WHO ARE WE?

OpenForum Europe (OFE) is a not-for-profit industry organisation launched in 2002 with the mission to facilitate open, competitive choice for IT users. OFE is supported by major IT suppliers, as well as a number of national and pan-European partners, representing many tens of thousands of SMEs free and open source supporters in Europe. We work closely with the Commission, the European Parliament, national and local governments both directly and via our national partners. At the European level, we fully support the European Commission’s Digital Agenda, which aims to create a flourishing digital economy in Europe by 2020. In the United Kingdom we launched a formal OFE UK Chapter, firmly endorsing the UK Cabinet Office’s Open Standards Principles, and with the goal of allowing wider and easier interchange between community volunteers and supporters and the public sector.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We devote much of our time to explaining the merits of openness in computing to politicians and legislators in Brussels and across Europe. Open Source, Standards, Procurement, Cloud and Internet are among our main focus areas. We maintain an ongoing dialogue with key decision makers, participate actively in public consultations, and often serve as an interlocutor between legislators and the wider open computing community. Throughout the year we run a series of focused roundtables that bring together academics, industry experts and policymakers. Once a year we host a bigger event at which top European policymakers and thought leaders from the industry share their views on broader themes related to openness in computing.

HOW DO WE WORK?

The OFE Task Forces is where we develop our thinking and coordinate activities within a particular focus area. Participation is open to OFE members (who also chair the Task Forces) and OpenForum Academy Fellows. To ensure quality and depth of the debate, non-members with a specific expertise in the topic area may also be invited to join OFE Task Forces:

- Cloud and Open Internet
- Standardisation
- Public Procurement
- Access to Knowledge

The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing a commercial strategy to drive the business and manage stakeholder, staff and social interests of OFE. The Executive Council decides on the strategic orientations of the organisation.
WHAT WE STAND FOR

To us, Openness is not a political statement, development method, or business model. Openness is a means to an end. It is essential that we do not lose sight of our objectives, including:

1. **User Centricity** - Providing choice to consumers.
2. **Competition** - To ensure constant innovation, a level playing field between producers is necessary, forcing them to compete on functionality and quality.
3. **Flexibility** - The possibility to construct complex combinations of products and services from different providers where parts can be upgraded or replaced.
4. **Sustainability** - Enabling the construction of products and services that are sustainable in terms of access to information, cost and impact on the environment.
5. **Community** - Coordination is needed to meet these objectives. This implies a community in which everyone can participate, where no single entity dominates and where decisions are taken via a transparent process.

**OPEN... SOURCE**

The Open Source definitions embody the openness principles directly: user centricity, competition and community are at the heart of open source, and Open Source Software excels in providing users sustainability. Open Source licenses ensure that interested parties can always take over if a popular product risks to be abandoned by its main contributors/maintainers.

**OPEN... STANDARDS**

Our Openness principles align with the UK government’s definition of the characteristics of open standards (“Open Standards Principles” document), which highlights: collaboration, transparency, due process, fair access, market support, rights. Taken together, these characteristics implies the existence of a community around the standard and will favour competition, flexibility and sustainability. We believe that these characteristics of Open Standards, should guide the process of selecting standards for use in government systems.

**OPEN... INTERNET**

The Internet was built with openness at its core. It is built on free, publicly available standards that anyone can access and build on, and treats all traffic that flows across the network in roughly the same way. This has enabled the development of a decentralised, open ecosystem with no single gatekeeper that has spurred enormous creativity and growth. Concepts such as network neutrality, the end-to-end connectivity, and multilateral governance are key to its continued openness.

**AND MORE**

We are also active in other areas, such as cloud computing, which offers a unique opportunity to realise advantages on a global scale, but also new challenges in terms of vendor lock-in and security and privacy of information stored in the cloud, and public procurement, which should in our view ensure accountable and transparent use of public funds, maximise competition, and help drive innovation by delivering the best value public services to citizens and business.
A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACTIVITIES

A VOICE RECOGNISED BY POLICY MAKERS


AN EYE ON EU POLICY

Originally developed exclusively for our members, our monthly Public Policy Review (PPR) now reaches a wider audience through direct subscriptions. The focus and the level of insight of the PPR go well beyond the generic reports provided by monitoring consultancies to provide relevant analysis of policy developments with a specific focus on the Openness angle. Subscribers to the PPR have the possibility to work directly with our team of policy analysts to tailor the report to their particular interests.

A FORUM TO DISCUSS NEW IDEAS


- Round Table: Open standards and open source in public procurement – from policy to implementation [http://bit.ly/1IGQK7l](http://bit.ly/1IGQK7l)


- Round Table: Ensuring the security of critical ICT Infrastructure after Heartbleed: Should we leave it to the Community or does Government have a role? [http://bit.ly/1waW1xe](http://bit.ly/1waW1xe)
A NETWORK OF EXPERTISE

OFE benefits from a wide range of expertise from its members, representing some of the key players in the ICT marketplace. Additionally, Openforum Academy (OFA) which is the think tank arm of OFE was set up to examine the current paradigm shift towards openness in computing, and to explore how this trend is changing the role of computing in society. OpenForum Academy provides a link with academia in order to facilitate new input and insight into the key issues which impact the openness of the IT market. Central to the operation of OpenForum Academy are the Fellows, each selected as individual experts and contributors to the work of OFA. OFA currently counts more than 40 Fellows, all supporting and providing valuable input to OFA work.

MEET THE OFE TEAM

Graham Taylor
Chief Executive

Diana Cocoru
Policy Analyst

Karel De Vriendt
Non-Executive Director

Sachiko Muto
Director

Rod Norman
Webmaster

Mel McIntyre
Non-Executive Director

Maël Brunet
Director, European Policy & Government Relations

Bob Blatchford
Non-Executive Director

Alea Fairchild
Non-Executive Director

Shane Coughlan
OFA Fellowship coordinator

Basil Cousins
Non-Executive Director

GET IN TOUCH

+32 2 210 02 80  info@openforumeurope.org

www.openforumeurope.org  @openforumeurope