

# South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance

# Multistakeholder Internet governance: from global debates to South Eastern European realities

3 June 2015 Sofia, Bulgaria

Meeting report

June 2015

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The South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance (SEEDIG) is a subregional IGF initiative dedicated to open, inclusive and informal dialogue on Internet governance issues among all interested stakeholders in South Eastern Europe (SEE) and the neighbouring area.

Inspired by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG), SEEDIG has been launched by and for stakeholders in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area, as a space where they can gather and discuss, in an informal and open manner, about current and emerging Internet-related issues that are relevant for the region.

SEEDIG is also aimed to create more linkages between the global Internet governance debates and the realities in the region, by encouraging and empowering SEE actors to actively participate in global processes and organisations and to contribute their views and experiences.

#### **SEEDIG objectives:**

- Raise awareness and promote a better understanding of Internet governance among stakeholders from South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area;
- Build or strengthen the capacity of these stakeholders to actively participate in national, regional and international Internet governance processes;
- Facilitate multistakeholder discussions and exchanges on Internet-related challenges and emerging issues that are particularly relevant to the region.

"Each region or sub-region may have different issues and I think it is a great initiative to bring together people from this sub-region, to see what are the issues they care about and want to talk about." Markus Kummer Advisor to the Chair of the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group & Member of the ICANN Board of Directors

#### **SEEDIG preparatory process**

SEEDIG is an initiative driven by stakeholders in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area (SEE), with support from others from outside the region. It was launched in a bottomup manner, as a response to a perceived need for a space where actors in this region can gather together and discuss those Internet governance issues that are relevant to them, and that may be less relevant for the rest of Europe.

The preparatory process for the SEEDIG 2015 meeting was initiated in the second part of 2014, by a multistakeholder group of individuals from SEE and the neighbouring area. This group has continuously increased and it now comprises around 60 members coming from 15 different countries in the region. In addition to regional stakeholders, several other entities interested in contributing to the SEEDIG preparatory process are also part of the group: Council of Europe, Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA Europe), EuroDIG Secretariat, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The current **multistakeholder** composition of the group is the following:

- civil society (40%)
- government (28%)
- technical community (18%)
- the private sector (9%)
- intergovernmental organisations (5%)

This group has been working mainly online, via a dedicated mailing list<sup>1</sup> and several virtual meetings<sup>2</sup> held throughout the year preceding the SEEDIG 2015 meeting. **Coordination** of this work has been done by a smaller multistakeholder and regionally diverse committee<sup>3</sup> composed of:

- Iliya Bazlyankov, UNICART, Bulgaria (private sector)
- Lianna Galstyan, Internet Society Armenia (civil society)
- Aida Mahmutović, Oneworld Platform for Southeast Europe Foundation, Bosnia and Herzegovina (civil society)
- Dušan Stojicević, Serbian National Internet Domain Registry (RNIDS), Serbia (technical community)
- Sorina Teleanu, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania (government)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The mailing list (icann-see[at]rnids.rs), hosted by the Serbian National Internet Domain Registry, was created after a meeting of various stakeholders from South Eastern Europe (held in the context of the ICANN 51 meeting), when participants emphasised the need for a space where they can exchange information on Internet governance-related activities, best practices, experiences, etc. As the idea of a SEE IGF initiative became better shaped, this mailing list became the main communication channel during the preparatory process for the initiative.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The virtual meetings were held via the Webex remote participation platform, thanks to support from the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The so-called "SEEDIG executive committee" was created following a call for volunteers, launched on the dedicated mailing list in December 2014. The current composition of the committee was endorsed by the larger group, taking into account the expressions of interest, as well as the need for a multistakeholder and regionally diverse structure of the committee.

The various stages of the preparatory process for SEEDIG included:

- face-to-face meetings of various stakeholders from the region, in the context of the ICANN 50, 51 and 52 meetings (June 2014, London, UK; October 2014, Los Angeles, USA; February 2015, Singapore) and the IGF 2014 meeting (September 2014, Istanbul, Turkey);
- creation of the dedicated mailing list and consolidation of the organising group;
- a decision to hold the SEEDIG 2015 meeting as a pre-event to the eighth EuroDIG, following discussions with the EuroDIG Secretariat<sup>4</sup>;
- a call for input on themes and topics to be discussed at the meeting (between November 2014 and January 2015);
- four virtual planning meetings (in January, February, March and May 2015);
- a face-to-face planning meeting in January 2015, in Sofia, Bulgaria (in conjunction with the EuroDIG planning meeting);
- a kick-off event in March 2015, in Belgrade, Serbia (in the context of the Regional Internet Forum organised by the Serbian National Internet Domain Registry);
- various pre-events held in Bulgaria and organised by UNICART;
- a pre-meeting webinar in May 2015;
- and a large number of exchanges via the dedicated mailing list.

The entire process has been **open** to all interested individuals and organisations, and this is reflected in the growing number of members of the mailing list. **Transparency** has also been part of the process, as summaries of the various meetings were made available on the mailing list and published online<sup>5</sup>.

Held in the context of the eighth EuroDIG meeting, SEEDIG 2015 was organised with the cooperation of the EuroDIG Secretariat, as well as of the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications and UNICART (as local institutional partner and, respectively, host of EuroDIG 2015). The logistics for the meeting (venue, technical equipment, catering) were financed from the overall EuroDIG budget. Support was also given by the Council of Europe, the IGF Support Association (funding for SEE participants), the IGF Secretariat, the Serbian National Internet Domain Registry (online communication tools) and ICANN (facilitation of face-to-face meetings in the context of ICANN meetings, and outreach support).

As it moves forward as a continuous process, SEEDIG remains committed to the principles of multistakeholderism, openness, inclusiveness and transparency. All interested stakeholders are invited and welcomed to become part of this process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Holding SEEDIG in the context of the EuroDIG meeting was seen as an opportunity to create better synergies between the realities and challenges in SEE and the pan-European debates on Internet governance, as well as to attract more stakeholders from the region and to encourage them to participate and actively contribute to both the sub-regional and pan-European dialogues on Internet governance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/Talk:South\_Eastern\_European\_Dialogue\_%28SEEDIG%29

#### SEEDIG 2015 programme

SEEDIG 2015 took place on 3 June 2015, in Sofia, Bulgaria. It was aimed to be both a capacity-building event, as well as a space for discussions on Internet governance issues that are particularly relevant for the region.

Under the overarching theme of "Multistakeholder Internet governance: from global debates to South Eastern European realities", SEEDIG was held as a full day event, with a programme structured into four distinct sessions.



"I sincerely hope that this forum will be beneficial to all of us and that the debates, the exchange of experience and good practices will greatly contribute to come up with a strong message to further enhance the Internet governance approach and practices." Valery Borissov Deputy Minister of Transport, Information

Technology and Communications, Bulgaria

#### **Programme outline**

- 08:00 Registration
- 09:00 Welcoming address
- 09:30 Introduction to Internet governance -What is Internet governance and why should I care?
  - Alias: Internet governance SEEduction
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:30 Multistakeholder Internet governance mechanisms/approaches at national level
  - Alias: Multi-SEE model

13:00 Lunch

- 14:00 Human rights for Internet users: theoretical approaches vs realities in the region
  - Alias: SEErights
- 15:30 Coffee break
- 16:00 The domain name space in South Eastern Europe – the case of IDNs Alias: IDN SEEssion
- 17:30 Conclusions and final remarks



All SEEDIG sessions were webstreamed and remote participation was available via Webex. Video recordings of the sessions are available at: http://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/South\_Eastern\_European\_Dialogue\_%28SEEDIG%29

# Introduction to Internet governance What is Internet governance and why should I care?

### Alias: Internet governance SEEduction

#### Issues discussed:

- what is Internet governance?
- key Internet governance principles;
- organisations and processes in the Internet governance ecosystem;
- motivations, challenges and barriers when it comes to participation in Internet governance processes; possible ways forward.

#### People:

• Keynote speaker (introduction to Internet governance and the Internet Governance Forum): Markus Kummer, Advisor to the Chair of the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) & member of the ICANN Board of Directors;

- Key participants:
  - Frédéric Donck,

Regional Bureau for Europe, Internet Society

- Lee Hibbard, Council of Europe
- o Jean-Jacques Sahel, ICANN
- Tanel Tang, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia
- Moderator: Sorina Teleanu, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania
- Remote moderator: Panagiotis Papaspiliopoulos, Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport & Networks, Greece
- Rapporteur: Oksana Prykhodko, European Media Platform, Ukraine

# Key messages<sup>6</sup>:

- 1. Internet governance (IG) should be understood as a process of dialogue, collaboration and cooperation.
- 2. IG is a collective effort of understanding the different interests and learning to work together for ensuring an open, global, reliable, trustworthy Internet.
- 3. IG is a lot about principles: multistakeholderism, bottom-up, openness, inclusiveness, transparency, equal footing for all stakeholders.
- 4. We must all learn to have a stake and to have a say, in order to be involved in Internet governance.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The key messages are aimed to reflect the main points raised or discussed during a specific session.

- 5. We need to continue strengthening the linkages between the realities in South Eastern Europe and the international work on Internet governance.
- 6. The way forward includes continuing awareness raising efforts, engaging actors in capacity building programmes, bringing IG to them in their own languages, building or consolidating local and regional platforms for discussions.



"Internet is this gigantic space, we are the users, but we are not aware of the different powers that we might have as different actors. It is changing [..] but I feel that people still are not aware that Internet is their space too." Belma Kučukalić, Oneworld Platform for Southeast Europe Foundation, Bosnia and Herzegovina

"Don't take the Internet as granted. The Internet is user-centric, users have a big stake, so local engagement is key." Frédéric Donck Regional Bureau for Europe, Internet Society "Internet governance is about sensitizing and raising awareness. That is a shared responsibility. Maybe we need to do more in this respect." Lee Hibbard, Council of Europe

# Multistakeholder Internet governance mechanisms/approaches at national level

Alias: Multi-SEE model

#### Issues discussed:

- what does a multistakehoder mechanism mean and how does it function?
- best practices and experiences from the region (ccTLD registries, national IGF initiatives, other national multistakeholder initiatives);
- challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of multistakeholder Internet governance mechanisms at national level.

#### People:

- Keynote speaker (introduction to multistakeholder mechanisms in the Internet governance ecosystem): Thomas Schneider, Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM), Switzerland.
- Key participants:
  - Hristo Hristov, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, Bulgaria
  - Megan Richards, Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology, European Commission
  - o Grigori Saghyan, Internet Society Armenia
  - o Dušan Stojičević, Serbian National Internet Domain Registry, Serbia
- Moderator: Vladimir Radunović, DiploFoundation, Serbia
- Remote moderator: Matei-Eugen Vasile, Association for Technology and Internet, Romania
- Rapporteur: Ana Kakalashvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia



#### Key messages:

- 1. On a global level, we need to come up with minimum standards/safeguards for guaranteeing a balanced multistakeholder model for Internet governance. We need checks and balances for people to trust this model.
- 2. Stakeholders do not have to know every bit of details of how policies/laws are made, but decision-/lawmakers should (and it is crucial for the multistakeholder model) spend more time on consultation with other stakeholders.
- 3. The creation and functioning of multistakeholder mechanisms is not conditioned by enshrining them in legislation or by having an official permission from government for putting them in place.

4. Every involved stakeholder should become more active in Internet governance: not only governments, but also academia, civil society, private sector and the technical community. For this to happen, digital skills and awareness on Internet governance should be developed and raised.



"The main obstacle is for the public authorities to understand that the multistakeholder system means that they don't need to control it and that they need to accept other parties, especially civil society, to stay on the same table, and with the same level of discussion."

Bogdan Manolea, Association for Technology and Internet, Romania

"The multistakeholder model for Internet governance [...] is not easy. It means you have to listen to everyone, it means you have to take into consideration everything, but somehow, out of this, you come up with something that is sensible and reasonable. [...] Nevertheless, the multistakeholder model has proven to be the best of what we know already." Megan Richards, European Commission

# Human rights for Internet users: theoretical approaches vs. realities in the region

Alias: SEErights

#### Issues discussed:

- Council of Europe's "Guide to Human Rights for Internet Users";
- protection of human rights offline and online;
- realities and challenges in the region when it comes to implementing and respecting human rights for Internet users (e.g. privacy, protection of personal data, freedom of expression, access to information, etc.).

#### People

• Keynote speaker (introduction to the Council of Europe "Guide to human rights for Internet users"): Elvana Thaçi, Council of Europe



Key participants:

- George Dimitrov, Internet&Law Foundation, Bulgaria
- Rade Dragović, Directorate for eGovernment, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Serbia
- Bogdan Manolea, Association for Technology and Internet, Romania, member of the MAPPING project
- Chris Sherwood, Allegro Group, Poland
- Moderator: Valentina Pellizzer, Oneworld Platform for Southeast Europe Foundation, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Remote moderator: Naser Bislimi, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Rapporteur: Valentina Pavel, Association for Technology and Internet, Romania

# Key messages:

- 1. Human rights apply online as well as offline, but we need to shift the discussion from the theoretical sphere into the practical one.
- 2. We need to take into consideration the online protection of all human rights, not just privacy and access to information.
- 3. The lack of awareness over Internet users' rights can be observed in all sectors, therefore we need to consider human rights compliance guidelines for all actors: industry, government, users.
- 4. Jurisdiction represents an important element for human rights enforcement states as well as business should have efficient and comprehensive mechanisms for human rights redress.

- 5. Human rights compliance might have a snowball effect in the private sector if some big companies adopt a human rights oriented conduct, they might set certain market requirements.
- 6. Considering all these aspects, more focus should be awarded to finding modalities for connecting the theoretical approach with the practical realities (ex: through effective implementation and application of the law).

"Not many people know that human rights apply to the Internet.[...] In real life, users are not aware of their rights on the Internet, they are not aware what are their fundamental freedoms on the Internet, what are the limits to their freedoms and when can these freedoms be legitimately constrained." Elvana Thaci, Council of Europe

"The technology and the Internet develop so quickly that the law is standing behind, it cannot grasp and regulate in an appropriate way the protection of human rights on the Internet. So there should be mechanisms [for the law] to be adapted more quickly."

George Dimitrov, Internet&Law Foundation, Bulgaria



# The domain name space in South Eastern Europe – the case of IDNs

#### **Alias: IDN SEEssion**

#### Issues discussed:

- key concepts behind the Domain Name System (DNS); the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved in the management and administration of domain names;
- what are Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) and why have they been introduced?
- sharing of experiences from IDNs already delegated or in the process of being delegated;
- relevance of IDNs for the region and challenges in using IDNs.

#### People:



- Keynote speakers:
- Introduction to domain names: Yuriy Kargopolov, Ukrainian Network Information Center, Ukraine
- Introduction to IDNs: Vojislav Rodić, Serbian National Internet Domain Registry, Serbia
- Key participants:
- o Iliya Bazlyankov, UNICART, Bulgaria
- Lianna Galstyan, Internet Society Armenia
- Moderator: Dušan Stojičević, Serbian National Internet Domain Registry, Serbia
- Remote moderator: Hovhannes Aghajanyan, Internet Society Armenia
- Rapporteur: Aleksandar Ichokjaev, Popovski Law Office, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

#### Key messages:

- 1. Domain names are more than addressing and naming, they are content.
- 2. IDNs preserve national identity, while uniting cultural and linguistic diversity.
- 3. IDNs are about enabling the exercise of basic human rights.
- 4. We need to cooperate on finding solutions for the technical challenges (such as functional IDNs emails and recognition of IDNs by search engines) related to full universal acceptance of IDNs.



"IDNs are not about getting money. It is the identity, it is the cultural diversity [that matter], it is about the right to have your language on the Internet." Panagiotis Papaspiliopoulos, Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport & Networks, Greece

"There is a need for linguistic diversification in the globalization that the Internet brings. As an elementary human right to use your own mother language or your script, IDNs are a remarkable tool to preserve national or linguistics specificities." Aleksandar Ichokjaev, Popovski Law Office, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



#### SEEDIG discussions feeding into EuroDIG

Having SEEDIG in conjunction with EuroDIG offered an opportunity to create linkages between the programmes of the two meetings, thus allowing for SEEDIG discussions to feed directly into some EuroDIG sessions. This, in turn, was meant to contribute to having issues and concerns that are relevant for SEE and the neighbouring area better integrated into the pan-European discussions on Internet governance, and to encouraging voices of SEE stakeholders to be raised in the context of EuroDIG.

Thus, the discussions held in SEEDIG's introductory session on Internet governance ("What is Internet governance and why should I care?") fed into EuroDIG's workshop on "Should I click for Internet governance? Where?"<sup>7</sup>. Both sessions discussed about relevance, motivations, challenges and barriers related to participation in Internet governance processes, as well as about possible ways forward in terms of ensuring that more stakeholders are empowered to actively and meaningfully contribute to the governance of the Internet. While the SEEDIG session discussed these issues from the perspective of SEE stakeholders, the EuroDIG workshop allowed for these perspectives to be incorporated into a wider European context.

Similarly, SEEDIG's session on IDNs ("The domain name space in South Eastern Europe: the case of IDNs") was linked with EuroDIG's workshop<sup>8</sup> on the same subject. The SEEDIG session was aimed at introducing the topic of IDNs to the SEE audience and allowing for exchanges of best practices and experiences from the region in terms of implementing IDNs. Building on the discussions at SEEDIG, the EuroDIG workshop was more intended to explain IDNs to a wider European audience, as well as to underline the relevance of IDNs-related universal acceptance issues within a Europe that has such a wide diversity of languages and scripts.

In addition to these clear cases of SEEDIG discussions feeding directly into EuroDIG sessions, there were also other instances in which SEE perspectives were included in debates held within the context of various EuroDIG workshops or plenaries. In these cases, participants from South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area actively participated in the discussions and shared their views and perspectives on certain topics, even if these had not necessarily been touched upon previously at SEEDIG. One example was EuroDIG's workshop on "European policy options on digital access and inclusion"<sup>9</sup>, which looked into issues related to the state of Internet access and use in Europe, and some cases of policy options seen as adequate for improving access and closing the gaps. Examples of such policies implemented or under implementation in some SEE countries were given during the discussions, and the case of IDNs as contributors to empowering more people to use the Internet was also brought up.

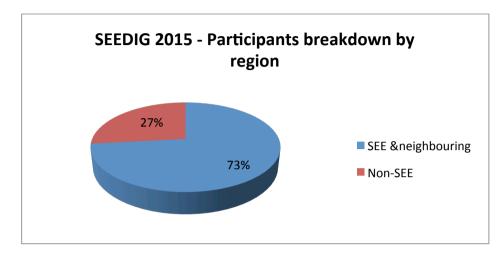
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> http://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/Should\_I\_click\_for\_Internet\_governance%3F\_Where%3F

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> http://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/Internationalised\_Domain\_Names

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> http://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/European\_policy\_options\_for\_digital\_access\_and\_inclusion

# Participation

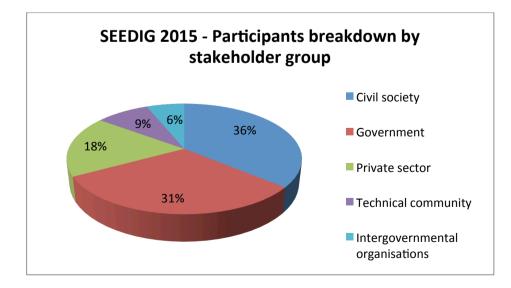
SEEDIG 2015 was attended by around 150 on-site participants, coming from 38 countries, both from within South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area (73%) and from outside the region (27%).



Some of the countries that were represented at SEEDIG, and that could be considered as part of South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area, are: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo<sup>\*10</sup>, Moldova, Serbia, Slovenia, Romania, Russia, Ukraine.

All stakeholder groups were represented at the meeting:

- civil society: 36%
- government: 31%
- private sector: 18%
- technical community: 9%
- intergovernmental organisations: 6%



<sup>10</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

In terms of gender representation, 52% of all participants were male, and 48% female.

Youth also participated at SEEDIG. Ten of the young SEEDIG attendees were also participants in the New Media Summer School (NMSS), which was organised on 1-2 June, under the umbrella of EuroDIG, and with support from the SEEDIG organising team<sup>11</sup>.

Participation of some other SEEDIG attendees was made possible due to support from the IGF Support Association (IGFSA) and the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe, through its regional Project "Promoting freedom of expression and information and freedom of the media in South-East Europe", covered the participation costs for 12 attendees from six countries in the region. The funds contributed by the IGFSA<sup>12</sup> were used to sponsor eight participants from eight countries in the region. Additional funds were made available by the EuroDIG Secretariat, from the overall EuroDIG budget, to cover the travel and/or accommodation costs for some members of the SEEDIG executive committee.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> More details about the New Media Summer School are available at: http://www.eurodig.org/eurodig-2016/youth/youth-programme/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The IGFSA contribution was made to the EuroDIG budget, and the EuroDIG Secretariat decided to allocate these funds for sponsoring participants from SEE to attend both SEEDIG and EuroDIG.

# Feedback from participants

An online evaluation survey was made available to SEEDIG participants who wanted to share their impressions, degree of satisfaction and views on how SEEDIG went, whether it should continue and how it could improve. The results of the survey show that:

- Seventy-five percentages (75%) of the respondents consider that the overall theme of SEEDIG was relevant to the current Internet governance challenges in SEE and the neighbouring area, while 88% of the respondents believed that the four SEEDIG sessions were relevant to these challenges.
- Sixty-three percentages (63%) of the respondents were satisfied with the content and format of SEEDIG's sessions, while 38% considered themselves to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- With regards to the level of interaction between panellists and participants, 50% of the respondents considered themselves satisfied, 38% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, while 13% were dissatisfied. One respondent commented that "the panel discussions were a bit one-sided, with the panel members often talking at an audience instead of engaging in a conversation".
- On a scale from 0 to 4, respondents considered that SEEDIG contributed to enhancing their understanding of various Internet governance issues at an average level of 3.25. On the same scale, an average grade of 2.75 was given to the level on which the various SEEDIG sessions shared experiences and best practices, and discussed possible solutions that could assist participants in addressing challenges faced by their organisation/community/country.
- All respondents (100%) expressed their desire for SEEDIG to continue over the following years.

"I would like to say that SEEDIG was a great first time event and an opportunity for the regional actors to get included in the global dialogue on Internet governance. I think that the programme and the topics were well thought to be more general, and that was reflected during the sessions which showed both how much IG is known among the different stakeholders in the SEE and also that there is a big need for more awareness and capacity building." (SEEDIG participant)

#### What worked well at SEEDIG?

(thoughts from participants, extracted from the evaluation survey)

- discussions
- collaboration, discussion, communication
- the programme itself, its variety and the up-to-date choice of topics
- the fact that it was created in the first place
- some of the members of the panels were very good
- It was good to see that people in SEE are also eager to become involved, their voice to be heard.
- It was a great networking opportunity with key stakeholders in the region.
- almost everything

# Suggestions for subjects to be discussed at a potential SEEDIG 2016 meeting

(thoughts from participants, extracted from the evaluation survey)

- privacy and data protection
- freedom of speech
- net neutrality
- copyright reform
- intellectual property protection on the Internet – local best practices and experiences
- privacy and security on the Internet
- the digital market
- new media
- Internet governance policy making processes
- how the EU regulatory framework is affecting the Internet – within EU and in its neighbourhood

"The organisation of the first edition of SEEDIG has been a welcome initiative and by no means inferior to the EuroDIG event that followed it. It was a useful first step on the road towards the SEE region, as a whole, gaining a better understanding of what the Internet is, how it functions and what it needs to continue being an engine for freedom, progress and growth.

The necessity of a SEEDIG became apparent with the interventions of certain stakeholders who were clearly not very familiar with the topics at hand and failed to engage during the rest of the conversations. This indicates a significant deficit of understanding when it comes to topics related to the Internet in the region.

Having the governments, together with all other stakeholders in the region, participate through their representatives in Internet governance fora could prove useful if these representatives seize on such opportunities to gain a better understanding of the

Internet and what makes it tick." Matei-Eugen Vasile,

Association for Technology and Internet, Romania

# **SEEDIG budget**

As mentioned above, having SEEDIG organised in the context of the EuroDIG eighth meeting also meant that SEEDIG was financed from the overall EuroDIG budget. This included the costs for logistics, catering, social event, as well as the travel and/or accommodation costs for some participants from the region. A general overview of the involved costs is presented below:

Budget item	Costs (euro)
Logistics	2100
Catering	1500
Social event	1000
Travel funds for SEEDIG	3680
Travel funds for the January planning meeting	953
Total	9233

# Find us online

Further details about SEEDIG 2015 are available at:

- http://www.eurodig.org/other-ig-initiatives/seedig/ (short URL: http://bit.ly/1GxpMV8)
- http://eurodigwiki.org/wiki/South\_Eastern\_European\_Dialogue\_%28SEEDIG%29 (short URL: http://bit.ly/1PAj7rp)

#### SEEDIG, as a process, welcomes all interested stakeholders.

- You can write to us at see[at]intgovforum.org. Contact person: Sorina Teleanu.
- And you can join our dedicated mailing list (icann-see[at]rnids.rs), at http://mail-server.rnids.rs/mailman/listinfo/icann-see (short URL: http://bit.ly/1OSjd1J)

Join us in making the voice of South Eastern Europe better heard in the Internet governance ecosystem!

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#### Thanks to:

Council of Europe, EuroDIG Secretariat, ICANN, IGF Secretariat, IGF Support Association, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of Bulgaria, Serbian National Internet Domain Registry, UNICART, and all others who have supported SEEDIG.