Geneva Internet Platform   SEEDIG

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

First IXP to be established in Bosnia and Herzegovina
In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the University of Sarajevo and three Internet Service Providers (ISPs) – BH Telecom, Logosoft, and Telemach – signed an agreement on the establishment of the country's first Internet Exchange Point (IXP). The IXP will allow the interconnection of local ISPs, meaning that local Internet traffic will be exchanged locally (instead of taking international routes). This will reduce costs for ISPs, while also improving the accessibility of local content.⤴

Deutsche Telekom plans investment in the Greek telecom infrastructure
Deutsche Telekom's CEO Timotheus Höttges announced company's plans to invest in **Greece**, during his meeting with the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The foreseen investment of EUR 2 billion is intended to support the deployment of an optic-fibre network and 5G over a period of four years. Tsipras saluted the initiative as a 'vote of confidence in the Greek economy', while adding that over 1 million households will be provided with 1Gbps Internet connection as a result of it.⤴

Convergence

SEE countries join cooperation agreement on AI
Bulgaria and **Slovenia** are among 25 European countries that signed a Declaration of cooperation on artificial intelligence (AI). The partnership will cover a broad variety of issues – from ensuring Europe's competitiveness in the research and deployment of AI, to dealing with social, economic, ethical, and legal implications. Among the key challenges to be addressed, states have named the impact of AI on the labour market, modernisation of Europe's education and training systems, ethical usage of AI, and accountability in AI development and use.⤴

Plans for a 5G corridor for automated driving
Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia signed a letter of intent to create a 5G-enabled transportation corridor between the cities of Sofia, Thessaloniki, and Belgrade.⤴ The corridor is supposed to support the testing and deployment of various technologies, from mobile systems of fourth and fifth generation to connected and autonomous vehicles. Through this agreement, the three countries join the network of other European states that are working on building cross-border 5G highways.⤴

Cybersecurity

CERTs cooperate with the private sector
In **Azerbaijan**, the country's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) signed a memorandum of understanding with Microsoft on cybersecurity cooperation. The cooperation is said to involve the use of Microsoft's expertise and technology to support research and protection against cyber-attacks.⤴ In Romania, CERT-RO signed collaboration protocols with industrial control systems producer ENOVO Group⤴ and gas distribution company E.ON.⤴ The protocols envision cooperation in cybersecurity information exchange, awareness raising, and capacity development, among others.

Network and information security draft law approved by the Romanian government
In **Romania,** the government has approved a draft law project on network and information security, for submission to the country's parliament.⤴ The draft law, which transposes the EU Directive on network and information security, establishes CERT-RO as the competent cybersecurity authority at the national level. It also outlines cybersecurity-related measures that various public and private entities will be obliged to undertake. Sectors covered include transport, energy, banking, financial infrastructures, health, water, and digital infrastructures, as well as digital services such as cloud computing services, search engines, and online markets. The draft law is now subject to debate and approval in the Romanian Parliament.

Cybercrime

Busted: Cybercrime group dismantled by Romanian-Italian joint operation
Romanian and **Italian** law enforcement agencies have concluded a two-year coordinated investigation of an EUR 1 million banking phishing fraud. As a result, 20 individuals were arrested: 9 in Romania and 11 in Italy. The cybercriminals scammed hundreds of bank customers through spear phishing e-mails, faking communication from national tax authorities. The e-mail contained a link that was guiding the victim to a fake website, allowing for account details to be stolen. Stolen banking credentials were used to transfer money from the victims' account to criminals' accounts, from which the attackers later withdrew money. Europol and Eurojust were also involved in the coordination of this investigation.⤴

Cybercrime

Ukrainian energy ministry website hit by a ransomware attack

The website of Ukrainian Energy and Coal Ministry was taken down by a ransomware attack on the morning of 24 April. In exchange for decrypting the files, the hackers asked for a ransom of approximately USD 1000 in bitcoin. The incident was isolated, as other government systems, state-run energy companies' websites, or the ministry's e-mail systems were not affected, according to cyber police spokeswoman Yulia Kvitko. The website was restored soon after the incident.

Child safety online

Open consultation for self-regulatory practices on harmful Internet content for children

The National Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Information Technology (ANRCETI) in Moldova launched a public consultation on a set of recommendations regarding self-regulatory practices for ISPs to filter Internet content that is harmful to children. The proposed recommendations suggest that ISPs should elaborate, publish, and promote guidelines to assist parents and teachers in protecting children from harmful online content. These guidelines would include information on issues such as e-safety tools for protecting children online, modalities for filtering harmful Internet content, and monitoring the use of devices and the Internet.

UNICEF launches #iamsafeonline programme in Albania

The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a multi-year child safety online programme in Albania. The #iamsafeonline initiative is aimed to protect children against child sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse on the Internet. UNICEF also signed a cooperation agreement with the Albanian National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (AKCESK), to advance the protection of children on the Internet.

Internet safety education project launched by Moldcell

Moldavian mobile network operator Moldcell has launched a project aimed at increasing the safety of users in the digital realm. For the Internet without worries (#InternetFaraGriji) project, Moldcell partnered with Tekwill and La Strada and developed a series of workshops, for both children and adults, planned for the year of 2018. During the first workshop, parents received information from trained industry experts and psychologists, on issues such as securing devices and communicating with children. Children assembled and programmed a robot that taught them what online safety is.

Cosmote launches Cosmote Family services

Greek operator Cosmote launched Cosmote Family, a series of services and tools designed to support families in ensuring child safety online. The new parental control app Cosmote Family Safety enables parents to obtain information on the websites and applications their children use, set limits on the time children spend on the Internet, and protect them from navigating into cyber-bullying or predators. Cosmote also created a new e-parenting portal providing parents access to articles on the subject of safe Internet use, as well as new trends and applications in online child safety.

Access

4Mbps broadband now part of Slovenia's universal service

The Slovenian Agency for Communication Networks and Services announced the decision to include broadband Internet access as part of the universal service concept. The universal service represents the smallest set of electronic communication services available to all end-users in Slovenia. The change, which would bring users a minimum download speed of 4Mbps, is expected to help address the digital divide affecting companies and residents in areas with poorly developed electronic communications infrastructure. The measure will enter into force 60 days after the publication in Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia of the acts that have been amended to make it possible.

Economic - other issues

Electronic registration of tourists

In Serbia, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications has announced that it started working on an 'e-tourism project' that would introduce the obligation for hotels and other accommodation service providers to electronically register tourists. This would allow authorities to 'know the exact number of tourists at any time and to have precise information about their number'. The ministry also intends to introduce a flat-rate tax for natural persons providing accommodation services.

Development-other issues

Belarus strengthens ICT cooperation with Egypt and Republic of Korea

In Belarus, the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Science and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) of the Republic of Korea, envisioning a multi-project plan through which Korean experts will assist Belarus in advancing its e-government system and progressing towards digital transformation. A memorandum of understanding on ICT cooperation was also signed with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt, covering areas such as cybersecurity, innovation and entrepreneurship, research and development, and capacity building.

Capacity development

Orange is teaching coding to Romanian kids

Orange Romania, one of the country's largest provider of electronic communication services, has launched the second edition of its Fast SuperCoders initiative, dedicated to teaching the basics of coding to 10-13 years old children. The programme will run between 18 April and 7 May 2018, in Orange shops located in 12 major cities across the country. Children will be taught how to develop programmes, games, or interactive stories. The overall goal of the initiative is to contribute to raising the interest of children in developing digital technologies.

Content policy

Recommendations for the media sector in Montenegro

As part of an EU-funded project, the Council of Europe (CoE) presented its findings and recommendations related to reforming of the media sector in Montenegro. A group of independent experts has worked in the country since late 2017 and came up with a report including 67 recommendations. The report covers issues such as copyright, media self-regulation, and freedom of speech in the digital age. The recommendations are aimed at bringing the Montenegrin media framework in compliance with the EU and CoE standards. It was suggested that a coordinating body responsible for media policy is created; that the Agency for Electronic Media regains its inspection prerogatives and the possibility to introduce monetary fines; and that the concept of media literacy is included in legislation governing media.

Regulation of online media discussed in the Belarusian Parliament

In Belarus, a draft law amending media legislation is currently being discussed in the parliament. The bill, which passed first reading in the House of Representatives, would directly affect online media. Although not compulsory, online media would need to register with the authorities to enjoy the benefits of traditional media (such as obtaining media accreditation and information from state bodies). The bill would also introduce a series of obligations for owners of Internet resources, such as monitoring the content so as not to allow the distribution of illegal material. Moreover, the Ministry of Information would be able to decide on restricting access to certain online resources. The bill is seen by human rights organisations as a threat to freedom of media and freedom of expression. The government did not rule out the possibility of the current draft being substantially modified in the light of ongoing debates.

Turkey submits 65% of global removal requests on Twitter

Twitter's latest Transparency Report revealed that between July and December 2017, Turkey submitted approximately 65% of the total number of content removal requests. There is a 58% increase in Turkish demands compared to the previous reporting period. However, Twitter stated that 35% of the increase can be attributed to a single spike in November 2017 from legal demands by the Turkish Information and Communication Technologies Authorities (ICTA) related to spam accounts. Out of 79 verified journalist and news outlet accounts which were subject to legal removal demands, 58 accounts appear in requests originated from Turkey. Twitter stated it had withheld one account on the basis of violating Turkey's anti-terror law.

E-commerce

E-commerce made easier

Serbia has amended its Law on Foreign Exchange Operation, to enable the trade of digital goods in foreign currency inside the country. The new rules apply to the sales of software and other digital products exclusively through electronic means. The condition is that payment is made using a bank card or electronic money, and through a payment service provider based in Serbia.
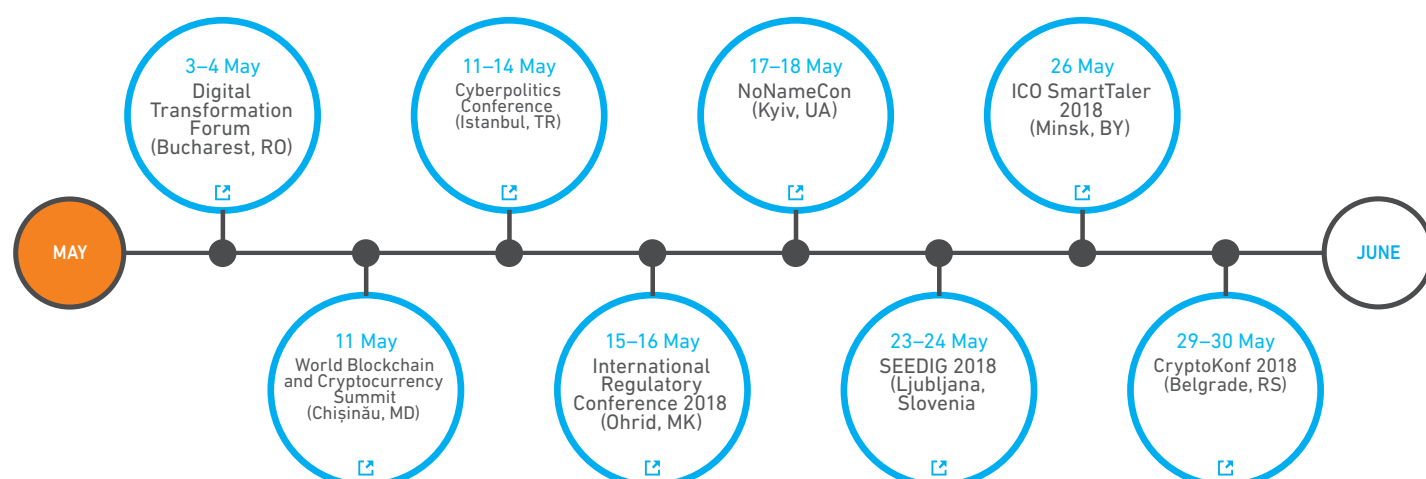
E-money and virtual currency

Cryptocurrency and blockchain centre created in Azerbaijan

The chairman of the Azerbaijan Internet Forum Osman Gunduz announced the creation of a centre for studying and developing the cryptocurrency market and blockchain technology. The centre will conduct educational activities (such as free training courses on cryptocurrencies and blockchain for media representatives), prepare proposals on the regulation of the cryptocurrency market and blockchain, and provide consulting services for companies and banks on issues such as Initial Coin Offering (ICO) and the application of blockchain technologies.

AHEAD IN MAY

MAY

- 3–4 May
  Digital Transformation Forum
  (Bucharest, RO)

- 11 May
  World Blockchain and Cryptocurrency Summit
  (Chișinău, MD)

- 11–14 May
  Cyberpolitics Conference
  (Istanbul, TR)

- 15–16 May
  International Regulatory Conference 2018
  (Ohrid, MK)

- 17–18 May
  NoNameCon
  (Kyiv, UA)

- 23–24 May
  SEEDIG 2018
  (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

- 26 May
  ICO SmartTaler 2018
  (Minsk, BY)

- 29–30 May
  CryptoKonf 2018
  (Belgrade, RS)

JUNE

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION

Development - other

Western Balkans Digital Summit | 18–19 April 2018 | Skopje, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Held under the theme Building the future of digital, the summit allowed participants to exchange ideas and proposals on topics related to digitalisation and the digital society. The programme was divided into four sections: digital skills, trust and security, digital environment networks and services, connectivity and access, and digital economy and society. A Digital Expo was also part of the event, allowing interested companies to showcase their work.

Armenian Blockchain Forum | 22 April 2018 | Yerevan, Armenia
The forum was aimed to contribute to the setting up of a favourable environment for high-tech startups in Armenia. It was divided into three main sections: Blockchain Hall (future of the blockchain market and battle of technological platforms), Education Hall (development/application of disruptive technologies in business, and blockchain education programmes), and Roadshow Hall (ICO-projects pitching sessions). More than 30 experts in new technologies, startups, investors, and leading international media participated as speakers.

9th Infocom World Albania | 24 April 2018 | Tirana, Albania
The technology conference was built around two main sessions. The first session was focused on smart cities and smart living, incorporating aspects of renewable energy, e-services, Internet of Things, digital banking, self-terminal,s and electric transport. The main topic of the second session was digital natives, where challenges of millennials regarding education, e-commerce, blockchain, smart goods, and AI were discussed.

iForum 2018 | 25 April 2018 | Kyiv, Ukraine
At its 10th edition, the forum explored issues related to Internet business, startups, advertising and promotion, Internet technologies, edtech of the future, innovations, blockchain, and digital fun. The exhibition zone was occupied by IT-companies presenting their promo stands, while The City of the Future showcased modern technological products, creating a prototype of the smart city. The iForum also hosted the final round of the first Ukrainian competition of biomedical startups MBioS Challenge.

Rockit Moldova 2018 | 27 April 2018 | Chişinău, Moldova
Organised by Rockit Academy and Digital Communication Network, the event looked at trends in the digital world for 2018 and covered the topics of innovation and technology (e-mail campaigns, future of skills), creativity (production houses, brand strategies, architecture of communication campaigns), communication (elections in digital era, fake news, media business), entrepreneurship, and startups.

International Conference for Blockchain Business & Development | 27–28 April 2018 | Split, Croatia
The conference was organised with the aim to support the growth of the blockchain ecosystem. The program was tailored for programmers, project managers, and entrepreneurs looking at the potential of working with the blockchain technology. The first day of the conference was reserved for full-day hands-on development workshops. On the second day, the conference was split into a development-oriented and a business-oriented track.

Cybersecurity

ITU Regional Workshop for Europe and CIS on Cybersecurity and Child Online Protection | 4 – 6 April 2018 | Odessa, Ukraine
The workshop was organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in cooperation with the Odessa National Academy of Telecommunications. More than 50 participants from 14 states discussed issues such as cybersecurity strategies and capacity building, the role of governments and international organisations in cybersecurity and child online protection, and tools and regulatory frameworks for child safety online.

Information Security in the Multi-platform Era | 16–17 April 2018 | Belgrade, Serbia
Organised by the International Data Corporation, in cooperation with the US Commercial Service Belgrade, the event brought together security executives, experts, and software and service providers to discuss topics related to secure applications, cloud and security, and cybersecurity incident responses. Keynotes were given by Serbian State Secretary at the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Tatjana Matić and US Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia Kyle Scott.

InternationalFestivalof Cyber Security | 20 April 2018 | Tbilisi
Organised with the support of local and international entities, the festival brought together students, representatives of governmental bodies, private companies, and the technical and academic communities, to exchange information and experiences on cybersecurity-related topics. In addition to exploring issues such as cybersecurity strategy and policy, cybercrime, and cyber law, participants also discussed the challenges of protecting personal data and countering disinformation in the online space.

E-commerce

OMGCommerce 2018 | 4 April 2018 | Zagreb, Croatia
The fifth edition of this regional conference brought together experts, companies, and others interested in the topic of online commerce. Numerous lectures, panels, and breakout sessions covered topics such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), global trends in e-commerce, data-driven marketing, and new forms of online payments. This year's gathering also saw the presentation of the first eComm awards, which aim to recognise the best online shopping practices.

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.