

## Internet Governance in South Eastern Europe

### INTERNET GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTS

#### Infrastructure



In **Serbia**, two mobile virtual network operators (MVNO) – Globatel and Vectone Mobile – started providing electronic communications services. Unlike traditional operators, these two companies do not own their own physical infrastructure and have not acquired frequency licences from the country's telecom regulatory authority. Instead, they rely on renting out portions of the existing network owned by traditional network operators. The MVNOs have, nevertheless, been licensed to operate as electronic communications services providers, which means there is no legal obstacle preventing them from providing services to customers in Serbia.

#### Convergence



Uber seems to be facing difficulties operating in **Croatia**, as authorities in the country might consider the service illegal. According to news reports, the country's minister of transportation has stated that both Uber and Cammeo (a similar service operating in the Croatian city of Split) are not legal in Croatia. The two companies have reacted saying they do not provide taxi services, and, as such, are not infringing related legislation. Uber has also stated that it follows all applicable rules in the country, including in relation to taxation.

#### Cybersecurity



TypingDNA, a start-up based in **Romania**, has been developing a system which involves the use of behavioral biometrics to secure devices and data. The company uses artificial intelligence algorithms to analyse the way people type on their keyboards (e.g. the time it takes for users to reach one key to another) and to match multiple typing patterns. The results are used as a method to authenticate users. This authentication solution could be implemented in various types of digital devices that require authentication, allowing them to constantly monitor their users and identify unusual or unrecognised typing activities. The company has clarified that the algorithm involved in analysing the typing habits does not collect data on what users actually type, so there are no privacy implications.

#### Child safety online



In **Serbia**, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications and Asseco SEE have launched a contact centre for child safety online. The centre will enable children, parents, teachers, and any other concerned individuals to report cases of online content that they see as threatening the safety or the rights of children on the Internet. The aim of the initiative is to prevent and combat online abuse against children and other types of harmful and dangerous content, as well as to raise awareness on the risks that children may face online. The centre will be operated with the support of other institutions in the country, which will be involved in both promoting the initiative and handling requests and complaints from citizens.

#### E-commerce



An e-commerce survey conducted in **Croatia** by Mastercard reveals that 81% of the respondents make online purchases at least once a month. The main reasons for shopping online include: affordable prices, saving time, and better offers online than in traditional stores. The items most often purchased online include clothing and footwear, followed by consumer and household electronics. With regard to the payment options for online purchases, survey respondents indicated: PayPal and similar services (35%), credit cards (35%), and Internet banking (11%). Forty percent (40%) of online shoppers prefer foreign e-commerce platforms, 16% use domestic online shops, while 44% make online purchases from both domestic and foreign shops.



Economic – other



**Belarus** is increasingly seen as a Silicon Valley of Eastern Europe, due to its information technology (IT) hubs, cheap and highly qualified workforce, and fiscal facilities. Over the past years, the country has become one of the largest IT outsourcing powers in Europe, with its Hi-Tech Park hosting over 160 companies (41% of these companies were created by Belarusian investors, 35% by foreign investors, and 24% are joint ventures). In 2015, the exports from this IT hub amounted to \$706.6 million.

In **Romania**, the information and communications technology (ICT) sector was the second largest contributor to the country's economic growth in the first nine months of 2016. According to the Employers' Association of the Software and Services Industry, this was due to the strengthening of the enabling environment, through supportive public policies covering areas such as taxation and education. The growth of the ICT sector, which now accounts for over 150 000 employees, has been a constant in the Romanian economic landscape over the past few years.

Development



Teams of developers from countries in **Western Balkans** participated in the *Ministry of Data* challenge, a competition designed to encourage the use of ICT skills for the development of e-solutions (mobile applications, platforms, visualisations/analytics, etc.) for improving the quality of lives in cities across the region. The competition, which involved the use of open data, was also aimed to encourage public authorities to publish data for reuse. A total of 53 solutions were proposed as part of the challenge, ranging from ideas of how to improve the quality of public policies and inclusion of citizens, to monitoring the spending of natural resources. Seven finalists will have the opportunity to be part of a bootcamp in Zagreb, Croatia, in February 2017.

In **Croatia**, a new initiative has been launched with the overall aim of promoting digital literacy and access to information. *Croatia Reads* will allow access to a virtual library of more than 100,000 books. The library includes a wide variety of books, in Croatian and in other languages, and it will be continuously expanded, with new books to be added every Friday. To access the library, individuals need to download a free application on their devices and to register as users of the platform. Accessing the virtual library is free of charge during December, and the initiators of the project are actively looking for partners to keep the library accessible for free for the future.

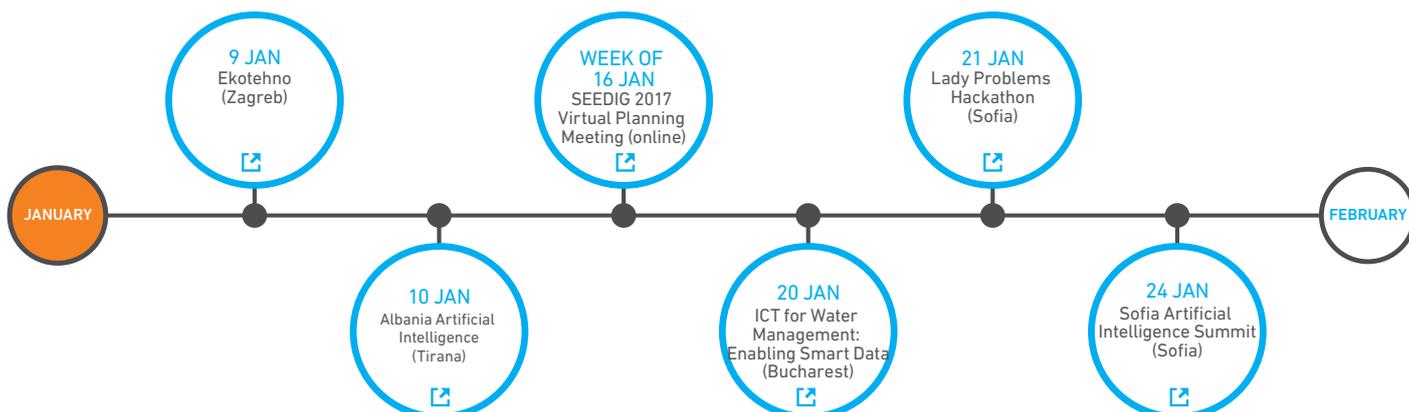
Privacy and data protection



In **Romania**, the Office of the Ombudsman has filed a case with the Constitutional Court over the constitutionality of the legislation concerning the electronic health record, and its compliance with privacy and data protection rules. According to the Ombudsman, the law regulating the electronic health record does not contain sufficient and objective rules and criteria regarding: the cases when accessing and using patients' data is allowed, the categories of individuals who are allowed to access the data, the conditions for data processing, etc. Data included in the electronic health record should be accessed and processed with maximum security considerations, in order to prevent the dissemination (even by accident) of personal data in manners that might negatively affect the data subject, opines the authority.

In **Serbia**, the Directorate for E-government within the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government has announced security upgrades to the country's e-government portal. The measures include a new SSL certificate and additional solutions aimed to ensure the protection of personal data and the security of electronic communications carried through the portal (i.e., individuals sharing information and communicating with public authorities). The security upgrades were implemented following public notifications that the portal was not secure enough in terms of protecting citizens' personal data. Plans are also undergoing for a complete functional redesign of the e-government portal, to make it more user friendly.

AHEAD IN JANUARY



EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



Infrastructure and technologies

**Eastern European Domain Name System Forum/UADOM** | 1–2 December | Kyiv, Ukraine

Held for the first time as the Eastern Europe Domain Name System (EE DNS) Forum, the UADOM featured discussions and sharing of experiences and good practices on topics such as Internet of Things (IoT) and emerging threats; challenges and roles in tackling cyber-crime; cybersecurity and the DNS; challenges and legal alternatives in domain name dispute resolutions. The event, which was hosted by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and Hostmaster, was attended by top level domain registries, domain name registrars, technical experts, representatives on public authorities, and non-governmental organisations from the region and beyond.

**IEEE Student and Young Professional Congress** | 1–4 December | Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Under the theme *Technology and Innovation for a Bright Future*, the event featured workshops and presentations on issues such as IoT and smart cities, machine learning, web applications security, and open innovation. A hackathon was also part of the programme, allowing 13 teams of engineering and computing students to develop various solutions that have a commercial potential.

**Smart Cities** | 8–9 December | Bucharest, Romania

The fourth edition of the Smart Cities conference, organised by the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, brought together teachers, researchers, and students interested in topics such as e-government, e-democracy, social innovation, urban planning and development, cybersecurity, and smart cities. Papers presented at the conference by both academics and practitioners in the field of public administration will be published in the the Smart Cities and Regional Development Journal or in HOLISTICA Journal of Business and Public Administration.

**Smart City Challenge** | 17 December | Belgrade, Serbia

The final phase of the Telenor Smart City Challenge was dedicated to showcasing the ten finalists of the competition, whose aim was to stimulate the development of innovative solutions for the cities of the future. Over the past four months, teams of Serbian entrepreneurs and innovators worked on ICT solutions for addressing urban problems in the fields of traffic, transportation, tourism, environment, and shopping. The ten finalists will have the opportunity to be part of an eight-month programme of training and mentoring in an ICT hub, while the best solutions were granted with funds amounting to €10,000 for further developing their projects.



Cybersecurity

**Virtual Security Summit – Central & Eastern Europe** | 29 November | Online

Held under the theme *Protection your organisation in a mobile-first, cloud-first world*, the Microsoft-lead webinar was aimed at sharing insights and good practices for combating the latest digital threats in an effective and efficient manner. Topics addressed during the presentations ranged from cloud computing and IoT security, to concrete modalities for protecting against, detecting, and responding to cyber threats.

**Young Faces Conference: Strategic Cybersecurity Policy Development in Southeast Europe** | 29 November – 1 December | Belgrade, Serbia

The event, organised by the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces and DiploFoundation, brought together 25 participants from South Eastern European (SEE) countries, for three days of lectures and discussions on challenges in cybersecurity governance, tools for cybersecurity governance development, and stakeholders in the field. Interactive sessions focused on exploring good practices and tools for developing and implementing cybersecurity policies and strategies across the region.



Economic

**IAB MIXX Conference Serbia 2016** | 15 December | Belgrade, Serbia

The conference, organised by IAB Serbia, was dedicated to discussions on the digital economy, in general, and on the use of technology and innovation in marketing and advertising. Participants also looked into the challenges and opportunities brought by emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, and the IoT. The event was attended by representatives of the marketing industry, experts in digital media, and technology professionals from Serbia and the region.

**Digital Global Society and Economy** | 19–22 December | Athens, Greece

The panel on Digital Global Society and Economy, held in the context of the 10th *Annual International Conference on Global Studies: Business, Economic, Political, Social and Cultural Aspects*, gathered academics and researchers in global economy, global society, and other related areas. Presentations and discussions revolved around issues such as virtual learning, green IT, politics and social media, and digital society and innovation.

## EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION



### Development

#### **Informatics in the Public Sector** | 5–6 December | Kranj, Slovenia

The event, organised by the Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration and the Slovenian Society Informatika, focused on discussions and exchanges of experiences and good practices in the field on electronic public services. Participants underlined the fact that the use of digital tools in the public administration is an essential step towards increasing the efficiency and quality of the public services. Topics discussed during the two-day event included: the use of cloud computing in the public sector, cybersecurity – vulnerabilities and users' awareness, blockchain technologies and e-government, digital competences, e-identity and e-business, big data, and artificial intelligence.

#### **Digital Career** | 8 December | Zadar, Croatia

The event, organised by Drupal and the University of Zadar, featured discussions on the benefits and challenges of developing a career in the digital and technology industries. Topics tackled during the debates included: the impact of technology advancements on the workforce (the elimination of some jobs and the creation of others); the educational system and whether it is properly designed to prepare students for digital careers; online education and informal edu-

cation as complementary solutions for adapting the workforce to the labour market requirements.

#### **Rail Girls Belgrade** | 10–11 December | Belgrade, Serbia

The workshop was aimed at providing girls and women with an opportunity to acquire web programming skills, as well as to learn about various digital tools that could help them express their creativity and put their ideas into practice. Working in small groups with the help of a mentor, participants learnt the basic of the Ruby programming language, and started developing their own applications.

#### **IT Days 2016** | 13–14 December | Belgrade, Serbia

The fourth edition of the IT Days conference gathered students, representatives of IT companies, and IT enthusiasts, for two days of discussions focused especially on aspects related to ICT, education, and employment. Issues covered during the debates included ICT skills needed in today's digital society, challenges for the labour market and the education systems, and ICT applications in education. Participants also discussed about financing solutions for ICT start-ups, commercial applications of virtual reality, and online payment methods.



### Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiatives

#### **Youth IGF Turkey** | 3 December | Istanbul, Turkey

The programme for the second edition of the Youth IGF Turkey included three sessions on e-entrepreneurship, data, and rights on the Internet. Discussions revolved around specific topics such as opportunities for ICT start-ups, e-training and online lectures, verification of news sources, storage and use of data by private and public entities, data leaks and hacking, the right to be forgotten, protection of children online, hate speech, and freedom of expression. Participants expressed their will to strengthen efforts to organise a national IGF in 2017.

#### **SEEDIG: Internet Governance Processes in South Eastern Europe – Challenges and Opportunities** | 7 December | Guadalajara, Mexico

Held in the framework of the 11th IGF meeting, the session looked into how the South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance (SEEDIG) could contribute to strengthening the Internet governance (IG) ecosystem in SEE. In addition to updates on the preparatory process for the SEEDIG 2017 meeting, discussions were held on possible activities that SEEDIG could engage into as part of its inter-sessional work. Suggestions included: awareness raising activities aimed to encourage regional stakeholders to engage in regional and global IG processes; surveys on specific Internet governance topics; compilations of good practices and possible solutions for addressing Internet-related challenges specific to the region.



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.