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Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at press conference on the launch of the EU's Cyber Security Strategy

Ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to be here today with Commissioners Kroes and Malmström to present the EU's Cyber Security Strategy.

This is our vision of how to prevent and respond to the growing problem of cyber attacks and cyber crime.

We all know what a huge difference the internet has made to people's lives across the world.

As the Arab Spring showed, the internet and social media can play a vital role in allowing young people, women and the marginalised to link up and call for change.

But we also know that the web has a dark side.

There are an estimated 150,000 computer viruses in circulation daily, and a similar number of computers are compromised every day.

The cost of cybercrime is hundreds of billions of euros every year.

Cyber attacks on major international organisations and governments have become a daily reality.

And I would like to point particularly to the need to protect our children from those who would threaten or abuse them.

This is unacceptable in every walk of life, and it is unacceptable in cyberspace too.

These two sides to the coin mean that we have to find a fine balance in our policy-making.

P R E S S

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At the heart of our policy is our firm belief that the protection of fundamental rights is as important in the virtual world as it is in the real world – we are united in Europe on this principle.

For cyberspace to remain open and free, the same norms, principles and values that we uphold offline must also apply online.

The European Union is determined to promote and defend its values online. For everyone to enjoy the benefits of cyberspace it has to remain free and open.

It is a guiding principle of EU Cyber diplomacy. But we also have to recognise our responsibilities. We need to agree the norms of behaviour in cyberspace between countries.

Some important initiatives have already been launched to build trust and confidence between countries.

There is a need to establish crisis communication lines and to enhance dialogues on cyber issues.

Trust and confidence should be improved not only between states, but also between private and public sector.

The Strategy we are launching today sets out a number of priorities to improve IT systems, reduce cyber crime, and establish an international cyberspace policy for the EU.

This means looking at how Member States can work better together and what the EU institutions and agencies can do to help them.

It means improving cooperation between different EU policy areas, and promoting coordination between the military and civilian sides.

It means working closely with our international partners, the private sector and civil society.
Ladies and gentlemen:

The expansion of the internet has been a success story.

The new EU strategy is an important moment to work together for a safe, secure and free internet.

Thank you.

Useful links:

[IP/13/94](#): EU Cybersecurity plan to protect open internet and online freedom and opportunity

[MEMO/13/71](#): Proposed Directive on Network and Information Security – frequently asked questions

[SPEECH/13/105](#): Stepping up the fight against cybercriminals to secure a free and open Internet

[SPEECH/13/104](#): Using cybersecurity to promote European values

Joint communication: [Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace - JOIN\(2013\) 1 final - 7/2/2013](#)

For audio-visual material please see [EBS website](#)
