

## Internet Governance in South Eastern Europe

### INTERNET GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTS

#### Domain Name System



In **Romania**, several civil society groups, domain name registrars, and other Internet stakeholders have sent a letter [to](#) the Ministry of Communications and Information Society outlining several principles seen as key for any regulation concerning the management of the .ro country code top-level domain (ccTLD). The letter came in the context of a call for public input launched by the Ministry in January 2017, when it announced its intention to elaborate a draft law on .ro. The seven principles include legitimacy and connections with the Romanian Internet community, transparency and openness, accountability, predictability, recognition of the purely technical role of the registry and registrars, regulatory flexibility, and a clear separation between the ccTLD registry and domain name registrars.

Also in **Romania**, the Parliamentary Committee on information and communications technology has debated a draft law on the management and administration of .ro [and](#) issued a report [recommending](#) its rejection. Elaborated in 2013, the draft law proposed, among others, a multistakeholder model for the management of the country's top level domain, a separation between the registry and registrar function, as well as the introduction of an annual maintenance fee for .ro domain names. In motivating its decision, the Committee argued that the draft law was not clear enough on aspects related to the registration, suspension, and cancellation of domain name registrations, and the extrajudicial dispute resolution mechanisms.

#### Infrastructure



Argela, a division of Turk Telecom, has opened the first 5G research and development centre – 5G Centre of Excellence – in **Turkey**, at the Ankara Middle East Technical University [. The](#) aim of the centre is to develop 5G technologies for secure communications infrastructures. Research carried out at the Centre is intended to contribute to transforming Turkey into a producer and exporter of 5G technology. Argela engineers and academics from 13 universities will work at the Centre. Entrepreneurs, students, and other academics will have the opportunity to make use of the Centre's facilities in order to test their 5G projects on 5G infrastructure.

In **Greece**, the National Space Agency is working on finalising the production of a new Greek satellite – Hellas Sat 3. According to the country's Digital Policy and Media Minister Nikos Pappas [, the](#) satellite could be used for a variety of applications, in areas such as defence, advanced weather forecasting, flood prevention, and surveillance of borders. Moreover, Hellas Sat 3 will be the only satellite providing Internet access to airplanes in Europe. The satellite, developed in collaboration with the London-based company Immarsat, is to be launched into space on 28 June, from French Guiana.

#### Economic – other



The National Assembly of **Armenia** passed a new law on tax incentives for information technology (IT) companies. According to the law, IT startups will enjoy tax benefits for the first five years of operation, instead of three year as it has previously been the case. IT startup companies with up to 30 employees are exempted from many taxes. In addition, these companies only have to pay an income tax of 10 percent. The former law adopted in 2015 impacted 178 startup companies with 865 employees, and a total turnover of US\$8.2 million.

The competition authority in **Turkey** has launched an investigation aimed to determine whether Google has violated the country's competition legislation [. The](#) authority is looking into whether Google has provided services and has concluded contracts with equipment producers in breach of applicable national competition law. A previous analysis of Google's competition practices has determined the authority not to open an investigation, but the decision was changed following a second evaluation of the situation.

#### Capacity development



In **Serbia**, Tailor's School, in cooperation with the Center for Mothers, and with the support of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, is organising an online training for mothers, called 'Mama programming' [. Following](#) an application round with more than 770 applications, 20 mothers were selected to participate in the training, which started in mid March. Online courses are aimed to teach basic programming languages (HTML, CSS, and JavaScript) to mothers.

Around 140 young people in **Armenia** are involved in the six-month programme 'From Army to IT', launched by the Union of IT Enterprises, and implemented by Synergy company [. The](#) aim of the initiative is to teach programming languages and professional English to around 40 demobilised young people. A series of courses on HTML/CSS /Wordpress, and Linux started in March. The best graduates will have the opportunity to work in Synergy or other leading companies in the country.



Cybersecurity and  
cybercrime



In **Serbia**, the government is taking steps towards the implementation of a previously adopted cybersecurity law. One such step is the adoption and entry into force (starting 2 March) of a regulation detailing the criteria that 'centres for the prevention of security risks in information and communication systems' should meet in order to be included in a dedicated registry maintained by the government. In practical terms, the regulation means that the government is entering the sphere of recognising and regulating privately-owned computer emergency response teams (CERTs). It is expected that this act will open the Serbian cybersecurity market for private companies and other organisations.

Statistical information presented by Kaspersky Lab have revealed that, in 2016, every third Internet user in **Armenia** faced cyber threats, such as malicious programs, hacker attacks, extortion, phishing, spam, etc. Over the course of 2016, the average number of cyber threats faced by an individual Internet user was 13. These statistics place Armenia on the 14th place in the world. However, the rate of threats originating from local networks exceeded those received from outside the country. On average, a user was exposed to local threats 82 times during the previous year. Ten percent of users experienced threats through mobile devices.

According to Wikileaks data, cited by the Bulgarian National Television, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has monitored some 150 Internet Protocol (IP) addresses in **Bulgaria**, belonging to telecom companies, Internet service providers, banks, and universities, among others. It is believed that the targeted IP addresses were 'zombies' used or intended to be used for surveillance and espionage, and most likely the concerned entities were unaware that their computers had been compromised.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, a review presented by the Federal Police Administration revealed that the number of individuals and legal entities in the country that have reported cyber attacks is increasing. Most common types of attacks include phishing and ransomware, and are possible due to attackers exploiting security vulnerability in users' systems and devices. The Department for Fight against Cybercrime issued several recommendations for preventing and mitigating cybercrime, such as: risks assessment and security policies on the use of information system within organisations, anti-virus software, additional authentication measures in the case of online payments, and data back-ups.

Development  
– other issues



In **Serbia**, the Ministry of Public Administration and Self-Government has announced the launch of a new e-government service through which citizens will be reminded, via text messages or e-mail, about the expiration dates of their documents. The service, available from 1 April, will notify citizens that particular documents – identity cards, passports, drivers licences, vehicle registrations – are due to expire within 30 days from the notification date. The Ministry also plans to enhance the functionalities of the e-government portal in order to allow online payment of taxes and the use of credit cards for payments.

Privacy and data  
protection



In **Romania**, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched a public consultation on a draft law aimed to amend the legislation on electronic identity cards. According to the ministry, the eIDs are mainly aimed to facilitate citizens' access to e-government services, as they would allow online authentication and the use of an electronic signature. The eID would also integrate the information currently included in a separate national health card. Citizens would still be able to opt for a non electronic identity card, should they wish to. Commenting on the draft law, civil society group Association for Technology and Internet said that there are at least three fundamental issues that the proposal fails to address: a data protection impact assessment, clarity on who can access the data and how, and a cost-benefit analysis.

Russian technology company Yandex is working together with Turkish mobile operator Turkcell on developing a new search engine in **Turkey**. Branded Yaani, the service would be available exclusively on the territory of Turkey, and all its content would only be in Turkish. The launch of Yaani follows an announcement made in early 2017 by Turkey's Minister of Transport, Navigation and Communications about the country's plan to build a national search engine, compatible with national culture and values, and which would allow the storing of all user data within Turkey's national borders.

Content policy



In **Ukraine**, the Ministry of Information Policy is putting together a list of websites that should be blocked because they 'undermine Ukrainian sovereignty'. According to Global Voices, the initiative targets websites that are used for the dissemination of pro-separatist and pro-Russian information. Information Policy Minister Yuriy Stets said that the list developed by the ministry would include websites that the ministry thinks should be blocked, but that the list would be subject to review by Ukraine's Security Service and an expert council, in line with a procedure that is yet to be developed. Moreover, Stets suggested that the final decisions about blocking certain websites would be taken in a court of law.

Twitter released its quarterly Transparency Report which tracks take-down requests to the micro-blogging site's content in the second half of 2016. The removal requests' summary of Twitter Transparency Report states: 'The largest volume of requests came from **Turkey** (3,076) and France (1,334)'. The report shows that Twitter also received removal requests from either courts or law enforcement agencies in other three countries in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring areas: **Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Greece**.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Infrastructure and technologies [↗](#)

**Days of Internet Domains Serbia (DIDS) 2017 | 7 March | Belgrade, Serbia [↗](#)**

Organised for the eighth consecutive year by the Serbian National Internet Domain Registry Foundation (RNIDS), the DIDS conference was held under the overarching theme 'Internet Search Secrets: Search, Find, Visit'. Discussions revolved around issues such as online content creation, search optimisation, digital marketing, and online advertising. The last segment of the event was dedicated to showcasing stories of successful Internet entrepreneurs in Serbia.

**Smart Cities – Exhibition and Conference for South – East Europe | 7–9 March | Sofia, Bulgaria [↗](#)**

The 'exhibition-conference' event dedicated to intelligent cities was aimed to promote modern technologies and good practices that can transform cities into more environmentally friendly and efficient systems. The exhibition was a meeting point between solution providers and their customers, while the conference provided participants with an opportunity to obtain and exchange information about trends, legislation, and perspectives in the area of smart cities.

**Regional Internet Forum (RIF) 2017 | 8 March | Belgrade, Serbia [↗](#)**

The third edition of the Regional Internet Forum, organised by RNIDS, brought together around 70 participants representing ccTLD registries, public authorities, and the broader Internet community in South Eastern Europe, as well as global Internet organisations. Topics discussed included: content marketing; the role of national registries, and their partnership with the state and the local Internet community; information security; and opportunities for partnership and exchanges of best practices in the region.

**SINOG 3.2 Workshop | 8 March | Ljubljana, Slovenia [↗](#)**

Organised by the Slovenian Network Operators Group (SINOG), the workshop covered practical experiences in the concepts of virtualisation of network functions and services. Addressing today's cloud computing systems and the technology behind it, the event featured discussions and exchanges of good practices regarding the introduction of virtualised networks and services as upgrades to existing models of network functions.

**3D Printing - The Forerunner of the 4th Industrial Revolution | 16 March | Sofia, Bulgaria [↗](#)**

Bulgaria's second National Forum on 3D Printing featured discussions on the developmental potential of 3D printing technologies, as well as practical demonstrations of 3D printing and scanning machines. Topics addresses ranged from analyses, forecasts, and trends in 3D printing technologies, to the use of additive manufacturing in medicine. Participants included, among others, representatives of universities, trade and logistics companies, marketing, advertising and PR agencies, printing houses, and manufacturing enterprises.

**CEE Peering Days | 22–23 March | Ljubljana, Slovenia [↗](#)**

The event brought together network engineers, Internet exchange point (IXP) operators, Internet providers, cloud administrators, and data centre operators in Central and Eastern Europe for two days of presentations, technical workshops, bilateral talks, and networking opportunities. The event highlighted solutions for growing regional challenges, such as distributed denial-of-service mitigation, border gateway protocol resources, and tools drawn from the community for more effective peering.



Cybersecurity [↗](#)

**RIPE NCC Meeting for Ukrainian Law Enforcement Agencies | 6–7 March | Kyiv, Ukraine [↗](#)**

The RIPE Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC) held a two-day meeting for the Ukrainian Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA). In total, 26 representatives attended this meeting, which featured, among others, a presentation on the RIPE Policy Development Process, and demonstrations on how RIPEstat could be used to help law enforcement. Emphasis was put on how to query the RIPE Database to access publicly available registration information. This was the first LEA meeting the RIPE NCC ran in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.

**International Conference on Cybersecurity | 7 March | Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina [↗](#)**

Organised by the Cultural Center 'King Fahd' and held under the auspices of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the conference

looked at how the different stakeholders could work together to address various forms of attacks and abuse in cyberspace. There were also discussions on the challenges that security and law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and around the world face in terms of adequate training, equipment, and capabilities to prevent, detect, and respond to cybercrime acts and cyber attacks.

**5th Annual Cloud Security Alliance CEE Summit | 9 March | Ljubljana, Slovenia [↗](#)**

The summit focused on possible risks and challenges characteristic for the transition of small and medium-sized companies to cloud computing. It addressed issues that employees in charge of information and technology deal with in their work, and it included presentations and lectures on issues such as cloud security vulnerabilities, data security, modalities for data protection, and compliance with applicable legislation.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Development

**22nd International Scientific-Professional Conference on Information Technology (IT) | 27 February – 4 March | Zabljak, Montenegro**

The aim of the conference was to review recent developments in the field of information and communications technologies (ICT), with a specific focus on the implementation of ICT in various areas such as science, education, industry, and society. The conference was supported by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and IEEE Regional Section for Serbia and Montenegro, and featured presentations and roundtable discussions, as well as lectures and short education courses.

**Open Data Day Croatia | 3 March | Zagreb, Croatia**

The event, hosted by the Information Commissioner of Republic of Croatia, was divided into two parts, first of which was dedicated to the necessity of open data, while the second one dealt with the use of open data in Croatia. Topics discussed included the re-use of public sector data, the challenges of developing the digital society in Croatia, European trends in the field of open data, and good practices in the use of open data by the civil society and the public sector.

**Blog Open 10 | 9–11 March | Novi Sad, Serbia**

Celebrating a ten year jubilee, BlogOpen consisted of case studies of the most famous bloggers, and exclusive workshops and plenary discussions on the newest topics in the blogosphere as well as social networks and digital society.

**SEEDIG Meeting at ICANN58 | 13 March | Copenhagen, Denmark**

Stakeholders from South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area gathered together in the context of the ICANN58 meeting, to discuss upcoming activities and preparation for the SEEDIG 2017 meeting.

Following an overview of the various activities undertaken and planned within the framework of SEEDIG (such as the SEEDIG Youth School and the SEEDIG Meeting Fellowship Programme), discussions revolved around possible modalities for strengthening the SEEDIG community and engaging more regional stakeholders in Internet governance processes.

**GameUp | 18 March | Belgrade, Serbia**

The third Game Up intended to familiarise the audience with the domestic gaming industry. The eight hours of lectures were followed by the presentation of the artists' work in the Live-Art Showcase. The audience also had the opportunity to try out more than 32 new video games. The jury chose two winners to present their game at the world gaming conference.

**Ministry of Data | 18–19 March | Zagreb, Croatia**

A competition between teams from countries of the Western Balkans titled 'Ministry of data' was held in Zagreb. Its aim was to encourage people to use open data, and ten teams competed for the win, under two tracks: 'Cities of Tomorrow' challenge, and 'My City Can Do Better' challenge. The competition was won by five groups, one of which is Tax Buster from Pancevo, Serbia.

**Day of Open Integration | 29 March | Zagreb, Croatia**

The question this conference was trying to answer was related to Croatia's readiness for the fourth industrial revolution. The adoption of digital skills and knowledge, readiness for cyber attacks, Croatia as an investment destination, the ascension of Croatia to the Schengen area, modernisation and expansion of the Dubrovnik airport and the conception of Teddy the Guardian were the highlighted features of Day of Open Integration 2017.

AHEAD IN APRIL



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.