuring the communications in this globalized world.


At its last session, the ITU Council, which I have the honour to chair, has adopted "Protecting children in cyberspace", as the theme of this special day, a theme that is considered without any doubt as an important task for institutions, non-governmental organizations and every member of our societies.

For less than two decades the Internet has changed the lives of people all over the world and most significantly the lives of our children. The common use of the Internet and the mobile devices has created a whole new way of living and thinking, new perspectives and opportunities. The possibility to have access to information on virtually every aspect of life, to be able to communicate with people sharing all kinds of different points of view and values contributes to the raising of new generations of young people, open-minded and indiscriminative, informed and concerned about their environment, about people, about future.

Unfortunately, every opportunity creates not only positive but also negative effects and in this regard cyberspace makes no exception with children being among the most vulnerable to exploitation and inducement to engage in unlawful activities. Protecting children in cyberspace is undoubtedly our duty and we most vigorously support, originate and take part in every initiative targeting the protection of the children in cyberspace, including the Child Online Protection (COP) initiative, an important part of ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda. At the same time we work actively on national initiatives raising the awareness among all members of the society of the need of conscious, intended and effective protection of children in cyberspace.

While making serious efforts in creating a universally accessible information society where everybody and especially children can benefit from the opportunities provided by the constantly evolving ICTs, we also work and will continue working in order to make cyberspace a safe and positive environment for our children.

We celebrate this 17 May both conscious of the importance and the significant role of the ICTs in our world and its future and of our responsibility to ensure that the use of the ICTs is safe for us and our children. The children are our present and our future, they are our world and we rely on everybody's support for all the initiatives aiming at their protection in the cyberspace.

  
**Dr. Plamen Vatchkov**  
*Chairman of the State Agency for Information  
Technology and Communications and  
Chairman of the ITU Council*