



For Immediate Release
November 30, 2000

Contact: Kimberley Claman
+1(703) 284-5329
Anders Halvorsen
+1(703) 288-1425

Global High Tech Industry Group Voices Concerns Over Draft Cyber-Crime Convention

Fairfax, VA. - The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) today issued a statement to [Council of Europe](#) General Secretary Walter Schwimmer, voicing concerns over the latest revision of the draft COE [Convention](#) on Cyber-Crime, but supported the objectives of improving international law enforcement cooperation and mutual legal assistance to keep pace with the increasingly international environment. This legally-binding text would be the first international treaty to address criminal law and procedural aspects of various types of offending behavior directed against computer systems, networks or data, and aims to harmonize national legislation in this field, facilitate investigations and improve co-operation between the authorities of the 41 member states. The draft Convention is expected to be finalized by an expert group by mid-December 2000 and could be adopted by Ministers as early as September 2001. Given the importance of the subject, non-member States, such as Canada, Japan, South Africa and the United States, also actively participate in the negotiations.

In the statement, WITSA expressed serious concerns with several of the provisions contained in the [24th revision](#) of the draft cyber-crime convention, dated November 19, 2000. In its current form, the draft convention could impose burdensome data preservation requirements on Internet service providers (ISPs); make ISPs liable for third party actions; and restrict legitimate activities on the Internet.

“The international enforcement problems implicated by crime using information systems, as well as the substantive problem of crimes committed against information systems, require close cooperation and dialogue between government and the information industry”, said Harris N. Miller, President of WITSA. WITSA recently launched a global partnership between industry and government leaders from around the world as the outcome of the October 16-17 2000 inaugural Global Information Security Summit in Washington, D.C. “WITSA, as well as many other industry and Internet user groups, have voiced concerns over many provisions contained in the draft Convention, which really indicates that this important process is just beginning and that all parties should take great care not to make premature decisions”, Miller added.

“Many of the changes made to the draft Convention over the past several months have been largely cosmetic, and clearly fall short of addressing the concerns of the IT industry and other groups”, said David A. Olive, WITSA Public Policy Chairman. “It bears remembering that often the most effective way to counter cyber crime is through technical innovation, not burdensome legislation”, Olive added. “WITSA is committed to participation in that dialogue, and to reaching a consensus on carefully tailored measures that will both support effective international law

enforcement and foster continued growth and innovation in the information technology sector.” A copy of the statement is available at the WITSA site at <http://www.witsa.org>.

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) is a consortium of 41 information technology (IT) industry associations from economies around the world. As the global voice of the IT industry, WITSA is dedicated to advocating policies that advance the industry's growth and development; facilitating international trade and investment in IT products and services; strengthening WITSA's national industry associations through the sharing of knowledge, experience, and critical information; providing members with a vast network of contacts in nearly every geographic region of the world; and hosting the biennial World Congress on Information Technology, the premier industry sponsored global IT event, and the biennial Global Public Policy Summit. Founded in 1978 and originally known as the World Computing Services Industry Association, WITSA has increasingly assumed an active advocacy role in international public policy issues affecting the creation of a robust global information infrastructure.