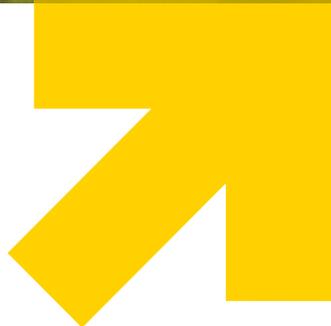Ljubljana Messages

Digital transformation and digital society in SEE+

South Eastern European Dialogue
on Internet Governance

SEEDIG
2018 23–24 May | Ljubljana, Slovenia

What is SEEDIG?

The South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance (SEEDIG) is a regional Internet Governance Forum initiative dedicated to facilitating discussions and collaboration on Internet governance issues among stakeholders in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area (SEE+).

SEEDIG brings together representatives of academia, civil society, governments, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector, and the technical community, with the aim of fostering open and inclusive dialogue on Internet-related challenges of relevance for the region.

Our strategic priorities
• Foster collaboration among stakeholders in SEE+ in addressing Internet governance issues
• Empower the SEE+ community through capacity development programmes
• Encourage greater participation of stakeholders in SEEDIG
• Build effective partnerships at regional, European and international levels
• Develop a body of knowledge about regional Internet governance practices and developments

SEEDIG process
SEEDIG functions as a process that includes an annual meeting and intersessional activities. This process is planned and run in a bottom-up, open, inclusive and transparent manner by the SEEDIG community, with support from various regional and international entities. The community, which includes stakeholders from all groups and different countries in the region, is open-ended and anyone interested is welcome to join at any time.

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SEEDIG 2018 meeting

SEEDIG's fourth annual meeting was held on 23–24 May 2018, in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Hosted by Digitas Institute, and under the honorary patronage of the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the meeting brought together stakeholders from within and beyond SEE+, to discuss the opportunities and challenges of the data-driven economy from a regional perspective.
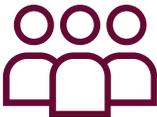
SEEDIG 2018 in numbers

8 SESSIONS

120+ PARTICIPANTS

27 COUNTRIES FROM SEE+ AND BEYOND

51% FEMALE PARTICIPANTS
26% YOUTH PARTICIPANTS
69% NEWCOMERS

12 YOUTH SCHOOL STUDENTS
14 FELLOWS
3 INTERNS

Messages from SEEDIG 2018

Under the overarching theme 'Digital transformation and digital society in SEE+' and having 'data' as a cross-cutting topic, the SEEDIG 2018 meeting featured discussions and exchanges of experiences on a broad range of issues, from digital literacy to network and platform neutrality, and from digital rights to cybersecurity.

These discussions are reflected in key messages, outlining main takeaways, possible goals, and proposals for future actions. The messages, endorsed by meeting participants, represent the main output of the meeting. Through wide distribution, at regional, European and international level, they are meant to help inform and influence decision-making processes within governmental entities, national parliaments, companies, and regional organisations.

Digitalisation & digital policies in SEE+: National priorities and regional cooperation [High-level session]

• The SEE+ region needs a common digital agenda, and enhanced cooperation across the region is an essential step in this direction. To more efficiently and effectively address the challenges that come with digitalisation, we need to build on the region's strengths (such as its human talent and cultural diversity) and create a framework for cooperation and exchange of good practices among countries, and among all stakeholder groups.

• The essential precondition for bridging digital divides and for the digitalisation of the region is infrastructure. Countries need to deploy high speed broadband networks, also in rural areas, and prepare for the deployment of new generations of broadband technologies. Proper regulation and enhanced market competition are needed for the creation of an enabling environment.

• Sustainable digital development across the SEE+ region can only be achieved by creating a stimulating environment, through a holistic approach and the involvement of all stakeholders in a bottom-up multistakeholder model. We need to actively support this model through building and empowering communities that cooperate towards achieving common goals.

• To join the next wave of data-driven development, we need to have more ambitious goals, at national and at regional levels. More focus should be placed

on developing digital skills, supporting the digital economy, and enhancing cybersecurity while ensuring the protection of digital rights.

- Countries must acknowledge that brain drain is a serious issue in the region and act to address it. Structural changes across the educational and economic sectors are needed to overcome this phenomenon. An enabling environment needs to be created that allows young people to thrive both educationally and entrepreneurially, or we risk lagging behind.

>> Find out more about the session.

Digital skills and lifelong learning in the data economy

- To fully benefit the opportunities of digitalisation, we have to engage in a lifelong learning process to develop our digital skills and keep pace with the constantly evolving digital environment.
- All stakeholders should play an active role in advancing digital literacy. Governments should adopt policies with input from all relevant stakeholders.
- Digital literacy should be part of the school curriculum from early ages. Teachers and students should have resources in native languages.
- Countries in the region should cooperate in advancing digital literacy by sharing experiences and good practices, while building on country-specific contexts.

>> Find out more about the session.

Is the Internet neutral? From network neutrality to platform neutrality

- Authorities have a responsibility to keep the Internet open for everyone. Transparency is key for ensuring network and platform neutrality.
- Neutrality of platforms is important for democracy and it should be protected as a way to enhance competition not only in applications and services but also in innovations, business models and ideas.
- All stakeholders should be involved in finding safeguards to protect net and platform neutrality. Balanced and principle-based regulation should better serve the interests of both businesses and users. Over and under-regulation should be avoided so it does not harm investments, innovation and customer needs.
- A future-proof model of net neutrality is difficult to determine now and specialised services should not endanger Internet access.
- Regulators should be able to efficiently and effectively monitor, and, eventually,

regulate online platforms in order to protect consumers' rights.
• End-users should be informed and able to understand the effects of new business models based on practices such as discrimination, prioritisation and zero-rating.
 ›› Find out more about the session.

Digital rights in SEE+: Between awareness and enforcement

• The Internet has helped people discover who they really are, even gender- and sexually-wise, so it should stay open as a space for discovery and discussion.
• Internet companies need to play a more active role in fighting gender-based online violence that occurs on their platforms.
• All stakeholders should strengthen cooperation with one another and share best practices in order to ensure child safety online. Especially youth, parents and educators must be made aware of possible risks online for children.
• Keys to safeguard freedom of expression and tackle disinformation are awareness and education: media literacy and critical thinking must be top priorities from early ages.
 ›› Find out more about the session.

Cybersecurity: National frameworks and regional cooperation

• The possibility of cooperation between national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) of non-EU SEE+ countries and the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) should be further explored.
• SEE+ countries should cooperate in cybersecurity amongst themselves, emphasising practical messages for a SEE+ digital agenda.
• A cybersecurity culture should be built in the region. To achieve it, SEE+ countries must raise awareness, educate citizens and cooperate regionally, which requires the partnership of all stakeholders.
• Regional and intergovernmental organisations do make an effort to put cybersecurity on the agenda in SEE+. However, it should be complemented with coordination of internal, national, and regional efforts by other actors such as ministries, regulatory bodies, technical community and so on. SEEDIG as a multistakeholder platform can provide a unique space for such discussions and cooperation.
 ›› Find out more about the session.

The click-economy: The practical implementation of data protection in the digital economy

- Data protection is vital for a data-driven economy. Strong regulation such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the first step towards enhancing the trust of users, ensuring privacy and transparency, but it should be followed by equally strong enforcement.
- Governments and civil society should do more to raise awareness and build capacities among end-users about the ownership of data and how their personal data is being collected, processed and shared.
- Collaboration is key and SEEDIG should be used as a platform to map the challenges in implementing GDPR in the region, particularly in the non-EU member states.
- Questions of consent and notification about data breaches are important. There is a need for a clear set of rules on when and how data subjects should be informed about data breaches, as well as for continuous revision of data protection rules and regulations.

>> Find out more about the session.

Data-driven technologies: Expectations and practical implementation in SEE+

- Developments in the field of the Internet of Things (IoT) come with challenges such as privacy, security, and the risk of widening the digital divide. But stopping technological progress is not a solution to these challenges. Instead, regulators should act promptly and devise policies and regulations that support IoT progress while addressing the challenges.
- In the data-driven economy, blockchain can serve as a reliable mechanism for providing more privacy, user-centred solutions, transparency, and credibility of data. This can enhance trust in data processing mechanisms.
- There are also concerns about the immutable nature of the data in blockchain. All actors should work on containing/mitigating the potential misuse of this technology to profile user behaviour online. Personal data needs to remain in the property of users.

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- A key issue to be considered is that developers influence decisions made by artificial intelligence (AI) systems through the principles and choices they instil in the programs and algorithms they build. This is why ethical principles should be at the core of AI development.
- AI brings many benefits, along with complex challenges. We should take advantage of AI to make our work easier, but we should also be aware of things that AI cannot achieve such as values, ethics, empathy, emotions. AI should be regulated since the technology is readily being used in various fields and businesses.

>> Find out more about the session.

Internet governance in SEE+: Putting the puzzle together

- The impact of IGF initiatives is not easy to measure, but there are concrete examples of how the discussions held at IGF meetings had a positive impact on organisations and countries. In one illustration, the discussions at the Bosnia and Herzegovina IGF on Internet Exchange Points (IXP) led to the creation of an IXP in the country.
- Resources (human and financial) are essential for building sustainability into IGF initiatives.
- SEEDIG is a valuable initiative in the SEE+ region, and its most valuable asset is its community. But there is much more potential to be explored. We should build on what we have and continue to evolve, through consolidating the community and engaging with new stakeholders, enhancing the capacity development activities, and strengthening the intersessional activities.

☺ Alternative messages on the future of IGF initiatives

- In the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, everyone is a stakeholder. The question is: How big are the stakes? Answer: If you do not participate, you will never know.
- The 'IGF family' is in its teenage years: after 13 years, the teenager needs to find itself and its way. Parents, whoever you are, you need to love, educate, and support your kids.
- Money is the key to the sustainability of IGF initiatives, like for anything in real life. We need to address the lack of money to cover all wishes of a teenager.
- What is the impact of IGF initiatives? And where do we want to go? Don't ask a teenager about that yet. Wait for him to grow, even if he is a musician.

>> Find out more about the session.

Outputs of SEEDIG's capacity development programmes

One of SEEDIG's main goals is to contribute to developing the capacity of regional stakeholders to actively engage in national, regional and international Internet governance and digital policy processes. With this goal in mind and with the support of our partners, we have launched a SEEDIG Youth School and a SEEDIG Fellowship Programme in 2017, and have been organising dedicated sessions as pre-events to the SEEDIG annual meetings.

SEEDIG Youth School

The Youth School programme offers students from the region a space to learn, network, exchange ideas, and prepare to actively participate in SEEDIG and other Internet governance processes.

This year, the School brought together 12 undergraduate and master students from 8 countries. The programme included several components, with the central element being a debate on Internet business models.

Divided into two teams—Team Cyberton (representing Internet users) and Team Digitalia (representing Internet companies)—the students had the task to come up with a new Internet business model in which there is a better balance between the interests of Internet companies and the rights and interests of end-users.

The models proposed by the two teams and the hybrid model they agreed on have one key element in common: they place ethics at the core of business practices. The components of the business models discussed touched similar points with the concerns voiced by members of the European Parliament while questioning Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on the same day.

SEEDIG Fellowship Programme

This year's edition of the Fellowship Programme included 14 fellows from 11 countries, representing academia, civil society, private sector, and the technical community.

On 22 May, fellows engaged in an unconference session, deciding on their agenda and topics for discussions. Six working groups were formed around the following issues: cybersecurity, privacy and the EU GDPR, freedom of expression and hate speech, digital literacy, the IoT, and artificial intelligence.

Each working group concluded its debate with several key messages, such as the ones below:

• Cybersecurity culture in SEE+ can be established through continuous and coordinated efforts on raising awareness among different stakeholders, and a redesign of educational programmes.

• Governments should play a more important role in combating hate speech. While regulation is essential, we should not forget the importance of education.

• The IoT will never be secure until we make it secure; we need to apply the security by design principle in the entire development and life cycle of products.

• Governments should play a bigger role in raising awareness about the importance of digital literacy, but academia and civil society should facilitate building this awareness.

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Read more about SEEDIG 2018

- Pre-meeting regional survey: Digitalisation and digital policy in SEE+
- Meeting programme
- Meeting attendance statistics
- Milestones | Programme guidelines | Session principles

Get involved

- Promote the Ljubljana Messages within your communities! Be the link and help SEEDIG make an impact!
- Contribute to our *SEEsummary*
- Get in touch if you have suggestions for local or regional activities that SEEDIG could launch or support!
- Are you organising a national or youth IGF in the region? Let us know!
- Subscribe to our dedicated mailing list. A good starting point to raise your voice.

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