

# IGF Serbia 2022

Belgrade, Serbia



The IGF is an international arena for discussion and cooperation in areas relating to the development of the information society, Internet governance and issues facing the Internet as a whole. The IGF is not a decision-making body but rather a forum at which the problems defined and approaches discussed can be formulated into public, international or national policies and presented to other bodies, whether to those within the UN or to other international organisations or governments, for their consideration.

The range of subjects cover technical, legal, economic and social aspects, including the topics of:

- primary infrastructure and global regulations for management of primary resources
- (critical information infrastructure, internet service and bandwidth providers, the IPv4/IPv6 protocol, IP/DNS/IDN, open standards);
- cybersecurity, cyber conflict, cybercrime, child safety;
- access to information and knowledge (digital media, intellectual property rights);
- the economy (e-commerce, taxation, the gig economy, labour rights);
- human rights (freedom of speech, privacy and anonymity, hate speech and violence, content policy, ethics);
- development (universal access, education and digital literacy, emerging technologies, e-governance and services, e-health);
- regulatory aspects (relationship between regulators, service providers and tech companies, civil society and users; approaches to governance, policies and regulatory issues at the global, regional and national level).

IGF brings together a broad range of stakeholders: representatives from many countries, representatives of the business sector, technical communities, networks of non-governmental organisations, international organisations and institutions and telecoms regulators.

In addition to the global IGF under the patronage of the UN, a large number of national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) have also been established. The European process, known as the **European Dialogue on Internet Governance** (EuroDIG) has existed since 2008, organised by the Council of Europe, the EBU, Swiss OFCOM, the European Commission and many other partners.. Belgrade has hosted the meeting, in 2011. Institutions and organisations from Serbia have been regular participants in EuroDIG and in 2021 Belgrade hosted one of the centres of the event, which was held in a hybrid format. In the South-Eastern European region there is also SEEDIG, in which organisations and professionals from Serbia take active part, and there are a number of national IGF processes too.

The first meeting to focus on IGF themes in Serbia was held in 2009 in the form of a panel debate titled “Serbia in the international information society process”, with several ministers and the director of RATEL in attendance. Between 2012 and 2014 the annual Serbian Internet Dialogue was held, with the participation of numerous institutions, companies and organisations and active discussion of key topics of significance to Serbia and digital policy in this country.



**The Serbian Internet Governance Forum (IGF Serbia)**, for the first time under this name and as part of the NRI network of the global IGF, represents the continuation of national discussions about digital policy and internet governance. It has been initiated in the multi-stakeholder spirit of IGF as the shared initiative of several organisations and institutions, under the auspices of the Ministry. The establishment of a national IGF is also one of the objectives set out in the Serbian Information Society and Information Security Development Strategy which was approved in autumn 2021 and runs until 2026.

The intention of the organisations and institutions which initiated and which organise and support IGF Serbia was to have an annual meeting in the coming years which will grow into an open, inclusive, public, open, constructive and useful process that helps shape national digital policy, thus creating the conditions for further digitalisation whilst preserving the rights of citizens. This outcome will largely depend on the interest and involvement of the public at large and of a significant number of institutions, companies and organisations going forward.

## Internet Governance Forum Serbia 2022

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The Serbian Internet Governance Forum (IGF Serbia) was held on 26th May 2022 at the Dom Omladine venue, Belgrade, Serbia, in a hybrid format.

It was attended both by a live audience in the Dom Omladine and an online one via Zoom and YouTube. Attendees had the opportunity to hear two plenary debates and four panel debates – and take part in them. These were held in parallel on two stages, in the Amerikana and Klub halls. This year's event focused on the challenges of Internet governance, primarily on the current global, European, regional and national political processes that are shaping our digital world.

The importance of IGF Serbia was best described by special guest and keynote speaker Chenge-tai Masango, head of the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum of the United Nations, who emphasised the key role and contribution of local stakeholders in global Internet governance processes and stressed that Internet governance “begins at home”.



### Stakeholders and supporters

Serbian National Internet Domain Registry (RNIDS) – the host; Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Internet Society Serbia, Diplo Foundation, Gransy, Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Share Foundation, Open Society Foundation Serbia, RIPE NCC, ICANN and Donuts Inc.

## Thematic scope and general outlines

The main discussions of IGF Serbia 2022 related to:

- **digitalisation and digital policy** - how to achieve sustainable solutions for digital challenges, both locally and globally;
- **digital sovereignty** - here the discussion was primarily about the possibility of the global Internet becoming fragmented into smaller parts, and the emergence of a “splinternet”, as well as about whether political events and processes could jeopardise the open nature of the Internet, with a particular focus on activities within the European Union, but on other countries, too;
- the importance of **cyber-security** in a digitalised world – educating the public and raising awareness about the threats and about how to protect yourself in the cyber/digital space; there was also discussion about local topics: what needed to be done to build a digitally literate society, what the role of the state was in the process of digitalisation, education and awareness-raising among the public, especially young people, in terms of the challenges that the Internet and the digital world bring with them.



Some of the main recommendations made to the state, the business world and the public were as follows:

**Digitalisation and digital policy** must remain high on the agenda for the Serbian parliament. In the process of **digitalising** state administration and the private sector, greater initiative is required on the part of the government to increase transparency in state bodies, and to increase efficiency and competitiveness in the private sector.

In particular, greater effort needs to be invested in raising awareness in small- and medium-sized enterprises with regard to **information security**. One shining example of public-private partnership is the Cyber-security Network which emerged from the informal Petnica Group to become a foundation in 2020. Training and raising awareness among the public are the themes that run throughout the objectives the Network has set for itself. Cyberhero is another excellent example of a programme orientated towards building capacities in the area of cyber-security. The primary goal of the programme is to popularise cyber-security among students, by way of special training events and participation in competitions, as well as partnerships with businesses.

The public needs to be given greater control over who has access to the **personal data** they generate. Governments must put in place a legal structure that will support the establishment of shared data, where members of the public with common interests can pool their personal data for the public benefit (e.g. for medical research).

In the context of **digital literacy and increasing digitalisation**, systems of formal and informal education need to be improved in order to develop new tools which will reach all citizens, in all age groups, and ensure the continuity of these public policies.

The global message of IGF Serbia was that **the Internet would continue to be one global Internet, though with some elements of a “splinternet”**. The expectation is that states will take greater part in shaping the future global digital space, with the further participation of all interested parties (a multistakeholder approach). In this context, the digital sovereignty that the European Union has put forward in its plans does not (as yet) mean the creation of a “splinternet” but rather means primarily the preservation of European values on the Internet, coupled with the evolution of digital technologies.



## IGF Serbia 2022 discussions and key messages

### Panel debate: Digitalisation and digital policy – two sides of the same coin

#### Panelists:

- Chengetai Masango, Head of the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum, United Nations
- Milan Dobrijević, State Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications
- Tanja Miščević, Deputy Secretary General, RCC (Regional Cooperation Council)
- Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Member of the European Parliament

**Moderator:** Slobodan Marković, UNDP

**Report by:** Katarina Anđelković (DiploFoundation)

- The only way to pursue sustainable solutions to digital challenges is to bring on board other groups of stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society and the academic community, and to facilitate participation in international digital issues initiatives on an equal footing for all stakeholders.
- Partnership between civil society organisations and the European Union in addressing specific digital challenges (such as digital oversight) already exists, but the expectation is also that these challenges will be high on the agenda of the new Serbian parliament.
- Digital matters will remain a key priority for the Serbian government in the years ahead. A range of projects are under way, such as the Data Centre in Kragujevac, the digitalisation of schools and classrooms, and others. In addition to infrastructure activities, work on digital legislation will be continued, as well as on capacity development programmes aimed at various age groups.



**Panelists:**

- Maja Zarić, Ministry of Culture and Information
- Danilo Krivokapić, Director, Share Foundation
- Marko Stanković, member of the Board of the National Youth Council of Serbia

**Moderator:** Bogdan Banjac,  
office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

**Report by:** Tatjana Buha Matić,  
office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

- A holistic, multisectoral approach needs to be adopted, encompassing all stakeholders, with respect to media and digital literacy, and networking encouraged in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development and support for democratic processes.
- The media and digital skills of citizens need to be reinforced, especially where members of vulnerable and marginalised groups are concerned, groups that are frequently entirely outside the information ecosystem. Systems of formal and informal education need to be improved in order to develop new tools which will reach all citizens, in all age groups, and ensure the continuity of these public policies.
- A digital environment orientated towards children needs to be fostered.





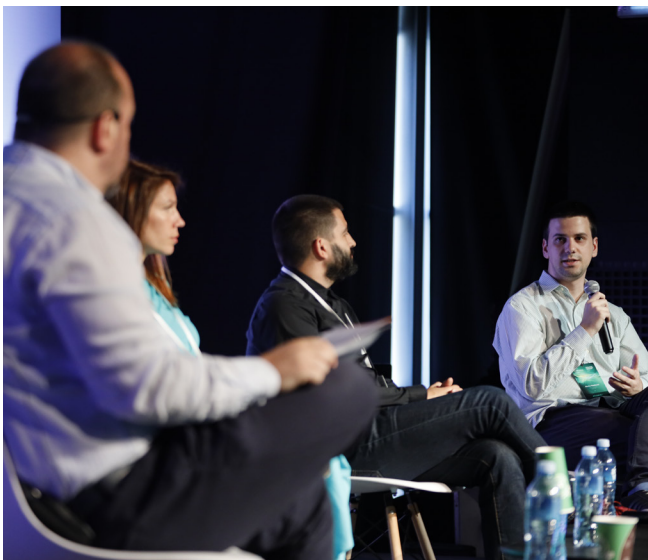
**Panelists:**

- Ivan Minić, serial entrepreneur, Chair of the RNIDS Board of Governors
- Goran Mladenović, Director of the NiCAT cluster

**Moderator:** Dušan Stojičević, Director, Gransy

**Report by:** Boris Begović (DiploFoundation)

- The process of digitalising the state administration in Serbia, as well as the private sector, is of exceptional importance. The aim is to increase transparency in state bodies, and to increase efficiency and competitiveness in the private sector. There is a need for greater initiative on the part of the state itself in the process of digitalisation, and for greater support from the state for private companies, for which an adequate model of partnership needs to be found.
- The other major topic was fiscalisation and the challenges and changes it has brought about for freelancers and IT entrepreneurs. There was a need for better legal regulation, but the process of enacting new regulations in this area did not involve sufficient cooperation between the state and the private sector. Poor management of change, and the lack of a strategy for implementing existing regulations, has given rise to many challenges, which needs to change in the future.
- COVID-19 has brought about challenges that are here to stay, the panellists agreed, noting that working from home has become the dominant model in the IT industry. Working from home and communicating online have their advantages, particularly in terms of availability and efficiency, but they also bring new challenges with them. Human contact and face-to-face communication cannot be replaced by any online platform. The challenge is how to find a model that will make up for the shortcomings of working from home.



**Panelists:**

- Nebojša Jokić, the Cyber-security Network
- Marko Krstić, Head of the Cyber-Security Division with responsibility for the activities of the national CERT at RATEL
- Dejan Đukić, Director of the Serbian National Internet Domain Registry Foundation (RNIDS)

**Moderator:** Milan Sekuloski, Cyber Security Network Foundation

**Report by:** Cyber Security Network Foundation representatives

- The area of information security is an exceptionally dynamic one, which requires investment in technology to go hand in hand with investment in people, who are the weakest link. In 2019 the national CERT conducted research on cyber culture in Serbia, and then in 2022 lent its support to the preparation of a survey on the security of Internet users in Serbia, conducted by RNIDS. We cannot be entirely satisfied with the results of the research. Nevertheless, they generate an opportunity to further educate the public.
- The state plays the key role in raising awareness about information security, but organisations also need to do more from their corner on producing and conducting educational programmes. In particular, greater effort needs to be invested in raising awareness in small- and medium-sized enterprises. One shining example of a public-private partnership is the Cyber-security Network which emerged from the informal Petnica Group to become a foundation in 2020. Training and raising awareness among the public are the themes that run throughout the objectives the Network has set for itself. The awareness platform of the national CERT will become a focal point for educational content, which will be accessible both by the public and by the business world.
- A lack of human resources in this area is a global issue, and if not enough is invested in this area much more could be lost. Interest among young people needs to be leveraged. We believe that initiatives such as Cyber-Hero can be a good way to pursue these goals, especially if the idea to establish a competition at the national level goes ahead. An indicator of the success of this type of initiative is the first place won by a high-school team at a regional camp held in Albania a month ago.

## Session: The data economy and the public interest

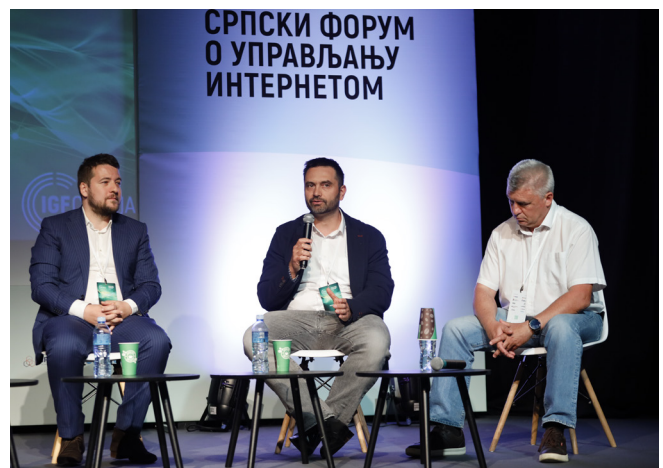
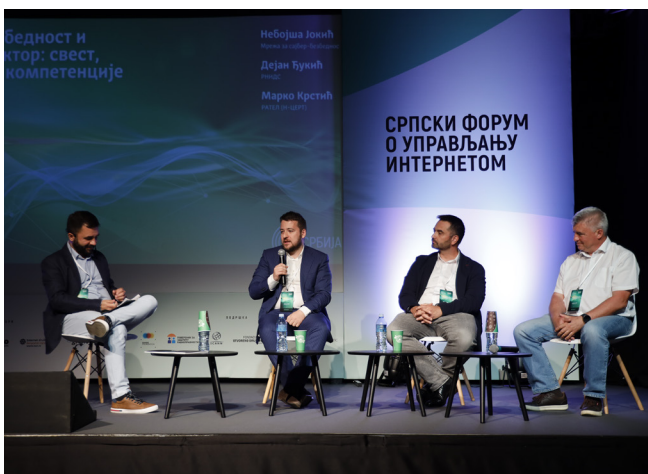
### Panelists:

- Dr Paul Twomey, Global Solutions Fellow

**Moderator:** Desiree Željka Milošević, Board Chair, isoc.rs

**Report by:** Anamarija Pavlović (Diplo Foundation)

- A key question is how we are to generate new initiatives for balancing the market in the data economy, taking into account the public interest. There are huge differences of interest between Internet users and the providers of digital services. Dr Paul Twomey and some 60-70 others from the Global Initiative for.
- Digital Empowerment (GIDE) have given this matter some thought and have identified some of the challenges: Providers of digital services have been implementing business models founded on mostly clandestine mass-tracking of users and collection of data. The lack of accord between digital consumers and independent digital financiers is responsible for a wide range of dysfunctionalities. The digital revolution has opened up a cornucopia of new opportunities, but of challenges too.
- A key question is how to restore control to users over their data, both individually and collectively. Implementation of the following new models has been proposed: The public need to be given control over who has access to the personal data they generate. Users need to be given the freedom to set the terms under which their information may be used; Entities wishing to use someone's personal data may only access them via a database controlled by consumers subject to pre-determined conditions; Entities drawing conclusions about information found in data not generated by the public would have to adhere to rules usually applied to the world outside the Internet – data may only be used in the best interests of the data subject; Governments must put in place a legal structure that will support the establishment of shared data, where members of the public with common interests can pool their personal data for the public benefit (e.g. for medical research). The European Union's GDPR is one such legal structure.



## Plenary session: Digital sovereignty

### Panelists:

- Bernard Benhamou, Institute of Digital Sovereignty, France
- Danko Jevtović, Board member, ICANN
- Desiree Željka Milošević, Board Chair, isoc.rs
- Dr Jan Krasni, Technical University of Berlin

**Moderator:** Vladimir Radunović, Diplo Foundation.

**Report by:** Katarina Anđelković (Diplo Foundation)

- Digital sovereignty from the perspective of the European Union is not a matter of creating a “splinternet” but rather one of preserving European values on the Internet in step with the evolution of digital technologies.
- Overregulation of the Internet brings with it numerous negative consequences (legal, political and economic), but a complete lack of regulation can also undermine democratic processes and lead to incidents such as that seen in the US with the attack on the Capitol.
- The business model needs to change; there is a need for a business model, a more transparent one, that will empower users to learn and understand what is happening with their data.
- If we want the Internet to resist the splinternet temptation, then we need to ensure that the giant online corporations are not the overlords of the Internet. On the other hand, it is crucial that the Internet remain free to innovate and grow.
- The Internet will continue to be a single, global Internet (with some elements of the splinternet) and a process involving a multiple stakeholder approach and an increased role on the part of states in these processes;



**Moderator:** Dušan Stojičević, Director, Gransy

**Report by:** Boris Begović (DiploFoundation)

- The open mic session was a chance to engage the audience in discussion about the future of the Serbian IGF, how to make it better, and what needs to be achieved. The conclusion of this portion of the event was that everything that happens globally also has an impact at the local level. The proposal was for IGF Serbia in future to devote more attention to local topics and challenges. Inclusion of local multiple stakeholders, in particular state bodies, is of crucial importance in raising awareness and providing education on topics relating to Internet governance in our shared digital world. In particular, the younger generations need to be educated and informed, but also listened to in regard to these important topics.



**Americana (plenary) recording:** <https://youtube.com/live/noZKjmRPd70>

**Club hall recordings:** [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0tWtarr\\_G5faU3AZZlZLoloKlHxae0i](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0tWtarr_G5faU3AZZlZLoloKlHxae0i)

**Following up on IGF Serbia activities:** [www.igf.rs](http://www.igf.rs)

