

## Future of SEEDIG Compilation of input submitted in response to the call for comments (6 - 31 July 2015)

### I. Explanatory note and summary of input

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A call for comments on the future of SEEDIG, and, more specific, a SEEDIG 2016 meeting, was launched on 6 July 2015, via the icann-see mailing list. List members were invited to provide their comments with regards to how they see a SEEDIG 2016 meeting. The main question raised was whether SEEDIG 2016 should be held in conjunction with the EuroDIG 2016 meeting, in Brussels, or as a stand-alone event, somewhere in the SEE region.

A compilation of responses received up to the deadline (31 July 2015), prepared by the SEEDIG executive committee, is set out below. The call for comments, as sent to the list, is also presented. The responses are listed in chronological order, by the time of their receipt via the list.

The coloured circles are used in order to indicate:



Comments in support of SEEDIG 2016 held as a stand-alone event, in the SEE region.



Comments in support of SEEDIG 2016 held in conjunction with EuroDIG 2016, in Brussels.



Comments in support of both options above, depending on some circumstances.

#### Statistical overview:

- Number of mailing list members who have responded to the call: 16
- Number of members expressing support for a stand-alone SEEDIG 2016, held in the SEE region: 10
- Number of members expressing support for a SEEDIG 2016 meeting held in conjunction with EuroDIG 2016, in Brussels: 5
- Number of members expressing support for both options for SEEDIG 2016, depending on some circumstances: 1

#### Main issues raised:



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#### General

- support for SEEDIG to continue;
- support for strong connections between SEEDIG and EuroDIG.



### **SEEDIG 2016 as a stand-alone event, held in the SEE region**

- SEEDIG seen as a separate discussion platform, with linkages with the overall European agenda;
- more potential to extend outreach and get new actors involved;
- opportunity to maximise participation from the region, from all stakeholder groups;
- lower costs for travel and accommodation for potential attendees from the region;
- benefits of having SEEDIG 2016 as a stand-alone event if there is support in terms of host/sponsors/partners; some assumptions that there will be funds attracted from usual institutional sponsors, plus local sponsors;
- support for having SEEDIG input into EuroDIG; suggestion to plan a SEE regional session at the EuroDIG itself, to feed in from SEEDIG;
- SEEDIG 2016 to be held minimum two months before EuroDIG 2016;
- suggestion to consider having SEEDIG 2016 (as well as future SEEDIG meetings) in conjunction with another Internet governance event(s) in the region;
- some support (Vladimir Radunović, Aleksandar Icokeev, Vojislav Rodić, Zdravko Jukić, Desiree Miloshević, Yuriy Kargapolov, Fotjon Kosta, Valentina Pellizzer) for Belgrade, Serbia as a host for SEEDIG 2016.



### **SEEDIG 2016 in conjunction with EuroDIG 2016, in Brussels**

- SEEDIG is a very young initiative; SEEDIG and EuroDIG should be kept together at least for 2016 and then the situation can be re-evaluated;
- it is early to talk about SEEDIG as a separate event; SEEDIG still needs support from EuroDIG;
- easier to organise SEEDIG as a EuroDIG pre-event, for financial and organisational reasons;
- opportunity to have more attendees (attendants will be able to receive travel support more easily, rather than justifying attendance to a stand-alone event);
- easier to pitch for funding opportunities; challenging to do fundraising only for SEEDIG;
- less efforts for promoting the event;
- easier to deal with logistics, legal issues, partnership, registration and other issues;
- the advantage of benefiting from general support from EuroDIG Secretariat;
- it would be easier to have SEEDIG 2016 in conjunction with EuroDIG because of a number of uncertainties around a stand-alone SEEDIG 2016 and related to issues such as: confirming host/sponsors/partners; not many possibilities to save money (as some SEEDIG participants will also participate in EuroDIG and will have to pay twice); ability to have a critical mass of participants for fruitful discussions (including international institutions).

## **II. Call for comments, 6 July (re-sent, with an extension of deadline, on 13 July)**

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“Dear all,

On behalf of the SEEDIG executive committee, I am writing to you with regards to the future of SEEDIG, and, more specifically, a potential SEEDIG 2016 meeting.

As you know, SEEDIG 2015 was organised in conjunction with the eighth EuroDIG, for several reasons. The most important ones were related to the fact that EuroDIG itself was held in the SEE region, and that we had an opportunity to create some connections between SEE Internet governance-related realities and the pan-European debates. The funds allocated from the EuroDIG budget (for logistics, catering, travel support, as detailed in our report), as well as the general support from EuroDIG Secretariat for a first SEEDIG meeting have been equally important.

### **I. Key questions**

As there seems to be at least a majority of views that SEEDIG should continue (and not remain a one time event), we need to determine how this moving forward should/could actually happen.

The two main questions that we now need to ask ourselves are the following:

- A. Should a SEEDIG 2016 meeting be held again in conjunction with the EuroDIG meeting to be hosted in Brussels? OR
- B. Should a SEEDIG 2016 meeting be held in the SEE region, as a stand-alone event?

### **II. Issues to consider**

However, determining how SEEDIG 2016 would look like is not just a matter of picking a location, as there are several important issues that need to be considered before making a decision:

1. participation (attendance at the meeting) and influencing factors (travel costs, travel funds, etc.);
2. financial resources /sponsors;
3. host for the meeting (including broad-based stakeholder conditions in the host country);
4. partners/supporters;
5. maintaining linkages between SEE and the wider Europe.

### **III. Possible approach**

Drawing on several informal discussions held with some of you in the weeks following SEEDIG (including the ICANN meeting in Buenos Aires), one possible approach for SEEDIG 2016 could be to:

- keep 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.

#### **III.1. Implications**

In practical terms, the approach above would mean that:

1. The call for proposals for topics for SEEDIG and EuroDIG 2016 are launched at the same time (October until December 2015), as part of a single process.
2. SEEDIG is represented at the EuroDIG preparatory meeting. A preparatory meeting for SEEDIG is also intended to be held in the host country (for the purpose of checking the logistics and related issues).
3. SEEDIG-related content continues to be hosted on the EuroDIG website and wiki.
4. SEEDIG takes place in a country within SEE and the neighbouring area, some time before the EuroDIG meeting, and becomes an integrated milestone in the EuroDIG preparatory process. Results should feed directly into the EuroDIG session planning process and become an inclusive part of the EuroDIG programme. SEEDIG could actually be the place to prepare, inter alia, a SEE-focused session at EuroDIG.

### **III.2. Advantages**

Such an approach would have several advantages, among which:

1. SEEDIG, as a meeting, remains in the region. This would respond to the concerns raised by some of you with regards to both the difficulty for most stakeholders in SEE to attend an event outside the region, as well as to a potentially limited relevance of having a SEE event held in Western Europe. And it could/should encourage significant participation from within the region, given that the travel costs involved are expected to be self-manageable by many potential participants.
2. SEEDIG and EuroDIG remain interlinked, thus responding to the need to ensure that the voices of SEE stakeholders go beyond the SEE region and that the pan-European debates on Internet governance are also considering SEE concerns.
3. SEEDIG continues to benefit from support from EuroDIG (in terms of preparatory process, hosting content and funding for some SEE attendees to participate in the EuroDIG meeting), and, possibly, its partners, thus gaining more recognition within the Internet governance ecosystem.

### **III.3. Challenges**

There are, of course, a number of challenges that would need to be dealt with, in the case of this approach being taken forward:

1. Financial resources. SEEDIG will need to have its own budget, and, thus engage in fund raising activities, including within the region. Additionally, legal issues will have to be considered, such as: setting up a bank account, responsibility and liability in terms of managing contracts, invoices, reporting on the finances (i.e. what entity would do this?), etc.
2. Keeping the SEEDIG 2015 supporters as partners. We would need to find a way to enhance such partnerships, as they would demonstrate that SEEDIG is backed by others and does not try to isolate itself from other entities and processes in the Internet governance ecosystem. Having this kind of institutional support would also help us when approaching possible sponsors.
3. Ensuring that the linkages with EuroDIG mean more than just having SEEDIG messages presented at EuroDIG. Finding a way to bring a significant number of SEE participants to EuroDIG (in addition to them participating in SEEDIG) and to actively

involve them in the EuroDIG process and meeting is an important aspect to consider. (More travel and time resources will be needed.)

4. Identifying a host. During the discussions in Buenos Aires, Serbia/Belgrade was mentioned as a possible location, given that the country has a working multistakeholder Internet governance model in place and this can be useful as an example for participants in SEEDIG. In addition, another argument invoked for having the next SEEDIG meeting in Serbia was related to the experience the various entities in the country have in organising/hosting Internet governance events (EuroDIG 2011, DIDS, etc.).
5. Human resources to run the preparatory process. Organising SEEDIG as a stand-alone event would require more efforts, both in terms of logistics and programme. The organising group would, therefore, need to be reinforced, and more volunteers would have to be involved in the process.

#### IV. Call for comments

Given all of the above, you are all kindly invited to provide your input with regards to the future of SEEDIG, in the form of comments, suggestions, support for or disagreement with the aforementioned possible approach, etc., until **Friday, 31 July 2015**. Please send your input to this mailing list and to [see@intgovforum.org](mailto:see@intgovforum.org).

All input will be compiled by the executive committee, shared with the list, and further discussed at a virtual meeting, to be held after the above-mentioned deadline (details to be communicated later). It is expected that a final decision regarding the approach for a SEEDIG 2016 meeting (questions at point I.A and B above) will be taken at this virtual meeting. Once this decision is made, further discussions will be held with regards to the preparatory process for SEEDIG 2016.

Thank you and we are looking forward to your feedback.

Best regards,

Sorina (on behalf of the executive committee)"

### III. **Compilation of comments**

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#### 1. Yuriy Kargaplov, 11 July

"If shortly and quickly:

To my opinion, SEEDIG should be separate discussion platform but with effective the communication channel to overall European agenda from Lisbon to Kamchatka.

We have the subjects and issues to talk substantively and thoughtfully, we have issues to offer the European and the World communities as well as for contribution in existing agenda's points and for the new challenges that we can offer to discuss.

If not shortly and quickly... I don't have detailed views on "how we can solve the architecture questions of SEEDIG building" that were voiced by Sorina."

## 2. Valentina Pavel, 12 July

“From my point of view SEEDIG is a much needed event for the region, especially in terms of awareness, sharing practices and information and I think it should become one of the traditional events for discussing IG issues.

Since it is a very young initiative, for ensuring the success of the future editions I believe SEEDIG should be organized in conjunction with EURODIG (or other similar events) because of the following reasons:

- There will be more attendants (attendants will be able to receive travel support more easily, rather than justifying attendance to a stand alone event)
- it would be easier to pitch for funding opportunities (2 in 1 - bundle event)
- less effort for promoting the event (SEEDIG piggy backs on top of EuroDIG until it grows further)
- less cumbersome for the organizing team in terms of logistics, legal issues, setting up partnerships, registration etc
- we benefit from general support from EuroDIG Secretariat (until the team gets more experienced I think it this is very important)
- At this incipient stage I do not see any strong reason for organizing the event specifically in the SEE region. I think the event can be anywhere provided that SEE region people are able to attend.

To conclude, this is just a short list of reasons why I think the next SEEDIG should be organized together with EURODIG 2016.”

## Follow-up: Yuriy Kargapolov, 12 July

“If we talk about money and finance in generally - it good arguments and maybe I'll support them. :)

If we are going talk about tasks and challenges facing the region, they aren't visible.

Will there the visible the real regional challenges (they exist and specific) in common agenda?

Thus we need, to my mind, to find a balance (or priority) between our practical interests - challenges, issues - and the possibility of financing.”

## 3. Vladimir Radunović, 12 July

“Thank you for a devoted and constructive discussion on SEE IGF. The entire proposal and process looks very good.

The IGF spirit and process is based on the bottom-up initiatives; this is how EuroDIG emerged, as well as LAC or African IGF; this is also how Arab or South-African and West-African IGFs emerged, and then many national IGFs. Seeing the bottom-up interest in SEE, I am off course most supportive of the regional IGF as well. EuroDIG should remain

supporting the offsprings, as it was the case for Sofia, and regional IGF should remain connected to EuroDIG.

On a practical note, I think the SEE IGF should take place in the region. The purpose of the regional IGF is to extend the outreach and get new actors involved. Travel financial difficulties are another reason for this.

There should of course also be a regional session at EuroDIG, to feed from regional discussions and event.

The regional IGF doesn't have to take place every year are all costs, however. It is more important to preserve continuity of discussions and inclusiveness, even if through online discussions and local events. Yet whenever possible, the annual IGF should be organised, usually back-to-back with other relevant regional event. As for 2016, it would be great of course for Belgrade and RNIDS to be the host, while a session in Brussels should also be organised as a feed.

My 2 cents, and full support.”

#### 4. Aleksandar Icokeev, 12 July

“Let's give SEEDIG a chance!

Yes, the dilemma is legitimate and serious!

1. SEEDIG 2016 meeting be held again in conjunction with the EuroDIG meeting to be hosted in Brussels? OR
2. SEEDIG 2016 as a stand alone - a pre event and a milestone for SEE IG processes to EuroDig ?

I agree with the majority and I vote for the option 2 - SEEDIG as a stand alone - a pre event but as an integral part of the EuroDIG process !

In my opinion, we shall take the advantage of momentum - the positive echo about the first SEEDIG in Sofia ,from Euro DIG itself , ICANN , IGF... !

I know you are all aware but allow me to remind you that the organization of the SEEDIG in Sofia in all aspects , was under heavy influence ( importance , attractiveness , institutional and financial support ) from EuroDiG and the other processes and entities in the IG ecosystem ! Therefore I agree that Serbia is the best host for this pioneer attempt and only after SEEDIG in Serbia we will have enough input for deep and comprehensive SWOT analysis about how to proceed with the SEEDIG 2017 !

Please see Below - in red font , my TOL's ( thinking out loud notes ) : ) , within the original email from Sorina !

Thanks again to Sorina and the exe. committee for their time and energy !"

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Timing for the SEEDIG meeting: "min. two months before EuroDIG".

Preparatory meeting: "the preparatory meeting for SEEDIG should precede the preparatory meeting for EuroDIG".

Travel-related issues: "What about accommodation? If self-funded, the event must be squeezed in one day".

Financial resources and partners: "Can we count on financial support from EuroDIG, ICANN, IGF, ISOC?"

Linkages between SEEDIG and EuroDIG: "In this case, I think that sponsors (if any from the business) would like to see that they are not supporting only regional event! Should we offer them the possibility to send their employees for participate to SEEDIG and EuroDIG in addition to their sponsoring of the event itself?"

Human resources for the preparatory process: "Agree, we should start spreading the word right after the final decision is made."

#### 5. Siranush Vardanyan, 12 July

"I will agree with the majority of thoughts that SEEDIG as a separate event should be connected with EuroDIG. This will make easier the participation, as at this point it would be challenging to do fundraising solely for SEEDIG, while EuroDIG to some extent has secure funding. At least for SEEDIG 2016. Later if SEEDIG becomes a strong and well spread entity/idea, the process may be otherwise. At the same time keeping SEEDIG close to region is of utmost importance."

#### 6. Anja Gengo, 12 July

"I completely agree with the last email from Siranush.

It is important to continue with SEEDIG since it's the only effective opportunity for the region to gather, brainstorm and act.

I think it is still early to talk about SEEDIG as a separate event which is why I should go with this idea of it being connected with EuroDIG for the next year- as a pre-event. Later we will see how the things will work, especially with funding and developing wider regional expert network."



## 7. Oksana Prykhodko, 12 July and 30 July

"I also would like to support Siranush point of view. SEEDIG 2016 (at least) would be easier to organize as EuroDIG pre-event in Brussels - both from financial and organizational reasons. And it would be great to organize cooperation of Steering Committees of SEEDIG and EuroDIG in the way, which allows to avoid duplication of issues to discuss, but instead to discuss at EuroDIG results of the discussion at SEEDIG.

And one more proposition - to organize at each national or sub-regional event panel/workshop/side-event, devoted to SEEDIG. It does not mean only to discuss messages from SEEDIG. It means to find the most critical for this country issues and to link this national discussion to SEEDIG/EURODIG. The best way to do it is to invite some members of SEEDIG Steering Committee into national ones (for example, into IGF-UA Steering Committee)."

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"SEEDIG in Sofia had great success. Sorina's role is extremely important, and, I hope, Sorina (as well as Liana and Dusan) will remain the main engine of SEEDIG in any case - in Brussels or in Serbia)))))

But there was also fantastic synergy with the host (thousands of thanks to Iliya) and EuroDIG Secretariat (Sandra, your support is extremely important!)

If we can find any local stakeholders in Serbia (did we receive any comments from Vlada, for example?) or in other local country, I think it would be great to organize SEEDIG 2016 in the region. That is why I think we have to start from evaluating our needs and resources. From one side Serbia (or any other Eastern European country) is of course cheaper than Brussels. But it's not for free( Do we have any answers from our potential sponsors/partners?

BTW, from the point of view of participants I also do not see a lot of possibilities to save money. Many of SEEDIG participants will in any case participate in EuroDIG. It means that they will have to pay twice( That is why I think it would be good idea to link SEEDIG (if we will decide to do it not in Brussels) to any other local event (RIPE etc.). That is why we again can not make any decision without confirmation of partnership from them((((

Regarding local priorities I have also some doubts: do we have enough critical mass to organize fruitful discussion of our internal problems without international institutions? What can be our purpose for this discussion? Do we need ICANN, ISOC, EU, CoE and others to involve in these discussions? If yes, are we sure that they will come to Serbia?

So, in case of not having confirmed host/sponsors/partners, who can provide the most critical resources for SEEDIG I support SEEDIG in Brussels. I agree with Sandra that it is extremely important to involve local stakeholders into SEEDIG process and financing. I just have some doubts that we can do it just now(."

## 8. Vojislav Rodić, 12 July

“I have taken in account the arguments outlayed in your emails (by 10pm Sunday), and they have been of great help in shaping my opinion:

Financial aspects:

- I made some calculations regarding my travels (mostly with "domenclatura" people meetings, very similar to IGF) in the past 4 years (3 times only to BRU) and my FPOV (financial point of view) tells me that regional travel expenses will be approx. 3 times lower for all of us, on average
- Meeting in Sofia was the first time it made sense for me to use the car (less than 400km from Belgrade), not just for myself but for two more passengers (one of them was a young student travelling on a zero budget) - compare that to 3 return airline tickets (remind you again - one passenger had zero travel budget).
- I presume that SEEDIG will be awarded some funds from the usual institutional sponsors (EuroDIG, ICANN), plus the local sponsors
- I translate lower expenses not only into cheaper tickets and accommodation for us on this list, I see it more as a chance to expand the number of people that could get included in our activities, and that is (should be) one of our goals.

Institutional aspects:

- There is a natural link between EuroDIG and SEEDIG, and I believe it exists even if the events themselves are not place-time sequential.
- Piggybacking on a greater event brings some organizational advantages as well as meeting more "influential" colleagues in the same "corridors of Internet power".
- With all due respect to input of the experience and influence of our "older" colleagues from the EU proper (or central, or I don't know if we have a name for non-SEE? :-), it is my impression that as devoted as they are to helping "newcomers", their resources are more focused on present issues they themselves have as focal point of their respective communities. Some of the problems we face were either solved such a long time ago that they hardly remember the process of solving them (and take those issues for granted), or are largely irrelevant for their environment.

Conclusion:

- SEEDIG should be a stand-alone event
- If possible staple it to EuroDIG (coordinate as a pre-event if EuroDIG is in any of the cities of the region)
- If EuroDIG is elsewhere - have SEEDIG as a separate event, output of which will be one of inputs for EuroDIG
- Possible locations for SEEDIG2016 - as Belgrade was mentioned several times today, and as I have some personal (as a member of a team) organizational experience with a SEEDIG2015 pre-event (part of our DIDS2015 event), I feel confident that Belgrade has the necessary facilities and organizing team experience for an event that will meet our expectations.
- I even have other cities in mind for 2017 and 2018, but let's take one step at a time :)"

9.  **Ana Kakalashvili, 13 July**

“To say it short: To all above stated reasons (by Valentina, Siranush...), I strongly support and agree that SEEDIG should be continued, and that it should be organized in conjunction EuroDIG (at least for the next year).

But in meanwhile, we should start working on finding potential partners and sponsors to make SEEDIG a separate event in the future.”

10.  **Tetiana Ivanova, 13 July**

“I'm agree that next SEEDIG have to be organized in conjunction EuroDIG. For now SEEDIG is young enough and still needs support of EuroDIG in every sense of the word. But I believe that in a few years SEEDIG will be independent event having it's own reputation and no matter where it will be held.”

11.  **Zdravko Jukić<sup>1</sup>, 17 July**

“I support the idea of having the SEEDIG 2016 in the SEE region as a stand-alone event, because it would enable more participation from the region, not only from the private sector and the government who have less issues with the travel expenses, but also from other stakeholders - the academia and the civil society.

I also support the idea that the SEEDIG 2016 is held in Belgrade as it has a number of advantages that are already mentioned, plus it is relatively easy to come to Belgrade from most countries of the SEE region.

When some more concrete proposals on the sponsoring possibilities will be defined, I will have it checked in Croatia to see if there is interest among the stakeholders to take part in that.

So, that would be all for now from my side.”

12.  **Desiree Miloshević, 17 July**

Endorsed the comments submitted by Zdravko.

13.  **Nelly Stoyanova, 21 July**

“I support having the SEEDIG 2016+ as a stand-alone event, which to be held in the SEE

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<sup>1</sup> Zdravko's comments were also endorsed by Yuriy, who has already expressed his support for SEEDIG as a stand-alone event. Therefore, Yuriy's endorsement is not counted again.

region.

For the next year and probably few years ahead, we may keep the SEEDIG and EuroDIG preparatory processes together, but getting more independent, and at the same time more integrated to the whole IG process.

It would be very good if we can have the whole IGF events picture and the calendar of all internet related events. Probably it is available somewhere. This will help us to find our proper place, timing and frame, and to strengthen our collaboration for better achieving our goals, expressing our specificity.”

**14.  Snezana Jondza, 23 July**

“I support the idea of having the SEEDIG 2016 and the other in the future, in the SEE region as a stand-alone event. I think it will enable more participation from the region, not only from the private sector and the government but also from other stakeholders. Placing the SEEDIG in the region, it will make ease for more people, who can contribute to this topic, to participate, especially for those who have issues with the travel expenses.”

**15.  Fotjon Kosta, 23 July**

“I support the idea of having the SEEDIG 2016 in the SEE region as a stand-alone event because like this we can ensure a larger number of participants (as private sector, government and multistakeholders) and for sure the overall expenses will be less.

I also agree with the idea that the SEEDIG 2016 can be held in Belgrade but I will also strongly support the idea that the SEEDIG 2016 can be held in Slovenia or in Croatia because both of them are EU countries and they encourage a lot IG initiatives and we can ensure more sponsoring possibilities.”

**16.  Valentina Pellizzer, 27 July**

“As many other I think that SEEDIG is a great opportunity to introduce Internet Governance in our region to a larger and divers audience. A critical mass is essential to have a serious debate and to make decision makers aware of the importance of issues and themes.

I believe that we need to use the window of opportunity and positive energy that Sofia had created thanks to the efforts of many of you and have the SEEDIG as event in the region, we can call or think of it as a standalone or a pre-event what is really important is to maximize participation. In this regard, Belgrade is a great option and a very accessible location.

On the connection between EuroDIG and SEEDIG I think it's a very natural one and will be easy to report back, link and connect in Brussels.

I think is important to acknowledge the diversity existing in Europe in terms of innovation, digital and gender divide and Internet Governance. It is essential to name the many trends, speeds and challenges, reflecting on them from our different perspectives. I am sure it will enrich every one and will bring more input to a conversation that is extremely relevant and common to us all.”