

Internet Governance in South Eastern Europe

INTERNET GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTS

Infrastructure



On 8 November, the Communications Regulatory Agency of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (CRA) and the **Croatian** Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (HAKOM) concluded an agreement on cooperation in the field of electronic communications. The agreement aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas such as use and harmonisation of radio frequency spectrum, and the transition to digital television.

In **Ukraine**, the services of a major telecommunications provider were shut down and its equipment confiscated on allegations that the company was involved in separatist movements and illegally wire-tapped its subscribers. The shutdown affected more than 1 million subscribers throughout Ukraine. The network services were restored two days later.

In **Serbia**, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications has announced the launch of the 'National Broadband Network Implementation Plan', in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The plan will include: an analysis of the current state of broadband networks and services in the country, a budget estimate for building new networks or upgrading existing ones, feasibility studies, and the preparation and planning of pilot projects.

Also in Serbia, the Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (RATEL) published data about electronic communications services, covering the first and second quarters of 2016. The data revealed a nearly 1% increase in broadband penetration across the country. The authority also released a report on the current status of development of 4G and LTE networks in Serbia, showing that there is progress in the deployment of these still relatively new technologies at the national level.

Serbia and **Kosovo*** reached an agreement on the further implementation of a 2013 telecommunications accord. The agreement, mediated by the EU, will facilitate the operations of Telekom Serbia in Kosovo through a local subsidiary company, which will receive a temporary license to provide mobile communications services. In addition, Kosovo is to be allocated with a three-digit dialing code by the International Telecommunications Union, in mid-December.

The **Serbian** Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications has launched a call for public comment on a draft law on electronic communications, inviting input from interested stakeholders until 3 December. A roundtable was also organised on 21 November.

Domain Name System



The Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries (CENTR) recently published its *Domain-Wire Global TLD Stat Report* with data about trends in global top-level domains for the third quarter of 2016. In Europe, the country-code top level domains (ccTLDs) for **Armenia** (.am) and **Cyprus** (.cy) registered the highest growth over the last year (9% in the case of .am, and 2.6% in the case of .cy). **Armenia** and **Russia** saw significant increase in the number of domain names registered in new generic top level domains (gTLDs): .top in Armenia, and .xyz in Russia.

The influence that misleading online information might have on electoral processes was brought into focus in November, as teenagers in **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** registered and used domain names to distribute false information about U.S. President-elect Donald Trump while campaigning. According to media reports, there was no political motivation behind such actions but rather economic incentives connected to earnings from online advertising.

Economic – other



The **Slovenian** government has announced plans for the creation of a multistakeholder digital coalition to support the development of the country's digital economy.[\[1\]](#) The coalition will undertake activities aimed at: raising awareness on the importance of ICTs and the Internet for development; improving the level of digital literacy among the population; and increasing the number of ICT experts.

Several technology companies in **South Eastern Europe** were featured in *Deloitte's Technology Fast 50 – Central Europe*.[\[2\]](#) which ranks the most innovative and fastest-growing technology companies in the region. The list includes: 6 companies from Croatia, 4 from Hungary, 4 from Romania, and 1 each for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Slovenia.

The **Romanian** ICT sector was ranked third in the EU by gross value added to the economy in the first semester of 2016. Romania, who followed Ireland and the United Kingdom, earned €2.5 billion from the ICT sector, representing 6.4% in gross value added to the country's economy.[\[3\]](#)

Access



The Regional Cooperation Council and the Working Group on Open Science, consisting of officials from several **South Eastern European** (SEE) economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) have discussed their plans of activities, in the context of 4th meeting of the network of National Points of Reference on Scientific Information of EU member states and the European Commission.[\[1\]](#) The group, established in October 2016, aims to assist countries in the region in adopting open science policies and measures that would facilitate open access to scientific publications and research data.[\[2\]](#)

Law enforcement authorities in **Croatia** have made a first arrest of a pirate site operator. A Croatian resident is accused of having illegally distributed more than 1250 movies online, via the Filmovita website, and earning around \$89,000 from advertising revenue.[\[1\]](#) Authorities claim that this had led to damages of more than \$592,000 to local copyright holders.

In **Ukraine**, the parliament has adopted a law allowing copyright holders to request the blocking of websites that allegedly infringe copyright, without the need for a court order. Moreover, law enforcement authorities have confiscated servers belonging to fs.to, a popular file-sharing website that allowed users to upload and download movies and other content.[\[1\]](#) Another Ukrainian file-sharing site, ex.ua, announced that it would close down, after 'threats, blackmail...and DDoS attacks', while declaring that it had, nevertheless, respected applicable legislation.[\[2\]](#)

In **Serbia**, a draft Strategy on intellectual property rights for 2016-2020 is facing criticism from civil society groups.[\[1\]](#) There are concerns that the proposed text would strengthen authors' rights to the detriment of fundamental freedoms, as the proposed text could facilitate unproportional removal of 'controversial sites', blocking of domain names that allow violations of intellectual property rights, as well as unjustified collection of data on online payments.

E-commerce



The Fiscal Administration in **Romania** is reportedly[\[1\]](#) planning to create a control agency for electronic commerce, which would be tasked with monitoring the compliance of online sellers with national regulations applicable to them, especially in the field of taxation. The Administration also intends to require online payment service providers to provide data regarding the transactions performed by Romanian citizens and companies. The central agency would use such data to identify online sellers who avoid paying taxes.

E-money and virtual currency



Individuals and companies in **Serbia** can now use e-money for domestic purchases of goods and services, following the entrance of the country's first electronic money institution to the payment services market.[\[1\]](#) iPay See,[\[2\]](#) authorised by the National Bank of Serbia with a license to issue e-money, started operating in late October.

The National Bank of **Ukraine** has introduced a ban on the use of electronic payment services provided by Webmoney, Yandex.Money, Qiwi Wallet, and Wallet One.[\[1\]](#) The measure was motivated by the fact that the provision of these services has not been agreed to with the National Bank. The interdiction seems to follow a previous decision of the National Bank requiring Ukrainian banks to cease operations with Russian payment system providers.

Cybersecurity and
cybercrime



Between 25 and 28 October, the **Serbian** Army and the Ohio National Guard performed the Cyber Tesla 2016 exercise, [link](#) under the theme 'defence of telecommunication and information systems from threats in cyberspace'. The exercise was aimed at contributing to increasing the operational capabilities of the Serbian Army in the area of cyber-threat response, as well as identifying specific cybersecurity threats.

The Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe (CoE) assessed the current situation in **Ukraine** regarding legislation on cybercrime and electronic evidence as well as the level of public-private cooperation in fighting cybercrime. The resulting report [link](#) includes recommendations on aspects such as: a clear separation of investigative authority between security and law enforcement; the introduction of clear rules and supervisory mechanisms for accessing and using data retained by service providers; and the need to regulate blocking and take-down of illegal online content on the basis of the principle of proportionality.

Romanian and EU law enforcement authorities have dismantled a computer fraud group accused of stealing more than €4.5 million from around 1000 victims since 2012. The group, which will be charged with economic crime, money laundering, and cybercrimes, was involved in e-scams schemes, convincing individuals to pay for non-existing online goods by transferring money to more than 300 bank accounts in Romania and abroad. [link](#)

Capacity
development



Techstitution, a capacity development project initiated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Innovations Lab, was recently launched in **Kosovo***. [link](#) The project aims to train youth to develop software engineering skills by engaging them in the practical development of technologies that can digitise institutional platforms and transform traditional institutions into smart institutions.

In **Serbia** the government launched the *Development of ICT Infrastructure in Education, Science, and Culture* project, aimed at connecting all primary and secondary schools in the country to Serbia's academic network, and providing them with a 'free and safe Internet' connection. [link](#) The project is part of a wider programme – *Associated Schools* – designed to modernise the educational system so that it can effectively contribute to improving digital skills among students.

Human rights



Law enforcement authorities in **Greece** have arrested and charged a man who was found in possession of 9 million personal data files (including details of national identify cards, tax numbers, vehicle license plate numbers, and home addresses), in what is being described as the country's largest breach of private information to date. [link](#)

In **Turkey**, there have been reports of Internet shutdowns [link](#) in the southeastern part of the country, allegedly in the context of protests against the detention of two local officials on terrorism charges. The shutdowns affected both fixed and mobile Internet operators, and seem to have resulted in 8% of Turkey's Internet infrastructure being unreachable. Temporary blockages of online communications services such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have also been reported [link](#) across the country, with connections to these services being throttled or slowed down by Internet Service Providers (ISPs), making them practically inaccessible.

Several countries in **SEE** and the neighbouring area are included in Freedom House's *Freedom on the Net 2016* report. [link](#) The report evaluates the level of Internet freedom experienced by average users while also looking at how Internet freedom has changed over time. Countries are allocated with overall scores on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 representing the best level of freedom on the net progress and 100 being the worst. Some of the scores allocated to regional countries include: Georgia – 25, Armenia – 30, Ukraine – 38, Azerbaijan – 57, and Turkey – 61.

E-signatures



In **Ukraine**, the Parliament has adopted new legislation aimed to facilitate the export of information and communications technology (ICT) services. [link](#) The legislation now allows contracts, signatures, and invoices in electronic form to be used in commercial relations with foreign entities, making them sufficient from a legal point of view. Exchanges of electronic emails are to be treated similarly to paper-based contracts.

The Presidency of **Cyprus** and the e-Governance Academy of Estonia have signed a cooperation agreement concerning assistance in the development of an electronic identity concept and a digital signature solution in Cyprus. [link](#) The e-Governance Academy will assist the Cypriot government in developing technical solutions for enabling secured electronic identification using public key infrastructure.

EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION

Economic



ZF Digital Summit [🔗](#) | 14-15 November | Bucharest, Romania

The summit brought together representatives on the country's ICT industry, for discussions on issues related to: legal and regulatory frameworks for the hi-tech and telecom industries, market competition, cybersecurity, and overall digitisation of the various industry sectors.

GPeC Summit and Awards Gala [🔗](#) | 15-16 November | Bucharest, Romania

Over 1000 participants from the Romanian and international e-commerce market attended the event, which was held as an e-commerce marathon, with many hours of premium e-commerce content, followed by the awarding of GPeC trophies to 25 different actors in the e-commerce area.[🔗](#)

Business Innovation Forum [🔗](#) | 18 November | Dilijan, Armenia

More than 150 participants took part in the two-day forum which featured discussions on: innovative products and services; business processes development through innovation; e-skills for innovation and development; and a strategy towards an innovative digital economy.

Romanian Computer Show [🔗](#) | 23 November | Bucharest, Romania

The event gathered ICT companies and public officials for a full day of discussions on the overarching topic of digital transformation. Participants addressed issues related to: challenges and opportunities for the growth of the national ICT sector, the use of new technologies (big data, cloud computing, smart cities, etc) by public entities, and the impact of artificial intelligence technologies on the work force.

Internet Freedom in the Context of Trade Agreements [🔗](#) | 26 November | Belgrade, Serbia

The event was dedicated to discussions on the impact of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements such as the Trans Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on Internet freedoms. Participants reflected on the implications of such agreements on the free sharing culture, the right to privacy, network neutrality, digital (in)equality, digital shared resources, and other similar issues.

KosICT | 28-29 October | Prishtina, Kosovo* [🔗](#)

The 5th edition of this technology festival featured discussions on technology trends and innovations, in areas such as: education, digital marketing, big data, start-up and funding, and e-sports.

IDC IoT Forum | 4 November, Belgrade, Serbia [🔗](#) | 24 November, Bucharest, Romania [🔗](#)

The two events provided participants with the opportunity to engage in discussions on IoT-related current trends and areas of future growth. Featured topics included: security and regulatory concern in IoT, cyber-attacks and IoT security, smart cities, and the use of IoT in health and agriculture.

COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System & Services) 2016 [🔗](#) | 22-23 November | Maribor, Slovenia

The event, mainly targeted at librarian communities across the region, included discussions on challenges and opportunities that digital advancements bring to libraries. The use of ICT solutions for enhancing the effectiveness of library services, and the interconnection between library information systems were also tackled.

European Association for Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality [🔗](#) | 22-24 November | Athens, Greece

The Association's annual conference focused on how radical developments in virtual, augmented, and mixed reality are likely to transform the ways in which people communicate, travel, and have leisure activities.

RSNOG [🔗](#) & **RIPE training days** [🔗](#) | 22-25 November | Belgrade, Serbia

The second conference of the Serbian Network Operators Group (RSNOG) included sessions on topics of interest for ISPs and hosting providers: data centers, cybersecurity, registry services, and Internet Exchange Points. The conference was followed by three days of training courses delivered by RIPE Network Coordination Centre, on different topics: local Internet registries, measurements tools, and Internet protocol version 6 (IPv6).

Infrastructure and
technologies



EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION

Capacity
development



CARNet Users' Conference [🔗](#) | 9-11 November | Rovinj, Croatia

The conference gathered regional and international participants, for exchanges of ideas, experiences, and practices on how to effectively use technology in the education processes. Under the theme *Let's Programme our Future!*, the event featured discussions on: interactive learning, open education, development of digitally matured schools, digital culture, and the impact of technology on the future of education.

Smarter Armenia'16 Hackathon [🔗](#) | 11 November | Yerevan, Armenia

Thirteen teams participated in the competition, which involved the development of ICT solutions in the field of telecommunications, finance, and healthcare, among others.

HackingPolitics [🔗](#) | 11-13 November | Belgrade, Serbia

The hackathon, held in the framework of the Week of Parliamentarism [🔗](#), engaged in the development of digital solutions that could enhance digital political participation, and improve the communication between citizens and members of the parliament.

Monthly Recommended Dose of Internet Governance [🔗](#) | 18 November | Bucharest, Romania

The Association for Technology and Internet kick started an informal meeting series aimed at building a common understanding on Internet governance issues among the Romanian Internet community. Held in the framework of Romanian Internet Governance Forum (IGF.Ro), the event focused on aspects such as: What is Internet governance? Who are the stakeholders and why should they get involved? What are the next steps for organising the first annual meeting of IGF.Ro?

Robotics Demo Day [🔗](#) | 19 November | Chişinău, Moldova

The event, aimed at inspiring technology education, targeted students of all ages interested to pursue careers in STEM-related fields, i.e. science, technology, engineering and math.

Human rights



South East Europe Coalition on Whistleblower Protection [🔗](#) | 14 November | Zagreb, Croatia

The second meeting of the Coalition gathered members from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo*, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Czech Republic, and Hungary, for discussions on the need for more adequate legal frameworks and policies regarding the promotion and protection of whistleblowers.

WikiMedia Freedom [🔗](#) | 21 November | Belgrade, Serbia

The editorial marathon was dedicated to enriching Wikipedia content on the topics of freedom of expression and media pluralism. Activists, journalists, and media professionals gathered together and created articles dealing with topics such as media freedom, access to information, censorship, and self-censorship.

Public-Private Cooperation on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence | 7-8 November, Yerevan, Armenia [🔗](#) | 9-10 November, Tbilisi, Georgia [🔗](#)

The workshops, organised by the CoE Cybercrime Programme Office, brought together CoE experts and national stakeholders, for discussions on various dimensions of and requirements for an effective cooperation between law enforcement authorities and Internet service providers in the fight against cybercrime.

Stepping up Regional Response in Fight against Radicalisation, Violent Extremism, Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in South East Europe [🔗](#) | 11 November | Tirana, Albania

Hosted by the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the regional conference engaged participants in discussions on recommendations and actions aimed at enhancing regional cooperation in the fight against radicalisation, violent extremism, terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters in South East Europe.

European Cooperation in the Area of Cybercrime [🔗](#) | 21-23 November | Bucharest, Romania

The training session, mainly addressed to Romanian prosecutors and judges, was aimed at assisting participants in acquiring substantive knowledge on methods used in cybercrime investigation, both at national level, and in the context of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Cybercrime



EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION

Cybersecurity



Smart E-government | 25-26 October | Belgrade, Serbia

The conference brought together decisions makers, private entities, and academics from SEE, for two days of discussions on challenges related to the development of secure e-commerce and e-government applications.

eGovernment IS DOS | 26-27 October | Belgrade, Serbia

The focus of the event was on e-government policies, services, and solutions, while specific topics addressed during the discussions included: interoperability, e-democracy and e-participation, trust and security in e-government services, open and big data, and cloud computing.

Information Security Forum – Age of Security | 28 October, Tbilisi, Georgia | 1 November, Kyiv, Ukraine | 2 November, Minsk, Belarus | 4 November, Baku, Azerbaijan

The goal of the Forum was to foster discussions on leading information security solutions and methodologies, as well as to encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences on how to effectively defend against modern cyber-threats.

Cyberthreats & Cybersecurity Day | 3 November | Bucharest, Romania

The event brought together cybersecurity professionals and other interested stakeholders, for discussions on necessary strategies and approaches for securing digital information infrastructures. Specific topics tackled included: cyberdefence strategies, business security, cybercrime, and the Internet of Things (IoT) security.

Managing Critical Infrastructures in Real Time | 4 November | Bucharest, Romania

The conference featured discussions on cyber-threats and vulnerabilities faced by critical infrastructures, and on strategies for ensuring an adequate protection of such infrastructures.

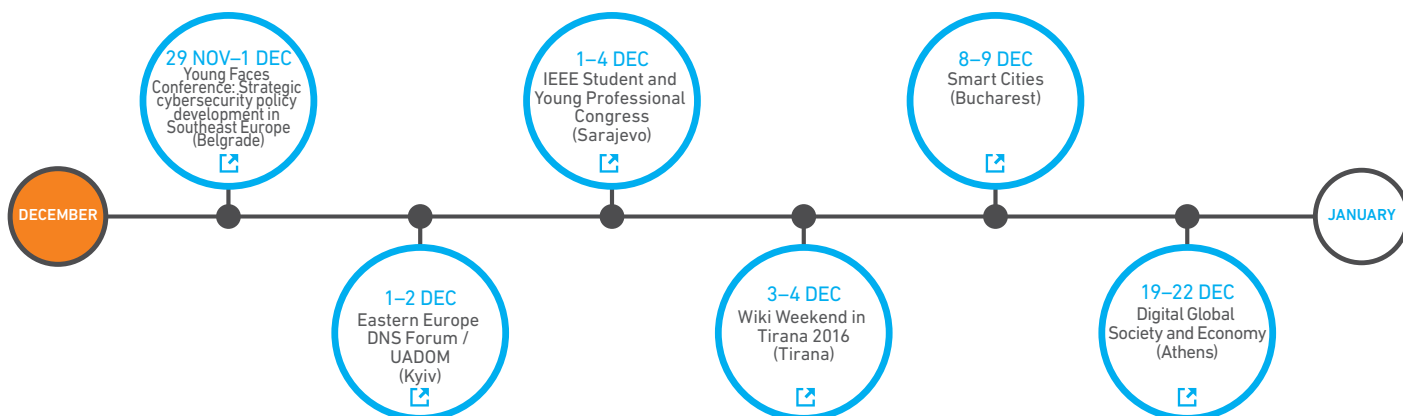
DefCamp | 10-11 November | Bucharest, Romania

The 7th edition of the Conference on Hacking & Information Security in Central Eastern Europe brought together over 1,000 participants from Romania and neighbouring countries, for two days of presentations, discussions, and hacking activities related to cybercrime and cybersecurity issues.

Kaspersky Security Day | 24 November | Yerevan, Armenia

Armenian cybersecurity specialists attending the event exchanged views and experiences on topics such as: modern cyber-threats, distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks, and methods for corporate infrastructure protection.

AHEAD IN DECEMBER



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.