

Internet Governance in South Eastern Europe

A monthly overview of developments and activities related to Internet governance and digital policy in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area.

INTERNET GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTS

Infrastructure



The **Serbian** government and the Chinese company Huawei signed an agreement on strategic partnership, aimed at involving the company in the implementation of a project designed to build broadband infrastructure across the country. The ambitious goal of Serbia is to provide all citizens access to 30 megabits per second Internet speed by 2020. Reforms and modernisation are impossible without fast Internet, and this partnership with Huawei is a way for Serbia to participate in the fourth industrial revolution, Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Rasim Ljajić pointed out. [↗](#)

Telenor **Serbia** introduced a new 4G+ signal in seven large Serbian cities, stating that digitalising Serbia is the company's priority. Telenor perceives it as an investment in a network which will be able to meet the highest demands – a 4G signal is one of the requirements (alongside a 4G SIM card and a phone which supports 4G technology) for the use of 4G networks, enabling twice faster Internet speed and instant loading of content. [↗](#)

AzTelekom, the largest telecom operator in **Azerbaijan** by number of subscribers, has announced its plans to introduce fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband to replace its existing asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) network. The CEO of the state-owned operator, Suat Pashayev, stated: 'Fundamental changes in the consumer segment are expected in the near future. Currently we are preparing to provide broadband internet access via FTTH technology. This is the direction in which the telecommunications industry is moving today.' [↗](#)

Kosovo's telecom regulatory authority has confirmed that Serbian mobile providers Telenor Serbia and Mobilkom Serbia have deactivated the infrastructure they had previously used to provide electronic communications services illegally in Kosovo (without a licence). The move is in line with an agreement reached last year between Serbia and Kosovo, on the basis of which Serbian state-owned company MTS was granted a limited licence to offer services in the northern areas of Kosovo, while Serbia paved the way for Kosovo to receive an international dialling code. [↗](#)

In **Greece**, telecom operator Cosmote and equipment provider Nokia have completed work to boost Cosmote's network coverage and capacity throughout underserved rural locations and the remote islands. [↗](#) The upgrade is expected to increase backhaul capacity and enable high-speed fixed and mobile Internet access.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, BH Telecom has concluded a USD1.6 million deal with Croatian Ericsson Nikola Tesla, under which the latter will modernise part of its fixed line core network, as well as its radio access network. [↗](#)

The **Romanian** Information Service, through the National Center Cyberint, and in partnership with other public institutions, organised the first national exercise on cybersecurity, involving 60 public and private institutions. [↗](#) The two-day exercise was aimed at testing and training the institutions' responses to cyber threats, and was organised in line with the country's National Cybersecurity Strategy.

Ukraine, Romania, and Azerbaijan were among among the top 20 countries most affected by the WannaCry ransomware cyberattack. [↗](#)

Serbia adopted a *Strategy for the Development of Information Security 2017-2020*. The Strategy shows Serbia's commitment to protect its citizens and their data in the digital world. It puts emphasis on awareness raising and capacity building, and it determines priority areas, such as security of information and communications technology (ICT) systems, information security of both Serbia and its citizens, and defense against cyber-crime. [↗](#)

Various news outlets in **Serbia** reported that the National Bank of Serbia (NBS) has been targeted by a phishing attack, causing a loss of EUR175 500. The NBS itself underlined it had not been a victim of a cyber-attack, but confirmed that there had been certain activities aiming at inflicting material damage to a department within the bank. The incident was reported to responsible authorities. [↗](#)

On 25 May, **Croatian** CERT warned WhatsApp users about an ongoing phishing/scam campaign targeting Konzum customers. The URL spread on WhatsApp did not install any malicious content on the user's mobile devices at the time, but the authority advised users to be cautious and not to click on links from suspicious sources, nor give away personal data. [↗](#)

Cybersecurity and cybercrime



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Domain Name System



University of Sarajevo's UTIC, the registry for .ba – **Bosnia and Herzegovina's** country code top-level domain (ccTLD) – became a member of CENTR, the association of European ccTLDs. The registry has been managing more than 19 000 registrations of .ba domain names since 1996.

In **Romania**, the Chamber of Deputies rejected a draft law on the management and administration of .ro. The law would have introduced a multistakeholder registry model for the ccTLD, among other provisions. On the other hand, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society is expected to publish a draft law on the same subject in the upcoming months.

Access



In **Georgia**, a project for a new Constitution includes the right to access the Internet. The inclusion of this right in the country's fundamental law would mean that Georgian citizens must be able to access the Internet in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and other fundamental human rights, that the state is responsible to ensure that Internet access is broadly available, and that authorities may not unreasonably restrict users' access to the Internet.

Capacity development



In **Romania**, the *Educlick 1/2017* project, launched by the Workshops Without Borders association, with support from ECOTIC, came to an end. Through this project, 8500 children and young people from 45 kindergartens, schools, high schools, NGOs, and other public education institutions located in disadvantaged communities in Romania benefited from ICT equipment collected from various companies and reconditioned. The aim was to contribute to enhancing the quality of education among children and young people, by making use of ICTs.

Code Club Croatia announced that it had established 35 coding clubs in **Croatia** so far. These clubs are intended for children aged 7-13, and consist of free workshops where children learn to make animations and websites, as well as HTML, CSS, and Python.

Development – other issues



The Gov ITHub programme, run by the **Romanian** Prime-minister's Cabinet, won the first prize for the section *Best Innovation Through Legislation*, at the Webit Festival – a digital and Innovation event for Europe. The category, open to political leaders and digital transformation policymakers, recognises the most efficient policy decisions, including various legislative initiatives, aimed at promoting the digital economy.

In **Serbia**, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government announced that a new e-government project, called *eZUP*, is to be launched in June. The project involves the interconnection of the six largest databases in the country (belonging to entities such as the Ministry of Interior, the Tax Administration, and the National Employment Service, among others). The Ministry has organised training for 434 self-government employees in order to make *eZUP* operational in June.

In **Croatia**, the city of Zadar is making steps towards the implementation of the 'smart city' concept, in line with the city's development strategy. In the framework of a six-month pilot project run by Croatian Telecom and Vendotel, smart booths are installed across the city, allowing citizens and tourists to access digital services via free access to wi-fi networks. The smart booths facilitate access to public and commercial digital services such as purchasing parking tickets, tickets for long-distance transportation, or mobile phone cards.

Economic – other



In **Serbia**, a private sector-led initiative, *Digital Serbia*, has been launched by Ringier Axel Springer Serbia and leading technology companies – Infostud, Microsoft, Nordeus, PwC Serbia, Seven Bridges, Startit, Telekom Serbia, and Telenor. The aim of the initiative is advancing Serbian economy in the digital era: the initiative will focus on improving the investment climate necessary for technological entrepreneurship and technology innovation.

Digital rights



SHARE Foundation continues to monitor the state of digital rights and freedoms in **Serbia**. The Foundation has published a report covering the period from January to May 2017, concluding that the trend of manipulation of the media continues, but that there is a slight downward trend of violating digital rights and freedoms of the journalists. The report also noted that several cases of Internet fraud, mostly via e-mail, had been recorded.

In **Turkey**, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority banned access to all language versions of Wikipedia. The reason for the ban was stated as 'unfounded claims of Turkey's involvement in terrorist activities'. The Authority has also issued statements on Twitter, in Turkish and English, explaining the reasons behind the ban. A legal appeal against the block, submitted by the Wikimedia Foundation, was rejected.

Content policy



President of **Ukraine** Petro Poroshenko approved a decision by the National Security and Defense Council regarding the application of economic sanctions against 1228 individuals and 468 legal entities. The biggest discussion arose around the ban of Russian social networks VK and Odnoklassniki, the email service Mail.ru, the search engine Yandex, and the cybersecurity and anti-virus providers Kaspersky Lab and Dr. Web. Ukraine explained the underlying motive for such restrictive measures by an urgent need to protect national security, while Reporters Without Borders called such ban unacceptable and threatening to freedom of speech. Ukrainian service providers have been ordered to block access to the websites, though it is still unclear how the decree will be implemented from technical perspective.

An **Azerbaijani** court issued nation-wide bans on five independent news websites, citing threats to national security and ties with foreign interest groups. Radio Free Europe's local branch was also subject to this wave of censorship. According to several watchdog organisations, this move creates a dangerous precedent for restricting access to online news and curbing freedom of expression.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Infrastructure and technologies

DataCenter Forum 2017 | 11 May | Bucharest, Romania

Organised by Tema Energy, the DataCenter Forum brought together 13 of the most relevant providers in the field, to exhibit technologies dedicated to data centres. The main objective of the event was to create a better connection between beneficiaries and suppliers of data storage services, and to analyse from a practical perspective the global trends in this field.

Bucharest Technology Week 2017 | 22-28 May | Bucharest, Romania

Participants at this tech festival had the opportunity to test smart gadgets, innovative systems and devices, and electric cars presented by over 40 companies. Also, solutions were presented for both

the improvement of urban electric transport, as well as for smart homes. Robots were also main actors in this event.

SINOG 4.0 Meetup | 23-24 May | Ljubljana, Slovenia

The meetup of the Slovenian Network Operation Group (SINOG) focused on issues related to the implementation of Internet protocol version 6 (IPv6) and network security enhancements.

Smart Cities Festival 2017 | 26-28 May | Belgrade, Serbia

The aim of the festival was to promote the use of new technologies to create modern and smart cities which correspond to the needs of the 21st century. The two-day conference consisted of a 48 hour hackathon, workshops, and a review of Smart Cities Challenge Serbia 2017.



Cybersecurity and cybercrime

Responsible Disclosure of Security Vulnerabilities | 9 May | Ljubljana, Slovenia

The event, organised by the Information Commissioner, SI CERT, and the Institute for Corporate Security Studies, discussed issue such as reasons for the inadequate identification and management of security threats; the role of different stakeholders in the disclosure of and responding to detected vulnerabilities; the boundary between ethical hacking and crime; and advantages and opportunities of responsible disclosure of security holes.

Industry 4.0 and Cybersecurity | 18-19 May | Osijek, Croatia

The first day of the event was dedicated to business digitalisation, the prerequisites for it, and success stories. Cybersecurity

was the overall topic of the second day, covering data protection, security aspects of business applications, and blockchain technologies.

Cybersecurity Festival for Students | 19 May | Tbilisi, Georgia

Organised by the Internet Development Initiative and the University of Georgia, the festival brought together students from across the country, to explore and discuss issues such as strategy, policy, and development of cybersecurity; new challenges in the field of cybersecurity; hybrid wars; cybersecurity in Georgia; legal aspects of cyberspace; cybercrime; and elements of cybersecurity in business.



Development

Open Education Conference | 15 May | Bucharest, Romania

The event featured discussions on open educational resources (OER) and copyright in the education environment. Specific issues tackled included experiences and plans for the use of OER in public education, policies for ensuring access to education resources of good quality, and good practices in the implementation of copyright exceptions in the educational system.

DevTalks Cluj-Napoca | 17 May | Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The expo-conference dedicated to the developer community brought together over 30 local and international speakers and 800 developers and technology enthusiasts. The objective was to contribute to the development of the Romanian IT community by promoting ideas that can transform the community, encourage innovative projects, support diversity, and actively involve women in technology.

Smart Education & Training 2017 | 22 May | Bucharest, Romania

The event was an initiative dedicated to open, inclusive, formal, and informal dialogue on smart education issues among all interested

stakeholders. It was built from the organisers' desire to put into an academic debate different aspects of what education and training is nowadays, through multidisciplinary scientific approaches that talk about the past, present, and future.

Code4Romania - Year 1 | 22 May | Bucharest, Romania

The event was dedicated to showcasing the work of Code4Romania, an organisation that builds digital tools for solving social problems and producing changes in communities. The NGO has 3 live projects, 17 ongoing projects, 500 de volunteers of 11 countries, and is focused on coding, communication, design, planning, and events.

iForum 2017 | 25 May | Kyiv, Ukraine

The conference featured debates and exchanges of experiences on five broad topics: Internet business/startups, advertising and promotion, Internet technologies, EdTech of the future/innovation, videoblogs and exports, and CRM and loyalty. In addition, an exhibition zone was turned into the prototype of the City of the Future. iForum gathered over 100 speakers and 7000 visitors.



Digital rights

Cybersurveillance Society | 10 May | Ljubljana, Slovenia

The debate focused on the issue of government cyber-surveillance, and it explored causes and consequences of such activities in Slovenia, the role of stakeholders in addressing the issues, and related policy development in Slovenia and in the EU.

Insafe Training Meeting | 17-18 May | Zagreb

The two-day meeting featured debates on fake news, echo chambers, and filter bubbles. An important part of the meeting was dedicated to exploring strategies to counter hate speech online and better understanding the challenges of implementing the new EU General Data Protection Regulation from a children's rights perspective.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Economic

Rockit Digital Conference Moldova | 11-12 May | Chişinău, Moldova

Chişinău hosted a regional digital and entrepreneurship conference aimed at exploring the most recent tools and practices of using Internet to achieve career goals. The event was built around four main topics: digital marketing, digital creativity, innovation and technology, entrepreneurship and startups, and brought together experts from all over the world.

Digital Day 2017 | 16 May | Belgrade, Serbia

The conference, held under the theme Connected Shopper, was dedicated to digital and interactive marketing. Some of the topics covered were big data in marketing, social and mobile commerce, and integration of digital and physical retail.

Digital Career | 24-31 May | Zadar-Split-Varaždin, Croatia

The conference put an emphasis on the openness of the digital economy to all professions, not only developers and designers, and explained why the digitalisation of industry is a reality. In each of the three cities, three local success stories were presented, followed by a panel dealing with concrete requirements for a successful digital career. A digital mentorship programme was also part of the event.

Spark.me | 29-30 May | Budva, Montenegro

The event brought together leaders from the business world, the world of technology, innovation and marketing, and startups. Participants were given an opportunity to listen to the internationally recognised speakers who provided advice on how to improve their operations and start new businesses.



Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiatives

Belarus IGF | 16 May | Minsk, Belarus

The initiative's second annual meeting was aimed to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue on the development of the Internet in Belarus. Discussions were held around six key areas: e-government, protection of personal data, Internet of Things, cybersecurity, open data infrastructure in Belarus, and regional problematics of Internet development.

Croatia IGF | 16 May | Zagreb, Croatia

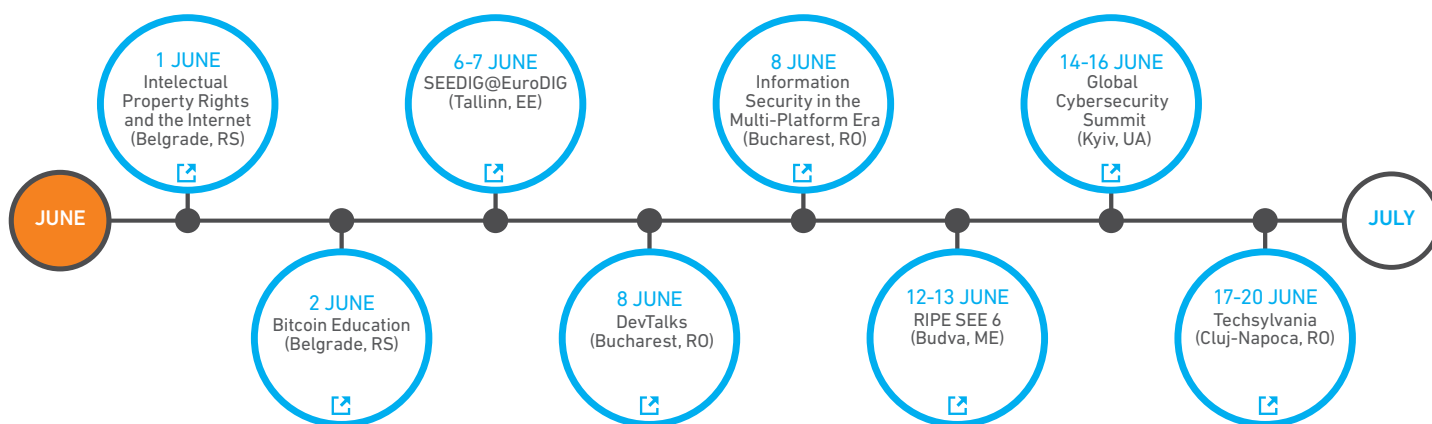
Held this year for the third time, the Croatian IGF meeting focused on the following themes: the newest trends from regional and global IGF initiatives, personal data protection and the use of pub-

licly available data for user profiling, digital literacy, and the issue of fake news.

SEEDIG 2017 | 24-25 May | Ohrid, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

SEEDIG's third annual meeting was held under the overarching theme of *Digital development: Turning challenges into opportunities*, and brought together over 160 participants from South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area, as well as from beyond the region. The main topics of debate were broadband challenges, fake news, the Internet of Things, open data, Internationalised Domain Names, and cybersecurity. All sessions were summarised in key messages.

AHEAD IN JUNE



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.