

EBU / EuroDIG Open Forum / 13 November 2015, 11:00-12:00

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Session description

Giacomo Mazzone in his capacity as an EBU representative introduced this Open Forum, explaining EBU's decision to devote this year their Forum space to the EuroDIG initiative and its future enhancement perspectives, since EBU's main activity in the IG field conducted in 2015 has been the co-organization of the EuroDIG event in Sofia.

Many representatives of European national / sub-regional IG initiatives¹ participated in this Open Forum as well as representatives from ISOC, RIPE NCC, ICANN, the Council of Europe and many others. At the peak we estimated around 40 participants in the room. It was an open discussion with no panel speakers, moderated by Giacomo Mazzone (EBU) and Sandra Hoferichter (EuroDIG).

Europe has the biggest concentration of national IGF's worldwide, with more than [20 national IG initiatives](#). However, the collaboration between national, (sub) regional's and the global IGF could be improved. Taking into account the limited resources available, we have to find easy ways for collaboration without creating additional work. The inter sessional work (initiated by the global IGF) or the joint approach of SEEDIG and EuroDIG (conducting a joint call for issues and aligning the processes) could be a starting point for such improvements.

Topics for discussion

During the Open Forum the following questions were discussed focusing on Europe:

1. Is there a minimum set of common rules needed to define a national IGF? such as
 - public list of coordinators and participants
 - public website
 - stakeholder diversity
2. Is there a need for common global goals? Is there a need to include global IGF goals in each national / regional agenda?
3. How to identify common goals across Europe?
 - piling up the calls (if any)
 - piling up the agenda of various IGF
 - producing list of priorities with points
4. Is there a need for sub regional IGF such as SEEDIG (or Nordic, or Baltic)? If so can we proceed in Brussels at EuroDIG 2016?

¹ **Participants:**

Many of the European national and sub-regional IG initiatives were present, besides some other participants from Europe or other regions. Non exhaustive list of represented national IG initiatives and of other organizations that took the floor at the Open Forum: Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, UK, SEEDIG (South Eastern European countries), EuroDIG, MAG - Subi Chaturvedi, Juuso Moisander, Aida Mahmutovic, Ana Neves (plus Giacomo Mazzone); ISOC –Frederic Donck; CoE – Patrick Penninckx; ICANN – Andrea Beccalli

Session Report

Premise: Whilst there are 18 European IG initiatives recognized by the IGF, the EuroDIG website maps 24 IG initiatives. This discrepancy is based on the global IGF principles to recognise a national IGF: <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf-initiatives>. One of the reasons for this exclusion is the fact that no report was submitted or that in some countries the process has just started, or that the initiative, in a way or another, doesn't match with the global established IGF criteria's.

Question 1: Is there a minimum set of common rules needed to define a national IGF?

An international debate opened with a huge variety of different responses.

- Norway, considers the "UN rules" not a must. It's certainly useful to have a frame, but it needs to be very flexible. The most important issue is the realisation of a dialogue. There are constraints about the costs and other aspects that need to be considered.
- EBU / CoE: accountability and transparency as common standards to all national IG initiatives are crucial - while still acknowledging the particularities of the countries. CoE is in support for the creation of culturally diverse IG initiatives all across the region. They are supporting the IGF gathering in Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the sub-regional SEEDIG. But these initiatives sometimes don't have all stakeholders participating in the process.
- UK / Nominet: rules are a sensible thing, guidelines or framework might be the better option.
- Russia: A basic principle should be equal footed discussion. Moreover, the financing of the national initiatives can be an issue in some countries, although it is not the case for Russia.
- EBU: We should perhaps better talk about best practices instead of rules.
- Austria: global IGF rules may be too strict. On the other side national IGFs are all part of an overall global framework, hence some common standard / format may be needed. Each step influences the next one, especially if we ensure the circulation of information across all levels (pyramid model).
- Bosnia-Herzegovina reminded the audience of the need for more diversity: without the support from international organisations the Bosnian' IGF would have been not possible. Although this could conflict with global IGF rules.
- Finland stressed that the national IGFs have no contractual relationship, neither with EuroDIG, nor with the UN IGF. So it's impossible to talk about "rules". Finland suggests using the term "guidelines". It has been also underlined that in some countries (as in Finland) national regulation may prohibit certain elements / conventions (like the publication of the names of the participants) which may drive to the exclusion of some IGF from the list of the globally acknowledged IG initiatives.

Question 2 / 3: Is there a need for common global goals? Is there a need to include global IGF goals in each national / regional agenda? / How to identify common goals across Europe?

Premise: As a preparation for this open forum the EuroDIG secretariat invited all European IG initiatives to send 3 hot topics from their 2015 agenda. These topics have been clustered

according to the EuroDIG 2015 categories and 2 new categories were added. This mapping provides a good overview about the issues discussed across Europe (see table enclosed).

- Various: there was a general agreement among the participants that this exercise of mapping the topics discussed across Europe is very interesting and especially useful to identify common grounds and differences nationally and sub regionally.
- Subi Chaturvedi / MAG argued against the idea of a global IGF defining the agenda of a national IGF.
- Various: to ensure equal footing there is a need for funding for the civil society
- Finland doesn't see an interest in discussing global issues at the national level. The problem of access for the next 2 billion is not a priority in Finland. It would be better having a proper process of connecting the national with the global IGF. In any case the IGF Finland will still take place between February and April and thus always before the global IGF decides its final topic for the year.
- Switzerland: also the priorities of the Swiss IGF will focus on the national topics and not on those of the global IGF.
- Denmark: for practical reasons the national IGF in Denmark starts its preparations in January - even though the event takes place in September. There is a need to start early in order to ensure an inclusive process. This time difference in the process makes it impossible to wait for the global IGF agenda.
- EuroDIG: National IGFs face trouble aligning the process to the global IGF and would rather bring national issues to the global IGF.
- EBU: some national European issues are very specific and may have no interest at the global level.
- UK disagrees: many issues are relevant at the global level and at the national level.
- The CoE is hesitant about a pyramidal approach within the IGF (global-regional-national initiatives)
- Armenia: topic categories (as proposed by EuroDIG) may be an inspiration at the national level, but Armenia does not want to use the EuroDIG website as a platform for the national IGF
- Finland: quite positive about having a common call for proposals, but having in mind that national processes vary a lot.
- Austria: all IGFs (regional and national) are interrelated. We need to establish ways in which input from national IGFs can be heard by EuroDIG and vice versa. The same applies to the global IGF.
- ICANN: the chart presented (with the categories and topics) is a resource for inspiration. It would be very useful to make this sort of information available at the global level (it could be used for the agenda planning).
- EuroDIG: secretariat could start asking for the main 3 topics of the national IGFs each year as soon as possible
- Switzerland: wishes as less coordination as possible; only as a facultative possibility
- ISOC: there is a need to think about the format not only about the topics. As a general rule, ISOC always supports a bottom-up approach.
- UK suggests using this process also the other way round. Reach out later in the agenda / programme process to demand for speakers within the corresponding national IGFs. For instance with regards to EuroDIG, once the agenda topics are chosen, to share immediately with national IGFs in order to favour reciprocal interaction.

Question 4: Is there a need for sub regional IGF such as SEEDIG (or Nordic, or Baltic)?
If so, can we proceed in Brussels at EuroDIG 2016?

Premise: This year a new sub regional initiative was established on the occasion of EuroDIG taking place in Sofia. Due to the location of the EuroDIG event in Bulgaria stakeholders from the South Eastern European and neighbouring countries met for the first SEEDIG on the day before EuroDIG 2015. Both initiatives SEEDIG, as well as EuroDIG, benefited in terms of logistical support and participation from each other (a second SEEDIG is planned for 2016 in Belgrade). In order to create further synergies SEEDIG and EuroDIG are conducting a joint call for issues. SEEDIG will be an integral part (milestone) for EuroDIG.

- SEEDIG: We saw that there is a need for SEEDIG and had the opportunity to make people more aware of Internet Governance and its importance for our region. A regional IGF is more economic / feasible for instance in terms of travel costs.
- In this sense, SEEDIG has decided to have a joint call for issues with EuroDIG
- CoE: much value on the idea of regional IGFs to identify common issues / goals. It may stimulate the creation of IGFs in countries that do not have an IGF yet
- Denmark: resources are scarce and there is a risk that funds could not be enough to finance multiple events (a national and a regional).
- Finland: a regional meeting after the national IGFs and before the global IGF would be both meaningful and helpful to coordinate within the region. Gathering the Nordic region together in Brussels during EuroDIG may be a way to raise more awareness among MEPs. More sub regional IGFs could be also interesting and needed.
- EBU: would be good to use the opportunity of Brussels' EuroDIG to attract the attention of national MEPs using the sub-regional initiatives. This regional awareness effort would have a positive effect and could consolidate also national IGFs.
- A special effort needs to be made to foster the creations of sub regional initiatives among the European countries still lacking of a national initiative.

Outcomes, recommendations and possible next steps

Question 1 / Conclusion: A set of guidelines and best practices shall be published at the EuroDIG website <http://www.eurodig.org/other-ig-initiatives/>. These guidelines should be developed together with existing European IG initiatives, taking into account the existing particularities and the flexibility needed in each country. These guidelines (not rules) will mainly serve to help new initiatives to develop.

Question 2; 3 / Conclusion: European national IGF's are invited to draw part of their agendas from the EuroDIG call for issues and use the suggested categories. The EuroDIG secretariat will include input from the national IG initiatives based on these categories in the EuroDIG programme. The use of the EuroDIG platform is left open to those national IGF willing to join.

Question 4 / Conclusion: New regional IGFs are invited to do a side- or pre-event at EuroDIG 2016 in Brussels and in conjunction with subsequent EuroDIG's (for instance a Baltic sub regional meeting in preparation of EuroDIG 2017 in Estonia)