

## Internet Governance in South Eastern Europe

### INTERNET GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTS

#### Infrastructure



Under new rules applicable from 1 January, providers of electronic communications services in **Croatia** are required to apply different tariffs for their services in cases of malfunction or failures. [If](#) a service malfunction persists for more than 24 hours, the operator has to reduce the fee it charges the affected customer for the respective service, or offer other form of material refunding. There are also new rules regarding the minimum Internet speed that providers are required to offer to their customers, with the threshold being increased from 50 to 70 percent of the speed stipulated in the service agreement.

Also in **Croatia**, a new law [came](#) into force detailing measures aimed at reducing the costs of implementing high speed electronic communication networks. The law contains provisions related to the joint use of existing physical infrastructures, and it introduces an obligation for network operators to meet all reasonable requests for access to their physical infrastructure, under fair and reasonable terms and conditions. Other provisions are related to the coordination of civil works, and the procedures that authorities need to follow with regard to granting permits for civil works involving the roll-out of electronic communications infrastructures.

In **Serbia**, the private sector is increasingly working on expanding the coverage of 4G networks across the country. Most recently, Telenor Serbia has announced [plans](#) to invest an additional €30 million in 2017, to further expand the coverage of its networks and enhance its capabilities. The company's aim is to ensure that, by mid 2017, at least 80% of the country's population is covered by 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) networks.

**Kosovo\*** is facing the risk of having to pay €400 million in compensation to German investment company Axos Capital. The company has filed a case in an international arbitration court on claims that it was unjustifiably prevented to buy Kosovo Telecom back in 2013. [The](#) 2013 planned sale of Kosovo Telecom to Axos Capital was blocked at that time by the Kosovo\* parliament. The sought for compensation is said [to](#) amount to 10–20% of Kosovo's\* budget.

#### Cybersecurity



A study conducted by the Ministry of Public Administration in **Montenegro** on the scale of cyber threats to the country has revealed an increase in the number of hacking attacks in 2016. [This](#) is particularly the case for attacks on information systems of state bodies and legal entities, which have become more sophisticated. In response to the analysis, the government plans to introduce mandatory training for all public employees, establish a joint team to deal with incidents, and strengthen the capacity of police and intelligence services to prevent hacking, among others.

In **Ukraine**, a power blackout that affected the country's capital on 17–18 December last year was caused by a cyber-attack, according to the country's national power company Ukrenergo. [It](#) was discovered that workstations and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems were affected by 'a premeditated and multi-level invasion'. Law enforcement authorities are currently investigating the incident, to determine the penetration point, as well as possible network elements that may have been infected with malware not yet active.

The hacker group 'Anonymous Bosnia' attacked [the](#) website of the Federal Police in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, leaving it inaccessible. The message left on the website's landing page said: 'The game has changed, we are everywhere. We are your neighbours, friends, colleagues, relatives. We are your mailmen, barber, seller and lawyer. In a world where corruption, repression and injustice is hiding its face, Anonymous is there to get them by force. We are following government officials, and soon we will publish all. Expect us!' Five days later, the Federal Police confirmed [that](#) two persons suspected to be the main actors of the attack were arrested.



Economic – other



In **Serbia**, several companies, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and business associations located in the city of Zrenjanin have formed a local *ICT Cluster*, with the main objective of strengthening collaboration and increasing the competitiveness of its members on domestic and foreign markets. The Cluster is also intended to promote innovation and encourage the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) and digital tools among businesses and entrepreneurs. In Belgrade, the first private investment fund for startups – *ICT Hub Venture* – was established, and it is targeted at investing in and mentoring recently created ICT companies.

In **Romania**, the government has extended the applicability of a measure aimed at exempting certain categories of programmers from income taxes. Programmers can benefit from the income tax exemption if they are employed by companies whose object of activity is the creation of software, and if their incomes result solely from the creation of software. The measure, adopted by the Romanian government several years ago, is motivated by the gains it brings to the state budget (mainly, companies are attracted by the measure and choose to invest in Romania, therefore becoming taxpayers to the state budget).

Capacity  
development



**Ukraine, Turkey, Romania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina** feature in a top of colleges and universities with the best coders in the world. The top was put together by Hacker Rank, following a University Ranking Competition during which educational institutions were ranked based on both number of participants and high scores. Among the top 50 colleges and universities with best coders are: the National Taras Shevchenko University of Kiev, Ukraine (position 7); Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey (position 18); Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (position 19), Highschool Grigore Moisil, Iași, Romania (position 20); Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (position 33); and University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (position 48).

In **Serbia**, B92 Fund and the Ministry of Education have launched the *KODigranje* national campaign, within the framework of the *Battle for Knowledge* project. The aim of the campaign is to promote digital literacy among primary school children, and to prepare them for the digital economy. Children are taught programming through games, as it is expected that this will help them develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. *Battle for Knowledge* also aims at equipping elementary schools in Serbia with information technology (IT) and robotic equipment, and training teachers to use such equipment as a teaching tool.

**Serbia** and India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which aims to promote cooperation between the two countries in the field of IT and electronics. The MoU is also directed at fostering cooperation between private companies, and provide capacity building for governmental institutions and other public and private organisations within the countries.

Development  
– other issues



In **Serbia**, authorities are working on developing a platform for data exchange and e-filing in the judiciary sector. The platform is aimed at facilitating communication across various judicial authorities (courts, public prosecutor offices, notaries, law enforcement authorities, ministry of justice, etc.), by simplifying the exchange of data between information systems, and enhancing the security of data exchange processes.

The **Croatian** County Association and the IT consulting company Coin have launched a project which uses open data to provide citizens with information on how several counties in Croatia are making use of the public budget. The *OpenBudget* project, which covers 15 out of the 20 counties, relies on graphic visualisations, allowing individuals to view data in a more simple and easy to understand way. The overall aim of the initiative is to contribute to better awareness on public expenditure among citizens, as well as more involvement in the public budget decision-making and implementation processes.

Freedom of  
expression



In **Turkey**, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has announced that, over the past six months, over 3700 individuals have been detained for questioning, on allegations that they were using social media to support terrorist organisations. Of these, over 1600 individuals have been formally arrested, while 84 were still being questioned. Moreover, 10.000 citizens are under investigation over similar concerns. Over the past year, there have been several media reports on access to social networks being restricted in the country, with authorities arguing that such measures were needed to preserve the country's safety.

According to media reports, **Serbia's** governing party (Serbian Progressive Party) has 'an Internet troll unit', dedicated to 'creating positive realities and portraying the critics as enemies of the state'. The trolls are reportedly well organised and well paid (apparently, pay rates start at 370 euros – amounting to the average monthly income in Serbia). The troll teams regulate their activities like a game and are ranked according to the number of comments, likes, or tweets they 'left behind'. SHARE Foundation has documented the effects of this 'phenomenon' and found out that there have been cases where people have lost their jobs after posting something critical about the government online.

Jurisdiction



**Turkey** plans to build its own domestic search engine and email service – as alternative to global services such as Google and Gmail – to be compatible with national culture and values, according to statements given in a TV interview by Minister of Communications Ahmet Arslan. The plans seem to be motivated by the desire of authorities to have Internet users data stored within national borders.

## EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



### Infrastructure and Technologies [↗](#)

#### **Sofia Artificial Intelligence Summit | 24 January | Sofia, Bulgaria** [↗](#)

The event brought together startups, corporates, and academics working in the field of artificial intelligence (AI), to discuss the current state of AI technologies, their value for businesses, and their broader social and economic implications. The event revealed new trends, industry insights, and practicable approaches of applying AI algorithms around text analysis, audio, image, video, and structured data.

#### **National Cyrillic Internet Domain .CPB Anniversary | 27 January | Belgrade, Serbia** [↗](#)

Under the theme *Čirbasters*, the fifth anniversary of the national Cyrillic Internet domain .CPB was dedicated to breaking false myths about the Cyrillic script on the Internet. It focused on offering counter-arguments to the frequently invoked reasons for not using the Cyrillic alphabet online: 'It's easier for me to write Latin alphabet.'; 'Under the Constitution, both scripts are equal.'; 'It's a reflection of nationalism.'; 'We cannot go in Europe with Cyrillic.'; and 'Cyrillic e-mail doesn't work.'. Panel discussions tried to 'unmask' those myths and offer solutions on how Cyrillic can be used on the Internet.



### Capacity Development [↗](#)

#### **SEEDIG Virtual Planning Meetings | 17-18 January 2017 | Online** [↗](#)

Each year, SEEDIG organises open virtual planning meetings with the aim to engage the regional Internet governance community in the planning of its activities. In January this year, two virtual meetings focused on running consultations with the community regarding the programme for the SEEDIG 2017 annual meeting, scheduled to take place on 24–25 May, in Ohrid. [↗](#) All interested stakeholders from South Eastern Europe and the neighboring area, including stakeholders who have submitted the proposals, were invited to attend either of the two meetings. Topics discussed included: SEEDIG 2017 – process overview; Topics proposed for SEEDIG 2017 – overview and discussion; Format for SEEDIG 2017; Overarching theme for SEEDIG 2017; Next steps in building the programme; Intersessional activities; and SEEDIG legal structure.

#### **Yandex Programming School | 20 January | Vanadzor, Armenia** [↗](#)

Twenty-eight (28) schoolchildren of 9-11 grades from Vanadzor were selected for Yandex Programming School, which opened on 20

January 2017. The course, organised by Yandex and the Enterprise Incubator Foundation, lasts for one year and is offered for free. It aims at teaching children the basics of programming and code writing, and offering them the perspectives of a possible future integration on the ICT marketplace.

#### **Global Game Jam International Hackathon | 20-22 January | Yerevan, Armenia** [↗](#)

The Global Game Jam (GGJ) international hackathon [↗](#) was held in Armenia for the first time this year. As the number of participants was limited, only 50 people took part in the event. After the Hackathon was completed, developed games were placed on the Global Game Jam website. This event was organised jointly with Noor Games and the Union of Information Technology Enterprises, and was part of a global initiative which covered a total of 98 countries. [↗](#)



### Development – Other Issues [↗](#)

#### **STARTIT MIT Hackathon | 27-29 December | Belgrade, Serbia** [↗](#)

The first medical hackathon in Serbia was organised by Startit Center and MIT Hacking Medicine. Multidisciplinary teams worked on developing software and hardware prototype solutions for problems the Serbian patients and medical doctors are facing with regard to chronic diseases. The objective of the event is building an ecosystem fostering collaboration between the tech industry and the healthcare system.

#### **Open Data Meetup | 29 December | Belgrade, Serbia** [↗](#)

The event was organised by the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade. The main objective was to introduce to academics and students the concept and the value of open data, as well as the possibilities of application of information technologies into politics. Many experts spoke about the notion of open data and related developments. A focused discussion was developed around the status of open data in Serbia.

#### **ICT for Water Management: Enabling Smart Data | 20 January | Bucharest, Romania** [↗](#)

Organised by the University Politehnica of Bucharest, the event was aimed at discussing recent developments in the use of new technologies – such as big data and smart data, Internet of Things, cloud computing, and web services – for water resource management. Participants looked into how technologies can contribute to addressing problems such as water scarcity and pollution, unreasonable use of water, and floods.

#### **Pecha-Kucha on Public Governance | 23-27 January | Yerevan, Armenia** [↗](#)

The second Armenian Public Sector Innovation week, held under the theme *Public Governance: what's next?* was dedicated to exploring public governance and the potential role of technology in achieving better policy-making. The Pecha-Kucha presentation format (showing 20 images, each for 20 seconds) helped participants explore the topic of governance in non-formal and creative ways.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Cybersecurity [↗](#)

**Creating Favourable Cybersecurity Posture in Serbia | 20-22 December | Petnica, Serbia** [↗](#)

The event was organised by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Serbia, DiploFoundation, Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), and Petnica Science Center. Developed around the topic *Beyond the national information security strategy – creating favourable cybersecurity posture in Serbia*, it gathered representatives from public institutions, the private sector, and civil society organisations, to discuss the key strategic components of the cybersecurity framework in Serbia. Discussions revolved around possible models for a public-private partnership in areas such as the protection of critical infrastructure, incident response, education, or building cybersecurity competences.

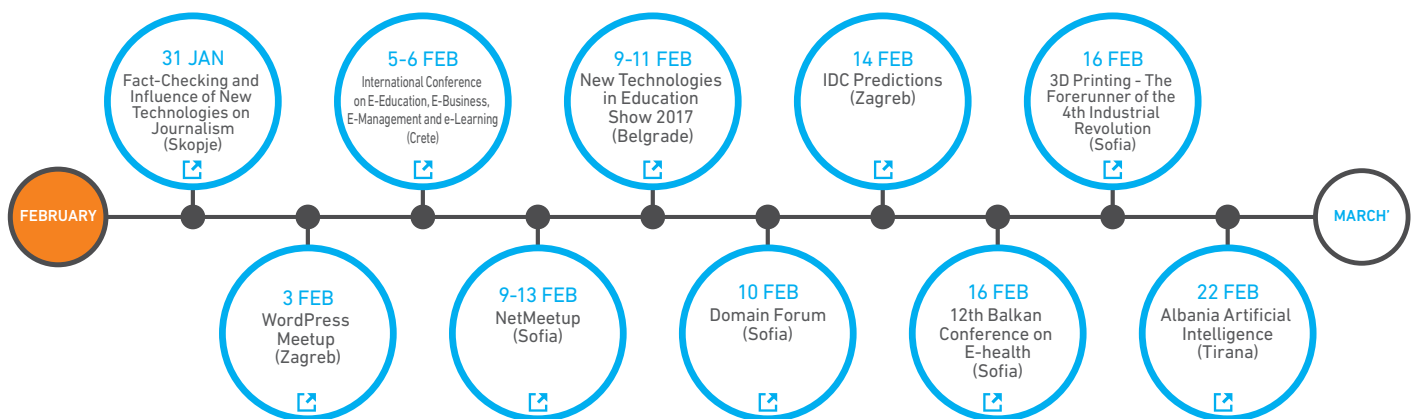


Human Rights [↗](#)

**Dialogues on Feminist Principles of Internet | 26 January | Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina** [↗](#)

One World Platform (OWP), a non-governmental organisation from Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with feminist web portal Ženskaposla.ba organised a round-table discussion on the principles of feminism and their relevance in the digital era. The event was supported by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). Many of the local civil society activists and other stakeholders that are working within area of gender, sexuality, reproductive rights, digital women rights, engaged into discussion.

AHEAD IN FEBRUARY



Join us in preparing the next issue. Send us [↗](#) updates about Internet governance developments and/or events in your countries. Comments on this issue are also welcome.