
REPORT

BY SOUTH EASTERN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE ON SEEDIG 10 ANNUAL MEETING

Introduction

The **10th Annual Meeting** of the South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance (SEEDIG 10) was held on **10–11 October 2025 in Athens, Greece**, at the Radisson Blu Park Hotel. This special anniversary edition marked ten years of SEEDIG and twenty years since the first global IGF in Athens.

As the organizational team, we deliberately chose Athens as the host city because it was the location of the first global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in 2006. By returning to the place where the IGF journey began, we wanted to celebrate SEEDIG’s jubilee at the symbolic starting point of global internet governance dialogue.

The overarching theme was *“A Decade of Dialogue and Cooperation: What’s Next?”*, reflecting on SEEDIG’s journey and its role in shaping regional and global digital governance.

This jubilee event was one of the **most attended SEEDIG meetings ever**, with **250 participants** from across the region and beyond. For the first time in SEEDIG’s history, the agenda featured **two parallel tracks**, allowing for broader and more diverse discussions.

Youth School – Pre-Event (9 October 2025)

The SEEDIG Youth School 2025 was organized as a pre-event, serving as a “Day Zero” activity. It was designed as a capacity-building initiative for students and young professionals from South Eastern Europe.

Overview and Analysis:

The Youth School gathered **28 participants from 18 countries**, with a majority coming from universities, followed by NGOs and a few from international organizations. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with slightly more female participants. This diversity highlights the program’s role as a bridge between academia, civil society, and professional institutions in the SEE region.

Structure:

- Phase 1: Online Internet Governance Course (September 2025), developed by the Internet Society.
- Phase 2: One-day event in Athens, 9 October 2025, hosted at SOLID Loft Psychiko.

Preparatory Webinar:

In September 2025, one month before the Youth School, the Internet Society (ISOC) organized a **preparatory webinar** for all selected participants. This online session

introduced the fundamentals of internet governance, provided guidance on the upcoming program, and allowed participants to meet each other virtually before arriving in Athens. The webinar ensured that all participants had a shared baseline of knowledge and were ready to engage actively in the Youth School discussions.

Objectives:

- Provide foundational knowledge on internet governance and digital policy.
- Connect youth with the SEEDIG community and global processes.
- Enable networking with experts and practitioners.
- Encourage active youth participation in regional and global digital policy discussions.

Agenda Highlights:

- Welcome & Icebreaker (SEEDIG Team)
- GenAI: Promise or Pandora's Box? (Diplo Foundation)
- Internet Governance – What Is It & Why Does It Matter? (IGF Secretariat)
- IP Management and Policy Explained (RIPE NCC)
- Insights from IGF 2024–2025 (GIZ)
- Internet Governance and the Multistakeholder Approach (ICANN)
- Why Domains Matter (.eu and Beyond) (EURid)
- Are You Smarter Than a Deepfake? (Coalition for Freedom of Expression in BiH)
- Council of Europe Digital Agenda – Opportunities for Youth (Council of Europe)
- Dinner & Networking

Special Dinner Activity:

The Youth School dinner was not only a social event but also a learning experience. Participants engaged in a hands-on cooking activity, making their own pizzas together, which they later enjoyed as a shared meal. This creative exercise fostered teamwork, collaboration, and informal learning.

Participant Statistics by Country:

- Albania – 3
- Armenia – 2
- Azerbaijan – 1
- Bosnia & Herzegovina – 2
- Georgia – 2
- Greece – 2

- Kosovo* – 1
- Moldova – 1
- Montenegro – 2
- North Macedonia – 2
- Serbia – 2
- Turkey – 3
- Ukraine – 4

Gender Distribution:

- Female participants: 15
- Male participants: 13

Institutional Backgrounds:

- Universities: 19 participants
- NGOs/Think Tanks: 5 participants
- International/Professional Institutions: 4 participants

Youth School Statistics from Agenda:

- Number of sessions: 9
- Number of speakers: 9
- Organizations represented: Diplo Foundation, IGF Secretariat, RIPE NCC, GIZ, ICANN, EURid, Coalition for Freedom of Expression in BiH, Council of Europe.
- Countries represented by speakers: Switzerland, USA, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Romania.

Outcomes:

- Two certificates awarded: one for completing the online course, another for attending the Youth School.
- Youth School served as an entry point for youth into the SEEDIG community and the broader digital governance ecosystem.
- Networking opportunities with experts and institutions.
- Increased visibility and opportunities for future fellowships and programs.

Theme & Objectives

- Celebrate ten years of regional dialogue on internet governance.
 - Strengthen cooperation among stakeholders in South Eastern Europe.
 - Align regional priorities with European digital frameworks (DSA, DMA, AI regulation).
 - Contribute to global processes such as WSIS+20 and the Global Digital Compact.
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Agenda Highlights

- Opening Ceremony – Welcome by SEEDIG Chair Olga Kyryliuk and the Government of Greece.
- Keynote – AI regulation and Greece’s digital transformation.
- Parliamentary Dialogue – Role of parliaments in internet governance.
- Human Rights & AI – Council of Europe’s binding framework.
- Digital IDs & Wallets – Regional progress and challenges.
- Countering Harmful Content – Human rights-based approaches.
- Youth Workshop – AI ethics, cybersecurity, digital economy.
- Multilingual Internet – Universal acceptance and local languages.
- Routing Security – RPKI adoption in SEE region.
- Future of Multistakeholder Governance – WSIS+20 perspectives.
- Day 2 Highlights – Media freedom, EU enlargement, cyber interference with democracy, ccTLDs, platform bans, and human rights implications.

Social Event:

At the end of Day 1, a special social gathering was held at the Radisson Blu Park Hotel, offering a stunning view of the Acropolis. The highlight of the evening was a celebratory cake marking SEEDIG’s **10th anniversary**, shared among participants in a festive atmosphere.

Statistics

- Participants: 250
- Countries represented: 20+
- Stakeholder groups: governments, parliaments, civil society, academia, technical community, private sector, international organizations.
- Gender balance: balanced representation.
- Youth participants: 28 (Youth School) + additional youth in main event.

- Main agenda sessions: 12 plenary and parallel sessions.
 - Panelists/speakers: 45.
 - Countries represented by speakers: 20.
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SEEDIG 10 – Messages from Sessions & Panels

DAY 1 – Friday, 10 October 2025

10:15–10:30 – Government of Greece – Welcome Address

Speaker: Dimitris Kirmikiroglou

Session Lead: Government of Greece

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Media Freedom as a Pillar of Democracy:** Protecting journalists and ensuring free, independent media are central to a healthy digital democracy and resilient information ecosystem.
- **Digital Literacy as a Shield Against Intolerance:** Expanding digital skills and education helps combat misinformation, hate speech, and online intolerance, empowering citizens to engage responsibly online.
- **Balancing Free Expression and Safety:** Governments face the challenge of safeguarding open dialogue while protecting individuals from digital harm — requiring laws that defend both rights and safety.
- **Regional Solidarity Through SEEDIG:** SEEDIG continues to serve as a regional platform for dialogue, fostering shared values of inclusion, security, and responsible digital transformation across South Eastern Europe.
- **A Human-Centered Digital Future:** Greece’s initiatives and SEEDIG’s collaborative vision align toward building a safe, democratic, and inclusive digital ecosystem through cooperation between governments, civil society, and youth.

10:30–11:00 – Keynote: AI Regulation in Motion – From Europe’s New Rules to Greece’s Pioneering Initiatives

Speaker: Dr. Maria-Oraiozili Koutsoupia

Session Lead: —

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **AI Requires Comprehensive, Risk-Based Regulation:** The EU’s AI framework classifies AI systems by potential harm, ensuring transparency for generative AI and banning unacceptable practices like social credit scoring.

- A Multi-Level Governance Model Ensures Balanced Oversight: The EU’s enforcement architecture — including the AI Office, national authorities, and the AI Board — balances harmonized standards with national implementation.
- High-Risk AI Systems Face Strict Human Rights Safeguards: Mandatory Fundamental Rights Impact Assessments (FRIAs) ensure that sensitive AI applications protect rights before deployment.
- Greece as a Leader in Ethical AI Innovation: Initiatives like the Pharos AI Factory combine technological progress with child protection frameworks that could serve as international models.
- From Regulation to Implementation: Real AI accountability requires building institutions, enforcement mechanisms, and national strategies that align innovation with rights protection.

11:15–12:00 – Gov.gr and Beyond: Rethinking Public Administration and Public Communication in Greece Through Digital Innovation and AI Ethics

Speakers: Dimitris Panopoulos, Dimitris Kirmikiroglou, Dimitra Tompros, Andreas Stefanidis, Georgios Karamanolis

Session Lead: General Secretariat for Communication and Information, Greece

Key Messages / Takeaways:

Session messages:

- Digital transformation in Greece is primarily a reform of public administration. The launch of Gov.gr has raised expectations by offering digital services and innovative tools for citizens and businesses, but its success ultimately relies on the readiness and capacity of public servants.
- Institutions such as the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government and the Academy of Entrepreneurship demonstrate effective pathways for addressing challenges like digital literacy gaps, institutional silos, and entrenched administrative mindsets.
- Greece’s experience highlights the importance of ongoing re-skilling and up-skilling of public servants. Embedding digital technologies requires a holistic redesign of workflows and interdepartmental processes, ensuring that online services are supported by efficient, streamlined back-end operations.
- In traditionally prescriptive environments, targeted training—especially in entrepreneurship—helps public servants become more open to innovation. Equipped with these skills, they are better positioned to identify opportunities, collaborate across boundaries, and contribute to agile governance.

11:15–12:00 – Parliamentary Dialogue: The Role of Parliaments and Parliamentary Assemblies in the Governance of Internet and Democratic Resilience

Speakers: Marco Emanuele, Hon. Abdelouahab Yagoubi, Hon. Fotini Arampatzi

Session Lead: Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Safeguarding Democracy Against Technological Threats:** Democracies face risks from disinformation, cyber attacks, AI misuse, and foreign interference, which erode trust and democratic stability.
- **The Urgent Need for Regulation and Oversight:** Strong regulation of emerging technologies — including AI-driven surveillance and spyware — is essential to protect democracy and human rights.
- **Collaboration as a Core Strategy:** International cooperation, public-private partnerships, and dialogue among parliaments are key to countering disinformation and securing digital infrastructure.
- **Investment in Capacity and Resilience:** Governments and institutions must invest in cyber resilience, training, and infrastructure to defend against technological threats.
- **Inclusivity and Empowerment Strengthen Democracy:** Involving women, youth, and marginalized groups enhances societal resilience and enriches democratic decision-making.

12:00–13:00 – Public-Private Policy Dialogue: Human Rights and Digital Business

Speakers: Octavian Sofranksy, Biljana Nikolic, Milica Mirkovic, Daniel Pap, Murielle Popa Fabre, Elizabeth Wiltshire

Session Lead: Council of Europe

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Balancing Technological Progress with Human Rights Protection:** Integrating ethical and rights-based approaches into digital innovation is critical to prevent harm.
- **Governance and Frameworks for Accountability:** Instruments like the Council of Europe's AI Framework Convention and HUDERIA provide structures to manage AI risks responsibly.
- **Research and Innovation for Rights-Based AI:** Initiatives such as Digital Human Rights Tracking Tools and AI Decoded show how AI can support rights monitoring and SDGs.
- **Ethics as a Competitive Advantage:** Businesses can turn ethical AI into a trust-based advantage through transparency, bias detection, and human rights due diligence.
- **Collaboration and Capacity Building:** Multi-stakeholder partnerships and training investments are vital to harmonize standards and align innovation with human rights.

12:00–13:00 – Digital IDs and Wallets in the Balkans: Progress, Challenges, and Human-Centric Approaches

Speakers: Asim Adeel, Lulëzon Jagxhiu, Dušan Polović, Olivera Dimic, Gabriella Marcelja

Session Lead: GIZ

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Trust and Security as the Cornerstones:** Secure, transparent, and user-trusted systems are foundational to digital identity adoption.
- **Public Interest at the Core:** The EU's open-source, publicly guaranteed wallet enhances transparency and public confidence.
- **Human-Centric, Inclusive, and Sovereign:** Legal frameworks must prioritize citizen protection, inclusion, and sovereignty.
- **Cybersecurity and Continuous Oversight:** Digital wallets require robust cybersecurity, GDPR compliance, and ongoing monitoring.
- **Building Capacity and Regional Cooperation:** Training, data literacy, and regional initiatives will strengthen mobility, inclusion, and EU integration.

14:00–15:30 – Countering Harmful Content and Disinformation Online

Speakers: Alina Tatarenko, Azra Maslo, Ioanna Choudalaki, Persa Lampropoulou, Robert Gajda

Session Lead: Council of Europe

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Blurring Lines Between Content and Propaganda:** Political and promotional material often masquerades as journalism, demanding better regulation.
- **Regulation Lagging Behind Innovation:** Political advertising and digital platforms evolve faster than legislation.
- **Disinformation as a Geopolitical Weapon:** Manipulative campaigns, such as Russian interference in Ukraine, undermine democracies and public trust.
- **Collaborative and Multi-Sectoral Solutions:** Cross-border cooperation, civil society engagement, and the EU Digital Services Act are key to countering disinformation.
- **Empowering Citizens and Aligning with EU Standards:** Media literacy, informed content choice, and regulatory alignment strengthen resilience.

14:00–15:30 – Co-Creation Workshop: Shaping Digital Futures – Youth as Catalysts for Change

Speakers: Katarina Bojović, Vildane Kelmendi, Aleksey Chalabyan, Mila Bajic
Session Lead: GIZ

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Addressing Digital Exclusion and Inequality: Youth and minority groups face barriers to digital participation and economic inclusion.
- Empowering Youth in AI and Governance: Meaningful youth involvement ensures fairness and accountability in tech development.
- Fostering Collaboration for Decent Digital Jobs: Cooperation among governments, industry, and academia can retain young talent.
- Building Inclusive Cybersecurity Ecosystems: Women and underrepresented groups must be engaged to strengthen digital resilience.
- Youth Participation as a Driver of Innovation: Active youth roles in policymaking foster democratic and technological progress.

15:30–16:15 – Beyond ASCII: Navigating the Internet in Local Languages

Speakers: Regina Filipová Fuchsová, Ram Mohan, Andrea Becalli, Dušan Stojičević, Charalampos Kyritsis

Session Lead: EURid

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Universal Acceptance as a Cornerstone of Inclusion: ICANN and UNESCO’s work ensures all domain names function across scripts and languages.
- Language Diversity Under Threat: Lack of support for non-Latin scripts risks excluding millions from full online participation.
- AI and Emerging Powers Shaping the Future: The rise of AI and actors like China reshape Internet governance, demanding adaptive strategies.
- Infrastructure and Policy Must Evolve Together: Supporting multilingualism requires coordinated action among stakeholders.
- Collaboration and Awareness as Enablers: Education, partnerships, and policy integration are key to advancing linguistic inclusion.

15:30–16:15 – Securing the Internet Routing in the SEE Region

Speakers: Desiree Milošević, Alena Muravska, Wouter Kobes, Zdravko Jukić, George Noukos

Session Lead: RIPE NCC

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Centralization Increases Vulnerability:** Heavy reliance on a few major networks creates systemic risks in regional connectivity.
- **Low RPKI/ROV Adoption Weakens Security:** Broader adoption of route validation is needed for stronger internet resilience.
- **Government-Led Initiatives Drive Progress:** National policies can accelerate routing security adoption, as shown by the Netherlands.
- **Trust Still Underpins Internet Operations:** Despite technological safeguards, transparency and collaboration remain vital.
- **Regional Collaboration Builds Resilience:** Diversified connectivity and modernized infrastructure are essential for a secure SEE internet.

16:30–17:30 – The Future of Multistakeholder Internet Governance: WSIS+20 Through a South Eastern European Lens

Speakers: Desiree Milošević, Chris Buckridge, David Frautschy, Ellie McDonald, Tereza Horejsova
Session Lead: ISOC Serbia Chapter

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Internet Governance Needs Structural Reform:** Current multistakeholder models lack actionable outcomes and must evolve.
- **Inclusion and Diversity Are Critical:** Broader participation from underrepresented actors enhances legitimacy and effectiveness.
- **People-Centric and Rights-Based Approach:** Governance must prioritize human rights and inclusive development.
- **Stronger Coordination Across Levels:** Better collaboration between governments, organizations, and local actors ensures coherence.
- **A Once-in-a-Decade Reform Opportunity:** Global momentum offers a rare chance to make governance more actionable and sustainable.

DAY 2 – Saturday, 11 October 2025

10:00–11:00 – Investigating Online Harassment and Abuse Against Women Journalists in the Western Balkans

Speakers: Brigitte Andersen, Tajana Broz, Rade Djurić, Maja Čalović
Session Lead: ARTICLE 19 Europe

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Harassment of Women Journalists Is a Growing Crisis: Online and offline abuse against women journalists is intensifying, threatening media freedom and personal safety.
- Institutional Protection Remains Weak: Many victims refrain from reporting due to lack of trust in authorities and inadequate institutional support mechanisms.
- Newsroom Support and Mental Health Are Crucial: Internal newsroom safeguards and psychological support are vital for resilience and well-being.
- Platforms and Law Enforcement Must Ensure Accountability: Social media companies and authorities must enforce safety standards transparently and act against online abuse.
- A Coordinated, Gender-Sensitive Response Is Essential: Media organizations, civil society, and governments must collaborate to ensure women's safety and uphold freedom of expression.

10:00–11:00 – Digital Policy and Enlargement: A Regional Roadmap for the Western Balkans

Speakers: Maida Čulahović, Vojislav Popović, Jadranka Vojvodić, Emma Quaedvlieg

Session Lead: Zašto ne / Why Not

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Digital Policy Must Be Central to EU Enlargement: Western Balkan countries must prioritize digital transformation as a core component of EU integration and alignment with the DSA and DMA.
- Implementation Capacity Is the Main Bottleneck: Legal alignment exists, but institutional readiness and expertise for enforcement remain weak.
- Regional Cooperation Strengthens Digital Readiness: Joint mechanisms such as Digital Services Coordinators can harmonize cross-border regulatory approaches.
- The Common Regional Market as a Platform for Integration: Shared digital strategies under the Common Regional Market can enhance cybersecurity, digital identity, and competitiveness.
- Building Trust, Resilience, and Sustainable Governance: Transparency, resilience to disinformation, and fair resource allocation are key to effective digital governance in the region.

11:00–11:45 – Cyber Interference With Democracy

Speakers: Octavian Sofransky, Paul Radu, Daniel Cuciurianu, Pablo Maristany de las Casas

Session Lead: Council of Europe – C-PROC

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Cybercrime Undermines Democracy and Elections: Manipulative digital operations, disinformation, and cyber interference directly erode democratic institutions and trust.

- Council of Europe’s Mandate: Fighting cybercrime is vital for protecting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.
- Tactics and Global Examples: AI-driven impersonation, fake accounts, and targeted misinformation have disrupted elections globally, including in the USA, Ghana, and Romania.
- Criminal Networks and Corruption: Organized crime and kleptocracy finance disinformation through illicit funding and political manipulation.
- Solutions and Policy Responses: Social media accountability, media literacy, and international judicial cooperation are needed to defend democratic integrity.

11:00–11:45 – Highlights and Challenges of SEE ccTLDs During Decade

Speakers: Dijana Milutinović, Barbara Povše, Zoran Perović, Goce Bocevski

Session Lead: RNIDS

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Modernization Achieved, Focus Shifting: The region’s internet infrastructure is modernized, shifting attention to policy, legal, and governance adaptation.
- From Technical Stability to Legal Resilience: ccTLD management now focuses on compliance, GDPR integration, and cybersecurity.
- Fragmentation and the AI Challenge: Technical and political fragmentation, alongside AI-related risks, demand balanced oversight.
- Market Liberalization and Pandemic Lessons: North Macedonia’s open domain market and the COVID-19 experience reveal both resilience and new vulnerabilities.
- Future Outlook – Secure and Smart Growth: Continued investment in infrastructure, security, and adaptive legal frameworks will guide sustainable development.

12:15–13:15 – Caught in the Feed: Rethinking Media’s Dependency on Big Tech

Speakers: Maja Čalović, Katharina Zügel, Fedja Kulenovic, Maida Muminović

Session Lead: Coalition for Freedom of Expression & OSCE BiH

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- Media Dependence on Big Tech Threatens Independence: Reliance on global tech platforms undermines editorial freedom and sustainability.
- Power Imbalance Requires Fairer Digital Ecosystems: Structural reforms, including digital service taxes and DSA enforcement, are needed for fairer revenue sharing.
- Small and Local Media Face Disproportionate Challenges: Algorithmic bias and cyber threats endanger the survival of local and independent journalism.

- **AI and Copyright Demand Regional Collaboration:** Coordinated efforts are needed to protect cultural and linguistic diversity from AI-generated content misuse.
- **Unity, Documentation, and Civil Society Support Are Essential:** Solidarity among journalists and civil society strengthens resilience and advocacy in the digital era.

12:15–13:15 – Platform Bans on the Rise: Trends and Human Rights Implications in SEE

Speakers: Azra Milić, Megi Reçi, Snežana Nikčević, Besmir Semanaj, Aida Mahmutović

Session Lead: Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)

Key Messages / Takeaways:

- **Erosion of Digital Rights and Due Process:** Governments in the region increasingly impose platform bans and surveillance without judicial oversight, often during elections.
- **Surveillance Technologies Without Accountability:** Tools like Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) enable broad monitoring and control of online activity without legal frameworks.
- **Policy on Paper, Control in Practice:** Despite alignment with EU digital laws, many countries continue authoritarian digital governance practices.
- **Citizen Resilience and Workarounds:** Platform bans are ineffective as citizens adapt through VPNs and other circumvention tools.
- **Civil Society as a Counterbalance:** Legal action, investigative reporting, and public advocacy are vital to expose abuses and protect digital freedoms.

Sponsors

The SEEDIG 10 Annual Meeting was supported by a diverse group of sponsors, reflecting the multistakeholder nature of the initiative:

- United Nations (UN) IGF
 - ISOC (Internet Society)
 - ICANN
 - RIPE NCC
 - EURid
 - GIZ
 - Gransy
 - Identity Digital
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Financial Report

The event benefited from **UN sponsorship of 6,000 USD**, which was allocated directly to cover the costs of the venue rental for the two-day meeting. This financial and institutional support enabled SEEDIG to host its **largest and most ambitious annual meeting to date**, with 250 participants, two parallel tracks, and a rich agenda.