

**SEEDIG and national IGF initiatives in
South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area**

**Virtual meeting II
29 February 2016**

Summary

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The aim of the meeting was to continue discussions about modalities for enhancing the communication between SEEDIG and national IGF initiatives from South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area, and to exchange information about updates from and next steps for both SEEDIG and national IGFs.

1. Updates from national IGF initiatives

National IGF initiatives participating in the meeting shared some updates about their past and planned activities.

- **Georgia (planned IGF initiative).** The process for building a national IGF initiative is evolving, and several entities have expressed interest to contribute to this process. A location has already been identified for the first meeting of the Georgian IGF, with in-kind support from the government. Support is now searched for technical aspects related to building a website and a mailing list to be used for communication and outreach purposes. One remaining challenge is related to engaging civil society and identifying entities that could be interested in contributing to the national IGF. On this aspect, it was mentioned that a list of civil society organisations from several countries in the region has been set up as part of a different project, and this could prove to be helpful for the Georgian IGF. More details regarding this list are to be shared.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina.** The second annual meeting of the national IGF is tentatively scheduled to be held in October. As compared to the first meeting, which was planned in only three months, more time is now available for preparing the second meeting, and this will give organisers an opportunity to focus more on the bottom-up dimension of the process, in terms of launching a call for proposals for issues to be discussed at the meeting and involving the community more substantially into the programme planning process. Fund raising activities will also be carefully considered, and efforts will be made to ensure that the meeting will

benefit from as many technical facilities as possible (such as webstreaming and remote participation).

- Participants were reminded that the IGF Secretariat is assisting IGF initiatives with remote participation facilities (free access to a remote participation platform) for their annual meetings. They were encouraged to contact the Secretariat to discuss the details.
- **Armenia IGF.** Plans are undergoing for a second annual meeting to be held most probably in October. More time will be dedicating to reaching out to the local community and involving it into the planning process, especially with regard to the building the programme of the meeting; a call for proposals for issues to be discussed at the meeting is planned to be launched in April. Currently, possible sponsors are being approached and discussions with them are to be held in the upcoming period. A location for the meeting has also been identified, at a local university.
- **Croatia IGF.** The second annual meeting is scheduled to be held in early June. The programme will cover three or four specific Internet governance topics, which were selected by the organising committee from a larger list of topics. The plan is to have these three or four topics announced by 15 March. An ongoing challenge for the initiative is the involvement of the civil society.

The online spreadsheet¹ that was created after the previous virtual meeting (outlining challenges, lessons learnt and good practices from national IGF initiatives) was updated to reflect the new input provided by participants.

Participants were informed about two initiatives launched by the IGF Secretariat and the EuroDIG Secretariat with the aim to build some documents outlining good practices and guidelines for IGF initiatives. While the IGF Secretariat is coordinating a global process for this purpose, inviting all interested IGF initiatives to contribute, the EuroDIG Secretariat plans to have a session at its June meeting dedicated to discussions on a possible set of guidelines for national IGF initiatives in Europe (with the possibility of having a draft document prepared in advance). Both processes are aimed to result in a written output that could later be used by both existing and planned initiatives in their planning processes and in addressing the challenges they face. Participants in the meeting were invited to join both processes and to contribute to building these documents. It was also mentioned that, at a later stage, such documents could be used as a starting point for some guidelines specifically addressed to IGF initiatives in countries in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area.

The IGF Secretariat also outlined the fact that it organises regular calls with national and regional IGF initiatives, with the purpose of strengthening the communications with and

¹ Available at: <http://bit.ly/1RkPqe4>

between them. Participants were invited to subscribe to the dedicated mailing² list run by the Secretariat and to participate in these calls.

2. Updates from SEEDIG

An update was given on the status of the preparatory process for the SEEDIG 2016 meeting. It was explained that the programme outline for the meeting is now available on the SEEDIG website³ and includes four sessions on: Internet governance, access and standardisation, cybersecurity and human rights on the Internet. These sessions are now further refined and developed by organizing teams, which are open to any interested individuals. The deadline for the finalisation of all sessions is 3 April.

Participants in the meeting were invited to review the programme outline and consider joining one or several of the organizing teams. It was also said that it would be helpful if information about the SEEDIG session planning process could be distributed via the national IGF initiatives networks, in an effort to reach out to more individuals and encourage them to participate.

It was also mentioned that a speakers' corner has been included as an addition to the SEEDIG 2016 programme, and it would be dedicated to short presentations on specific Internet governance issues. Proposals for such issues were still welcome at the time of the meeting, and IGF initiatives were invited to promote the call for proposals among their communities.

IGF initiatives were also informed about SEEDIG's plan to launch an Internet governance survey addressed mainly to stakeholders in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area. The aim of this survey would be to collect information on how Internet governance, in general, and Internet governance issues and processes, in particular, are perceived by the Internet community in the region. It would cover aspects such as: interest and participation in IG processes and organizations (motivation, challenges, opportunities), Internet-related issues considered as most pressing at national level and in SEE, degree of satisfaction with national, regional and global IG mechanisms, etc. The aim is for the survey data to be compiled and reflected in a report to be presented at the SEEDIG meeting in April. It was said that, as soon as the survey is launched, IGF initiatives would be informed and kindly invited to promote it among their networks.⁴

3. Next steps

A discussion was held on the value and usefulness of continuing to have regular meetings between SEEDIG and national IGF initiatives. It was agreed that such meetings should continue to be held at least once a month, as a modality to maintain and enhance the

² http://mail.intgovforum.org/mailman/listinfo/igfregionals_intgovforum.org

³ <http://www.seedig.net/seedig-2016-programme/>

⁴ The survey was launched after the meeting, and is available at:
<http://www.seedig.net/seedig-survey/>

communication, collaboration and exchange of information between SEEDIG and national IGFs.

It was also noted that, in line with the objective of enhancing linkages between IGF initiatives in SEE, SEEDIG's website has dedicated pages with information about national IGF initiatives⁵ and other Internet governance events⁶ in the region. These pages are work in progress, and they are to be further improved and updated with more information. Participants were invited to inform SEEDIG's executive committee about any other details they would want to be published with regard to their initiatives (such as the dates and places of their annual meetings, websites, etc.), as well as about other IG events that they are aware of and are not currently listed by SEEDIG.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for late March or early April.

⁵ <http://www.seedig.net/national-igf-initiatives/>

⁶ <http://www.seedig.net/other-initiatives/>