

# 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

### Telecommunications infrastructure



#### Fiber optic for more Internet users in Turkey

The Turkish Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications revealed that **Turkey** is expanding its fiber optic network to satisfy the demands of 28.3% of Internet users who prefer this type of network. Authorities noted that an increase of 9.6% in the length of fiber-optic network in 2016, resulted in a 20.1% increase in the number of Internet users. During the first half of 2017, operators such as Turk Telecom, Turkcell, and Vodafone invested over 2.6 billion liras to provide an uninterrupted mobile Internet connection to users.

#### Ukraine to launch 4G auction

The State Regulatory Service of **Ukraine**, the Antimonopoly Committee, and the State Service of Special Communication & Information Protection have agreed on the launch of a 4G LTE mobile frequency auction. According to the National Commission for State Regulation of Communications and Informatisation, an auction concerning the 2600MHz band would be launched in November-December 2017, closely followed by an competition for the 1800MHz band in early 2018.

#### High speed Internet in Georgian villages

Internet is now available in 24 villages in the Tusheti region in Georgia. The project, with a cost of \$40,000, was implemented by the Tusheti Development Fund and the Internet Society, with the support of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Giorgi Gakharia, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, said that expanding Internet access is one of the government's priorities.

#### SEE countries talk about digitalisation and AI at the UNGA

At the General Debate marking the opening of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Croatia, Greece, and Serbia talked about digitalisation and the fourth industrial revolution. **Croatia** called on the UN to 'facilitate a transformation towards the age of digital economy and narrow the digital divide, which could generate new inequalities'. **Greece** noted that the 'machine era' brings innovation and advantages, but also challenges. States need to face these challenges effectively, as well as 'show resilience and meet the needs of their people for more human rights, communication, growth and innovation'. **Serbia** explained that digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) are becoming important topics at national level, and investments are made to spur the creativity of young people.

### New technologies



#### Ukraine uses blockchain for public auctions

The **Ukrainian** System of Electronic Auctions of Seized Property (CETAM) has tested the use of blockchain technology for conducting a public auction for seized goods. The system was implemented as part of a partnership concluded in April this year between Ukraine and technology company Bitfury Group, on the use of blockchain for digital government projects. The introduced novelty is aimed at increasing transparency and eliminating corruption practices, as blockchain allows the elimination of data manipulation possibilities. The Ministry of Justice expects to transfer state property and land registries to the blockchain platform by the end of 2017.

#### First Initial Coin Offering in Croatia

Digital Assets Power Play, a finetech start-up for digital assets trading and automation, launched the first **Croatian** Initial Coin Offering (ICO) for its Digital Assets Power Play Token Platform. The platform enables crypto traders, funds, and investors to build their own algorithmic trading strategies, with historical and live market data, from numerous exchanges and technical indicators. Co-Founder and CEO Matej Ujević noted that 'by combining blockchain technology with scalable system architecture, trading can be easily accessible to anyone, regardless of their programming skills'.

### Multilingualism



#### Guide for 'Social Media Use in Turkish' under preparation

At a meeting on 'Enhancing the use of Turkish on the Internet and social media', authorities in Turkey have announced plans to develop a guide on 'Social media use in Turkish'. According to the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, the 'correct and effective use of social media' is as important as expanding Internet infrastructure and increasing the number of active users. Participants pointed out that the 'correct use of language on social media' cannot be achieved through pressure, but that communication and awareness raising are crucial. The Ministry's Directorate General for Communications is to coordinate similar events, with the active participation of civil society, businesses, universities, and media, to further explore ways to increase local content online.



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Cybersecurity and  
cybercrime



**Combating cybercrime in South Eastern Europe**

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) launched a new capacity building programme for criminal justice institutions in the South Eastern Europe. The programme focuses on common and new challenges in fighting cybercrime and cyber-enabled crime, and it also has a training-of-trainers component, designed to prepare beneficiaries for ensuring sustainability and continuity of achieved results.

**Serbia and Ohio practice together**

'Cyber Tesla 2017', the second annual multinational command and staff exercise of the Serbian Armed Forces and the National Guard of Ohio was held in Gornji Milanovac, Serbia. Participants on the Serbian side included representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Army of Serbia, as well as civil institutions with responsibilities in cybersecurity, as defined by the Law on information security. The exercise was aimed at improving participants' competences in cybersecurity and cyber defence.

Development



**Towards enhanced e-government**

The Ukrainian government has approved an e-government strategy, defining goals, priority directions, and measures up to 2020. Key reforms should occur in three sectors: modernisation of public services, improvement of public governance, and management of e-government. By the end of 2018, 100 most used services are expected to be available online for citizens and businesses. The introduction of electronic identification is seen as one of the biggest challenges. Attention is also to be paid to expanding the availability of open data, creating electronic archives, and improvement of internal systems of document sharing.

**Informatics and computing mandatory in primary schools**

Starting this school year, primary school children in Serbia have informatics and computing as a mandatory subject in their programmes. State Secretary of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Tatjana Matic stated that students would be trained in algorithmic thinking and be prepared for future professions based on digital technology and digital culture. Getting acquainted with information and communications technologies (ICT) from an early age will help children gain an interest in the ICT industry, which is one of the most sought out sectors in terms of employment.

**OSCE and UN officials ask Turkey to remove restrictions on media freedom**

Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and David Kaye, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression called on Turkish authorities to restore media freedom and freedom of expression in Turkey. The call came after a Turkish Court ruled to deny the release of six Cumhuriyet journalists and executives, previously accused of being members of illegal organisations and helping illegal organisations. 'It is only through fundamental legal and policy reforms that journalists, bloggers and social media users can exercise their rights to freedom of expression in the country. We continue to offer our assistance to Turkey and urge the authorities to change course without delay,' the two media freedom watchdogs said.

**Privacy matters, says ECHR final ruling**

Employee monitoring is not illegal, says the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), but it has to be done under certain conditions such as informing workers prior to monitoring. Being fired two weeks after his employer read personal mail sent from a work computer, Barbulescu lost in prior rulings by Romanian courts and ECHR. The last ruling in this case overturned past decisions. On top of setting guidance on monitoring conditions, the judges encouraged companies to weigh in forms of monitoring that do not infringe on employees' privacy. Moreover, the Grand Chamber suggested states should develop protection measures against abuses in this field.

**Concerns over collecting tourists' personal data**

A new law project regarding the collection and storage (for five years) of tourists' personal data has been set for public debate in Romania. The Informatic System for Romania's Tourism Activity Record (SIEATR) aims to digitalise an already existing system and further widens the range of entities allowed to access data. The centralised system would grant access to the Romanian Information Service (SRI), External Information Service (SIE), National Defense Ministry (MApN), Internal Affairs Ministry (MAI), and many more. Experts and civil society organisations warn about several arising issues such as vague definitions, lack of declared purpose in collecting certain types of data, no mechanism ensuring data deletion, and a lack of auditors looking at the system's security levels.

**Romania gets ready for the new EU privacy rules**

The Romanian data protection authority has published a Guide on the application of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Regulation, to enter in force in May 2018, will introduce stricter rules for personal data processing, and new obligations for data operators. The Guide is aimed at assisting operators in preparing for these new rules and obligations. The Authority has also organised a roundtable for public institutions, to brief them on their obligations concerning the new data protection rules.

**New data protection law in the pipeline**

Serbian authorities have been working on a new law on privacy and data protection, to reflect the provisions of the EU GDPR. EU experts have been consulted in the preparation of the draft, which is now close to being finalised. The draft law is expected to be subject to public consultation until the end of the year. It will then enter the legislative process in the Parliament, and the aim is to have it approved before May 2018, so that its provisions enter into force at the same time with the GDPR.

Human rights



## EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



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

#### **Blockchain Development Meetup | 25 September | Zagreb, Croatia [↗](#)**

The event's purpose was raising awareness among its participants with regards to blockchain technology and smart deals. It included a lecture and a workshop during which attendees were introduced to these concepts and taught how to write a smart agreement using Solidity language and set up a contract on Ethereum. The event ended with a cozy networking session.

#### **Regional Regulatory Conference 'Next Generation Regulation' | 25–26 September | Budva, Montenegro [↗](#)**

The conference was organised by the Telecommunication Development Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)



### Cybersecurity and cybercrime [↗](#)

#### **IV Regional Meeting of the Cybercrime@EAP III project | 11–12 September | Chişinău, Moldova [↗](#)**

The meeting, organised by the Council of Europe's Cybercrime@EAP III project, in collaboration with the Moldavian Prosecutor General's Office, focused on public-private cooperation on cybercrime. Specific topics tackled included, among others, the application of procedural safeguards and guarantees in line with the Convention on Cybercrime, liabilities and obligations of Internet services providers, and cooperation with major Internet companies like Apple, Facebook, and Google.

#### **5th Central European Cybersecurity Public-Private Dialogue Platform | 14–15 September | Sibiu, Romania [↗](#)**

The congress is considered to be the only ITU-backed non-governmental yearly cybersecurity event in Europe. The main goal of the event is to create an open dialogue among countries in Central Europe in order

to improve information sharing and cooperation in the field of cybersecurity. This year, experts, policy and decision makers, governments, ICT security players, and consumers came together to discuss newest security problems and response mechanisms.

#### **Online Financial Fraud and Credit Card Fraud Workshop | 18–19 September | Podgorica, Montenegro [↗](#)**

Organised by the Council of Europe's iPROCEEDS project, the capacity development workshop was aimed at strengthening the capacity of criminal justice institutions in Montenegro and Kosovo\* to search, seize, and confiscate online crime proceeds generated by cybercrimes. Social engineering, e-commerce fraud, online extortion, online money laundering, and credit card fraud were among the topics discussed, together with issues related to legal frameworks and international cooperation for investigations of online crime proceeds.



### Development [↗](#)

#### **Bled Strategic Forum | 4–5 September | Bled, Slovenia [↗](#)**

This year at its 11th edition, the forum – organised by the Slovenian government – brought together more than 1000 participants from 66 countries, including high-level officials from governments and international organisations, representative of the private sector, academic, and NGOs. The main digital policy issues tackled during the discussions included: fake news and the role of innovations in the new media landscape, digital diplomacy, human rights in the online world, and the collaborative economy and its impact on consumer behaviour and traditional businesses.

#### **Armenia Digital Transformation Workshop | 9–10 September | Yerevan, Armenia [↗](#)**

The Centre of Strategic Initiatives (CSI) with the support of the EU funded project on Development and Strategic Studies organised a two day workshop to kick start work on defining an Armenian Digital Transformation Strategy. Participants included government officials, the private sector, the EU delegation to Armenia, and other interested actors. An outline of Armenia's Digital Strategy was drafted, with a focus on infrastructure, digital skills, e-government, private sector digitisation, and cybersecurity.

#### **Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide | 12–13 September | Ljubljana, Slovenia [↗](#)**

The event, organised by the ITU, the Regional Cooperation Council, and the International Center for Promotion of Enterprises, was aimed

at building regional and national capacities in developing digital ecosystems. The workshop was based on the recently launched publication 'Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems'. It stressed the importance of building digital innovation environment, favourable to entrepreneurship and creation of start-ups.

#### **Future of Internet in Turkey | 19 September | Istanbul, Turkey [↗](#)**

Organised by ISOC Turkey Chapter, as part of the Internet Society's Intercommunity 2017 event, the panel focused on regulatory challenges in the area of personal rights and freedoms, the evolution of the digital economy, and government strategies to bridge the digital divide. Reports on content blocking and the future of the Internet were also presented to participants.

#### **Bosnia Goes Digital | 28 September | Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina [↗](#)**

Information technology company QSS BiH celebrated 20 years of existence by organising a regional conference about digital transformation. One of the focuses of the event was the importance of the digital transformation for the country's economy, but also for the wellbeing of the whole society. It gathered around 300 representatives from the business, academic, and political communities.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Economic

**OMGcommerce | 14 September | Belgrade, Serbia**

The conference focused on mobile payments and transactions in e-commerce, and featured lectures and sharing of experiences from banks, e-commerce platforms, and others. Discussions re-

involved around recent developments in the area of e-commerce at a global and regional level. Companies talked about their plans in terms of expanding e-commerce offerings, noting that e-commerce is an area still under development in the region.



Sociocultural

**Business of Truth. Digital Impact | 8–9 Sept | Belgrade, Serbia**

The Digital Communication Forum Belgrade organised the event with the aim of increasing the quality and footprint of new and independent media and entrepreneurs operating in a global framework. Focus topics included the impact of the Internet and social media on journalism and society, creating compelling content for new media platforms, fact checking, financial and legal aspects of new media, and innovation and entrepreneurship, among others.

event, twenty teams from Western Balkans countries worked with mentors to improve and present their ideas. The top six online projects were awarded small grants and will be launched in the upcoming months.

**Resonant Voices Initiative Hackathon | 14–17 September | Durres, Albania**

The hackathon was aimed at finding and supporting projects that challenge extremist narrative and hate speech online. During the three-day

**Media Meets Literacy | 21–22 September | Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The conference was organised by Evens Foundation and its partners (European Commission, Mediacentar Sarajevo and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung). Around 250 participants, guests and speakers, took part in two days of panels, workshops, and discussions about media literacy issues, including fake news, propaganda, education, advertising, hate speech and the influence of platforms and Internet content on media and society.



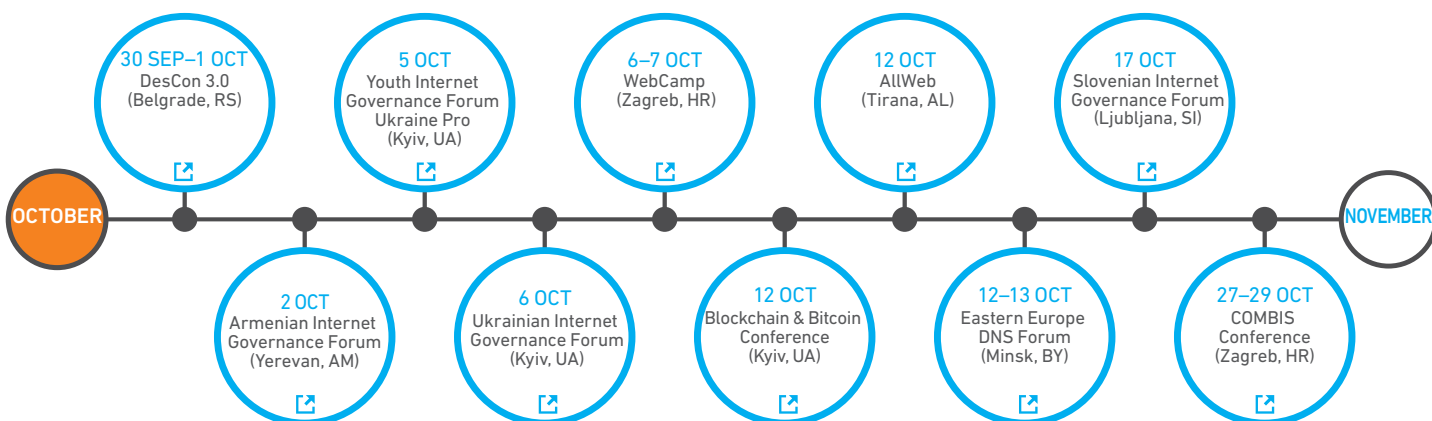
Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiatives

**Georgian Internet Governance Forum | 11–12 September | Tbilisi, Georgia**

The second annual meeting of the Georgia Internet Governance Forum (GeoIGF) brought together local and international stakeholders to discuss Internet-related issues of relevance for the Georgian community. The event focused on topics such the multistakeholder

model of Internet governance, cybersecurity, data protection, copyright, digital divide and infrastructure deployment, domain name management, fake news, and safer Internet and youth. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the RIPE Network Coordination Centre and Georgian National Communication Commission.

AHEAD IN OCTOBER



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.