SEEDIG virtual meeting – Future of SEEDIG: Q&A session
21 July 2015

Summary

Participants: Iliya Bazlyankov, Andrea Beccalli, Lianna Galstyan, Sandra Hoferichter, Desiree Milošević, Oksana Prykhodko, Dušan Stojičević, Nelly Stoyanova, Sorina Teleanu.

1.   Overview of the call for comments on the future of SEEDIG

A quick overview was given on the call for comments on the future of SEEDIG, as distributed on the dedicated mailing list in early July: http://mail-server.rnids.rs/pipermail/icann-see/2015-July/000232.html In short, building on the general support for a continuation of SEEDIG, the SEE community was invited to share its views on how a SEEDIG 2016 meeting should look like and two options were put on the table: organise SEEDIG 2016 in conjunction with EuroDIG 2016, in Brussels, or organise SEEDIG 2016 as a stand alone event, somewhere in the SEE region. It was explained that several important issues need to be considered when making a decision on the SEEDIG 2016 meeting, such as participation, partners, supported, funds, host, linkages between SEE and the wider Europe, etc. One possible approach was also outlined, together with some related implications, advantages and challenges: keeping the SEEDIG and EuroDIG preparatory processes together, but have the SEEDIG meeting organised somewhere in the region, at a time that precedes the EuroDIG meeting.

A summary of the responses sent to the list in advance of the meeting was also presented. Twelve (12) members of the mailing list shared their views on the future of SEEDIG, and they all expressed support for SEEDIG to continue and to have strong connections with EuroDIG. Six (6) respondents were in favour of SEEDIG 2016 being organised in conjunction with EuroDIG (mainly because of financial and logistical purposes), while the other six (6) were in favour of SEEDIG being organised as a stand-alone event, in the region (the main reasons presented being related to the relevance of a SEE-focused event in SEE and to the opportunity to attract more participation).

2.   Discussions

Participants were invited to share their views and ask questions with regards to the call for comments.

A view shared by many, if not all, participants in the meeting was that it would be more valuable for SEEDIG to be seen as an independent initiative, which has support from stakeholders in the region (both in terms of general support, for the SEEDIG concept, as well as in terms of financial support). It was noted that, although from a financial point of view, it might make sense to have SEEDIG in conjunction with EuroDIG one more time, for 2016, there

seems to be a good ground (the success of last year, a possible host already being discussed, etc.) at this point to start SEEDIG as a stand-alone event. This would mean having SEEDIG held within the region, as an event which is separate from the EuroDIG meeting, but which is very well connected with the EuroDIG process (having SEEDIG as a milestone for EuroDIG and ensuring that the results of SEEDIG feed into EuroDIG in a meaningful and comprehensive way). This would give more credibility to SEEDIG as a process addressed to the Internet governance community in SEE, thus attracting more attention and having a stronger impact within the region. At the same time, such an approach would also help demonstrate how to interconnect the different layers (in the form of regional, sub-regional and also national IGF initiatives) of the Internet governance processes at a European level.

It was noted that SEEDIG 2015 was a successful meeting, and one important contributing factor was the support given by EuroDIG and its partners. While it would make more sense for SEEDIG to stay in SEE, as a mean to reaching out to more regional stakeholders, it would be crucial to ensure strong support for the initiative. It is encouraging to see that there seems to be some level of support already (for example, from EuroDIG, ICANN, and some regional entities like RNIDS), and this is something that needs to be built upon.

Another comment made during the meeting was related to the timing for SEEDIG 2016: it was underlined that, if SEEDIG is organised as a stand-alone event, it will have to take place somewhere between March and May, definitely before the EuroDIG meeting scheduled for 9-10 June 2016. This would be necessary in order to create the framework for SEEDIG to really feed into EuroDIG, not only in terms of SEE messages being presented at EuroDIG, but, more importantly, in terms of actual involvement and contribution from the SEEDIG community (in)to the EuroDIG process.

It was also mentioned during the discussions that organising a SEEDIG 2016 meeting as a stand-alone event would require more human resources, and, as such, a more active involvement from SEE stakeholders throughout the entire preparatory process.

A point was made to try to use various regional events (RIPE, IETF etc.) as opportunities for promoting SEEDIG and attracting support and participation. It was also said that the ICANN54 meeting in Dublin (October 2015) will be another opportunity for the SEE community to meet and discuss about SEEDIG, not only within itself, but also with other European and global stakeholders. One suggestion in this regard was to maybe plan a pan-European event and to have SEEDIG discussions integrated as part of this event.

3.   Next steps

The call for comments remains open until 31 July (the extended deadline), as previously announced. Hopefully, this will allow for more views to be expressed by members of the mailing list, in order to allow for an informed decision on the future of SEEDIG. If those who have already expressed their views have a change of mind before the deadline, they are welcome to write again to the list in this regard.

After the deadline for comments, a compilation and a summary of all input received will be prepared by the executive committee and shared with the mailing list, most probably together with a proposal for an approach for SEEDIG 2016 (drawing on the submitted input).

A second call will then be scheduled with the aim of making a final decision on whether SEEDIG 2016 will be a stand-alone event or will be held in conjunction with EuroDIG. The aim is to have this decision made by middle August. The rationale for this tight timeline is related to the need to ensure that there is as much time as possible available for the actual preparatory process for SEEDIG 2016 (programme, outreach, sponsorship, etc.).