

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



Romania to join EuroHPC

On 13 September 2018, the **Romanian** Government approved a Memorandum initiated by the Ministry of Communications and Information Society and the Ministry of Research and Innovation on Romania's Accession to the European High Performance Computing (Euro HPC) initiative. In a preparatory meeting headed by the Romanian Minister of Communications and Information Society, Petru Bogdan Cojocaru. The Minister declared that Romania's accession to this European initiative is essential as it contributes to keeping the country 'in the economic race of the era of informational supercomputer speed'. Romania will also be able to access EU funds for the development of technologies and applications for the next generation of supercomputers.

Makedonski Telekom performs 5G demo

Electronic communications operator Makedonski Telekom announced it has performed a 5G demo in **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**. Reported as the first 5G demo in the country, the initiative is part of the company's preparations for the commercial launch of 5G networks. Makedonski Telekom is planning to invest and put more focus on this technology in the next two years to fulfill all the prerequisites for the commercial launch. The speed of the 5G demo measured four times faster than current 4G speed.

Slovenian government is looking for partners to co-fund construction of broadband networks

The **Slovenian** Ministry of Public Administration has released a public call for co-financing the construction of open broadband networks of next generation. The idea behind the call is to increase accessibility to information and communication technologies, and improve their application and quality. The pursued objectives are broadband expansion and deployment of high-speed networks, support for the use of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy, as well as access to broadband electronic communications services in areas where broadband infrastructure is not yet built, and there is no market interest in its construction. Applications are open until 19 October 2018.

Cybersecurity



Azerbaijan developing a national strategy on cybersecurity

Deputy Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of **Azerbaijan**, Elmir Velizade, stated that Azerbaijan is working on the development of a national strategy on cybersecurity. The Ministry and corresponding state agencies are working on the draft strategy, and a coordinating committee in the field of information security has been set up. The strategy is intended to envisage the most advanced experience in the field of cybersecurity and to be fully compliant with international experience (e.g. full readiness for cyber threats, application of all necessary measures to combat them, coordination issues, etc). The adoption of the national cybersecurity strategy is also set to create the framework for the revision of national regulations in this area, the Minister stated.

Digital Signatures



Status of trust services in Albania

In preparation for the cybersecurity month, the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (NAECCS) of **Albania** is releasing information on the regulation and use of electronic signatures, electronic identification and other trust services in the country. According to the authority, there are now two accredited providers of trust services in Albania: the National Agency for Information Society, which provides trust services for the public administration and the private sector, and ALEAT, which provides services for citizens. In September 2018, there were 9668 qualified certificates (for electronic identification and electronic signatures) issued for civil servants and private entities, and 784 303 qualified certificates issued for citizens (and integrated into national ID cards). NAECCS reports that trust services are largely used for accessing electronic public services via the e-Albania portal, which currently offers a total of 1268 such services. Among these, 68 e-services require the use of electronic signatures, while 54 involve electronic stamps.

Access



New regulatory measures envisioned in Moldova to support access to electronic communications by persons with disabilities

Until 11 October 2018, **Moldova's** National Agency for Electronic Communications and Information Technology (ANRCETI) is accepting input on a draft decision on requirements and measures needed to allow persons with disabilities to benefit from equal access to publicly available electronic communications services. [Once adopted, the decision will introduce specific measures for providers to enable access by persons with disabilities to qualitative and affordable electronic communications services tailored to their special needs and under equal conditions with other end-users.](#)

Macedonian authorities map out Internet coverage

The Minister of Information Society and Administration of **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, Damjan Mancevski, presented a detailed mapping of Internet coverage in the territory of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. [The mapping defined three categories: white, grey and black areas. The white category denotes areas where no Internet coverage exists, grey is where only one broadband network is installed and there are no plans for more instalments in the next three years, and black areas are those where more than two operators have Internet coverage or plan to cover the area in the next three years. By the end of the year, the Ministry will have published the National Operation Broadband Plan. In this plan, state investments will be planned for the development of fast broadband networks in areas where there is no economic interest from the operators. In line with the requirements of the EU, the government will establish a National Broadband Office which will monitor the development of broadband networks.](#)

Mobile phones banned in Albanian schools

A ministerial order banning pupils and teachers in **Albanian** primary and secondary schools from using mobile phones during classes came into effect on 17 September 2018. The ban, issued by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, is effective during the learning process, but not during holidays and other activities. [Telecom operator Vodafone Albania supported the Ministry's initiative, described as being aimed at improving the education system and helping children stay focused while cultivating better results in school.](#)

Development - other
issues



An e-building permit system has been launched in Greece

A pilot electronic building permit system was launched on 3 September 2018 by the Ministry of Environment and Energy in **Greece**. It aims at making the process of issuing or revising building permits easier and more transparent. The new system is managed by the Technical Chamber of Greece and is expected to be fully operational by mid-October 2018. According to the Minister of Environment and Energy, Yannis Maniatis, 'with the new information system entitled e-Permits, the traditional way of issuing or revising building permits will be in the past. The entire licensing process is simplified and accelerated. [It will now be electronically, in full transparency, without contact with the services and with constant control.](#)

Belarus and EEC discussed digital agenda

The Minister of Communications and Informatisation of **Belarus**, Konstantin Shulgan, met with the Minister for Internal Markets, Informatisation and ICTs of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), Karine Minasyan, to discuss the progress made in the implementation of the EEC digital agenda. [In particular, the parties focused on the ways to overcome digital barriers, as well as facilitate cooperation in the field of digital trade and integration into transcontinental supply chains. According to the EEC official, the ultimate goal of the digital agenda is to create a regulatory environment that would meet the needs of all member states in digital integration processes. The parties also discussed the harmonisation of the national digital agenda of Belarus with programme documents of the EEC.](#)

Economic - other
issues



Turkey to establish digital transformation centers

Turkey's Minister for Technology and Industry, Mustafa Varank, announced plans for the opening on digital transformation centre for industrialist in November 2018. According to the minister, the centres will focus on the provision of training and consultancy services and will be launched in Ankara and the province of Bursa. The initiative is part of the country's overall plans to promote digital transformation across industry and society and to create the conditions for sustainable growth rates, competitiveness, and structural transformation across the national economy.

Content policy



Fake news tackled at the 13th International Media Forum hosted by Belarus

The Ministry of Information of the Republic of **Belarus** hosted the 13th Belarusian International Media Forum [\[1\]](#) - Partnership for the Future: Digital Agenda for Media Sector, with over 300 participants representing about 30 countries from within and beyond the Community of Independent States (CIS). The event focused on issues such as the digitalisation of the Eurasian Economic Union, the development of the digital economy and information society in Belarus, and enhancing the performance of modern mass media. The final resolution [\[2\]](#) of the Forum emphasises the challenges brought by fake news and illegal content (e.g. extremist material and hate speech) and acknowledges that mass media should pool efforts in fighting the spread of such content. In this regard, attention should be paid to informational ecology and protection of individuals by, inter alia, fostering cooperation and sharing of best practices between media specialists.

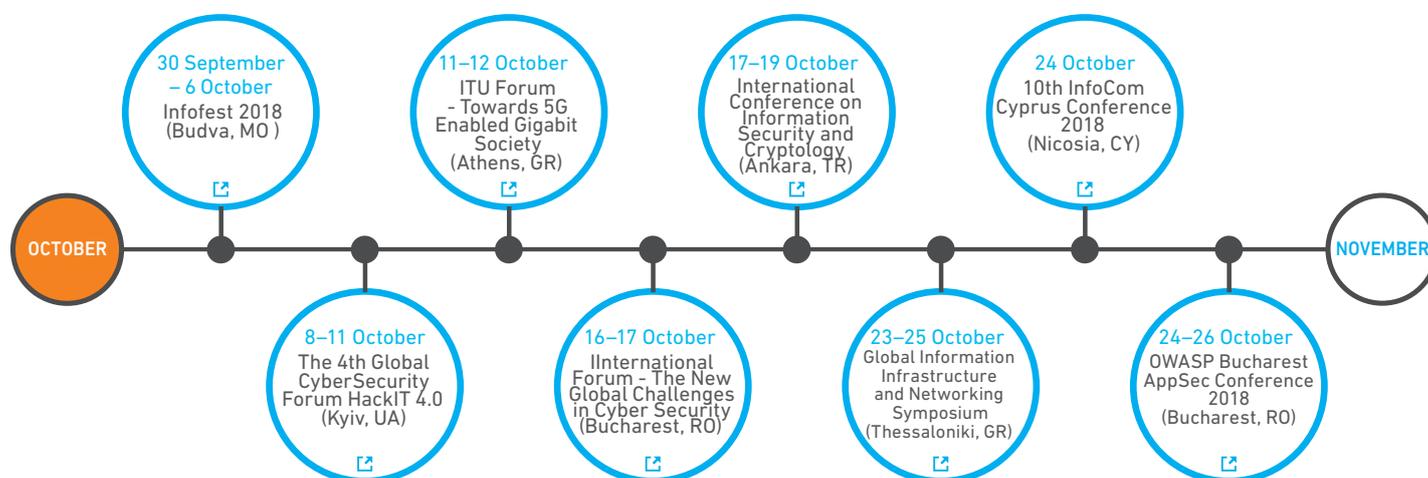
Ukraine is strengthening information cooperation with China

Yuriy Stets, the Minister of Information Policy of **Ukraine**, and He Ping, Editor-in-Chief of Chinese Xinhua news agency, met in Kyiv to discuss the possibilities for cooperation in the information sphere between two countries. [\[1\]](#) The parties agreed on mutual promotion and information exchange between the International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine and Xinhua. Earlier that day, the Ukrinform National News Agency of Ukraine and the Xinhua News Agency have signed an agreement to strengthen information cooperation in the fields of news exchange, new media and social media. [\[2\]](#) The signing of the new agreement marked 20 years of partnership and collaboration.

Bosnian state court asks for media regulation

The Court of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** issued a statement asking the country's authorities to draft legal regulations for media reporting on criminal proceedings aimed at tackling unprofessionalism, derogatory reporting and prejudice. [\[1\]](#) It simultaneously asked the Communications Regulatory Agency to amend its rules on media coverage of judicial proceedings to correct the flaws noticed in practice. The court noted that such measures are not intended to restrict freedom of the press, but to safeguard the court's independence, promote the rule of law and ensure that correct information is provided to the public. It also mentioned that poor reporting on war crimes cases increases ethnic tensions and offends war victims.

AHEAD IN OCTOBER



Join us in preparing the next issue. Send us [\[1\]](#) updates about Internet governance developments and/or events in your countries. Comments on this issue are also welcome.