Croatian Internet Governance Forum CRO-IGF 2025 – Final Report
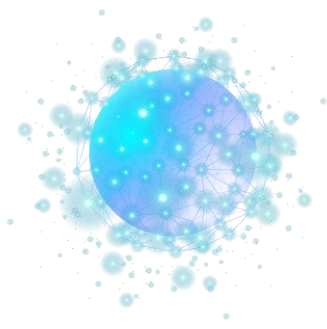
What is Internet Governance Forum?

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a global initiative operating under the auspices of the UN, with the primary goal of fostering inclusive and equal participation of all stakeholders in discussions related to Internet governance. Established in 2006 during the "World Summit on the Information Society" (WSIS) in Tunisia, the IGF was envisioned as an open platform for addressing Internet governance issues.

This decision was prompted by the recognition of the necessity to involve a broader community in the governance and regulation of the Internet. As a result, a diverse range of topics emerged, spanning from IP addresses and Internet protocols to domain management. In this context, it is crucial for multiple stakeholders, including civil society, academia, industry, and the private sector, to actively engage in these discussions alongside state representatives. This collaborative approach allows for well-rounded perspectives and ensures that a wide array of interests and expertise are considered in shaping Internet governance policies.

The IGF does not have a decision-making mandate, nor does it adopt binding acts, but their results may affect other processes, which have binding effects. The IGF, by drawing its conclusions and drawing attention to topics that are relevant, can influence decision makers and thus participate in forming an official national position or public policy in the field of internet governance.

The IGF is fully open to the participation of anyone interested in the issues of Internet stability, its security, usage and development. IGF is an annual event. Topics that will be discussed on the IGF can be suggested by anyone interested.

In addition to the global IGF initiative, there are regional (e.g. EuroDIG - European Dialogue on Internet Governance, SEEDIG - South East European Dialogue on Internet Governance), national (e.g. CRO-IGF), or age (Youth IGF) initiatives.

IGF initiatives, especially national and regional ones, are important as they promote communication among all stakeholders, foster the development of a culture of dialogue among different stakeholders on internet-related issues, which helps in anticipating different perspectives and interests. Important principles on which the IGF is based are:

- o openness and transparency (allowing all interested parties to participate in the IGF, public insight into all parts of the IGF's work)
- o inclusivity (enable active involvement of all concerned)
- o bottom-up approach (involving the public in the creation of the IGF program)
- o is not intended for sale of goods and services
- o multi-stakeholder model (model of involvement of all stakeholders: academia, business sector and industry, civil society organizations and state and public administration)

Why CRO-IGF?

The National IGF has been running for several years now as a platform for open and inclusive multi-stakeholder discussions on Internet governance issues in Croatia. The first CRO-IGF was held in Zagreb on 6 May 2015 at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb. One of the topics discussed was about the benefits that CRO-IGF as a platform could bring to Croatia. Reports from the very first as well as subsequent CRO-IGFs have been uploaded to the global IGF website: https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/eastern-european-regional-group.

The goals of CRO-IGF are:
- o to point out to various stakeholders the opportunities for involvement in Internet governance processes relevant to their business and activities, and to encourage dialogue and, if necessary, help in capacity building for better understanding of Internet-related topics;
- o to empower all stakeholders in Croatia to actively participate in national, and then directly or indirectly, regional and international Internet governance processes;
- o to identify Internet governance topics that are important for Croatia.

CRO-IGF 2025 Preparatory Process

This year, the Organizing Committee invited the public on the website and LinkedIn to actively participate in the discussion to share thoughts, comments and suggestions on topics that can enrich the discussion and advance the understanding of the future of the free Internet and communication technologies.
CRO-IGF web site is available at http://www.carnet.hr/carnet_events/cro_igf
LinkedIn Profile: https://www.linkedin.com/company/croatian-internet-governance-forum/

The Organizing Committee prepared program focusing on the following topics:

1. **Media and content: Fact checks on the internet and media space**
   Disinformation and content manipulation are a threat to democratic processes and public perception of reality. Fact-checkers, journalists and technology experts face the challenge of

filtering out true data in a sea of misinformation every day. In the panel discussion, we will analyze how the truth of information is determined, what are the challenges in the fight against fake news, and how algorithms and regulation affect the availability and credibility of content.

2. **Satellite communications, opportunities, development and challenges**
   Mini interactive presentations will provide participants with a unique insight into the latest projects and technological development of satellite networks at the European and national level. The focus will be on current initiatives that are shaping the future of space and communication technologies, with a special emphasis on their impact on the economy, security and everyday life.

CRO-IGF 2025 Organizational Committee

Academic Community:	Private sector/Industry:
Tihomir Katulić, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb Marin Vuković, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb	Adrian Ježina, Telemach Hrvatska Hrvoje Hadžić, Ericsson Nikola Tesla Martina Silov, CroAI Branimir Rajtar, NOG.hr
Public Sector:	**Internet Users/Civil Society:**
Krešo Antonović, Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure Tihomir Lulić, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Marin Ante Pivčević, of Ministry of justice, public administration and digital transformation Nataša Glavor, CARNET Ivana Jelačić, CARNET Mislav Hebel, HAKOM, GAC Representative Zdravko Jukić, HAKOM, GAC Representative (Advisor)	Kristijan Zimmer, Croatian Open Systems Users' Group, HrOpen

More detailed information on organizations with representatives on the CRO-IGF Organizing Committee:

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs	https://mvep.gov.hr/en
Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure	https://mmpi.gov.hr/en
Ministry of justice, public administration and digital transformation	https://mpudt.gov.hr/en
Croatian Academic and Research Network - CARNET	https://www.carnet.hr/en/
Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb	https://www.pravo.unizg.hr
Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb	https://www.fer.unizg.hr
Ericsson Nikola Tesla	https://ericssonnikolatesla.com/en/
Croatian Open Systems Users' Group, HrOpen	http://www.open.hr/

CroAI, the Croatian Artificial Intelligence Association	https://www.croai.org/
Network operators group Croatia (NOG.hr)	https://nog.hr/en/about/about/
Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (HAKOM)	https://www.hakom.hr/en/home/8

CRO-IGF web site is available at http://www.carnet.hr/carnet_events/cro_igf
LinkedIn Profile: https://www.linkedin.com/company/croatian-internet-governance-forum/

CRO-IGF community contact could be reached using email address cro-igf@carnet.hr

CRO-IGF 2025 Event

The eight Croatian IGF was held in Opatija on 4 June 2025 at Grand Hotel Adriatic as an independent event at the MIPRO 2025 Conference. This event had the following agenda:

15:30 – 16:00 Welcome and networking
16:00 – 16:05 Short introduction – Ivana Jelačić, CRO-IGF 2025 Coordinator
16:05 – 16:15 Welcoming speech – Nataša Glavor, Deputy CARNET CEO for National CERT
16:15 – 17:30 Panel: Media and content - Fact checks on the internet and in the media space
17:30 – 17:45 Coffee break
17:45 – 19:00 Mini interactive presentations and panel discussion
   o Mini interactive presentations: Satellite regulatory framework, Satellite communications, quantum communications development and challenges
   o Panel discussion: Satellite communications, opportunities, development and challenges
19:00 – 19:10 Conclusion and messages

Ivana Jelačić, the Coordinator of this year's CRO-IGF opened the forum, presented the agenda for this year's Forum and invited Nataša Glavor to give a short welcoming speech.

Nataša Glavor, Deputy CARNET CEO for National CERT greeted the attendees and wished everyone a successful event.

Media and content - Fact checks on the internet and in the media space

The panel discussion titled "Media and Content: Fact-Checking on the Internet and in the Media Space" raised issues of the increasing presence of disinformation and manipulation via social media. Participants pointed out that without a responsible approach to information and the development of media literacy from an early age, society remains vulnerable to fake news.

Panel Participants:
   o Ankica Šunjić Matković (CroFacta, The Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography)
   o Goran Vojković, Ph.D. (University North)
   o Robert Tomljenović (The electronic media Council (VEM))
Moderator: Professor Hrvoje Lisičar, Ph.D., Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb

At the panel, the following questions were raised:
   o Analysis of fact-checking methods, obstacles in the fight against disinformation, and the impact of technology and law on the information space
   o Influence on democratic processes and perception of reality
   o The role of experts in the fight against fake news
   o Filtering true information in a sea of manipulations
   o How algorithms and regulations shape the availability and credibility of content

Panel: "Media and Content: Fact-Checking on the Internet and in the Media Space"

Messages from the panel discussion:

- Fact checkers are tools that help readers assess the credibility of the information presented for themselves, but the final assessment remains with them.
- It is important to continuously invest in fact checking and media literacy, with an emphasis on developing critical thinking from early childhood, even kindergarten age.
- The role of traditional media as the guardian of information has been replaced by social networks, which today dominate as the main source of news for the public.
- Fact checking has become necessary due to the almost complete lack of accountability for content published on social networks, unlike traditional media, which had correction mechanisms and legal consequences.
- People are often unaware of how easily they can become victims of manipulation through media content, and it is important to raise awareness of this.
- The need for fact-checking is not new, but technological developments have accelerated the spread of disinformation, requiring a faster and more effective response.
- Education remains the most important tool in preventing the negative effects of fake news and manipulation.
- Successful and responsible use of AI tools require deep expertise in a specific field, as AI alone cannot replace human judgment.
- The fact-checking process requires time to research, verify, and confirm information, which is a challenge in a world where news is published in real time.
- Regulation of new technologies must find a balance between encouraging innovation and protecting society, which is a complex and still ongoing challenge.
- The consequences of regulating the technology sector are yet to be seen, but without the right rules, we could face major problems.
- Opponents of fact-checking often argue that it threatens freedom of speech, but ignoring the truth can have serious social consequences.
- Emotions are more easily activated than reason, making media manipulation a powerful tool for influencing people's behavior.
- The media often simplify and trivialize news to attract attention and clicks, which negatively affects the quality of public dialogue and trust in institutions.
- In a world flooded with fast and often unreliable information, fact checking is not a luxury, but a necessity to preserve the truth.

Mini interactive presentations: Satellite communications, opportunities, development and challenges

Through a series of interactive presentations, participants were introduced to new projects in the field of satellite communications and quantum infrastructure development.

The introduction was given by Marin Ante Pivčević Ministry of justice, public administration and digital transformation and experts who shared their experiences and knowledge were:

- o Marijan Globan (Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries - HAKOM)
- o Hrvoje Hadžić (Ericsson Nikola Tesla)
- o Bojan Schmidt (CARNET, project CroQCI)

In their mini presentations, the experts covered the following topics: basic concepts of satellite communication (LEO, GEO, HEO, MEO orbits), CroCube – the first Croatian satellite, risks of interference and spoofing of GNSS signals, with an emphasis on air traffic and security services and the possibilities that satellites offer for border surveillance, traffic, emergency services and economic connectivity

Mini presentations provide direct insight into concrete examples, interactive approaches (audience involvement).

Topics discussed were:
- o satellite communication as one of the most dynamic and promising areas of technological development
- o how satellite technologies affect the economy, security and our everyday lives

Mini interactive presentations: Satellite communications, opportunities, development and challenges

Messages from the panel discussion:

- Disruptive technologies significantly change established ways of doing things. These technologies are from the digital field
    - o Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)
    - o Artificial intelligence AI
    - o Augmented reality XR
    - o Quantum technology QT
  Every device will have some part with one of these technologies by 2030.
- Satellites in different orbits such as LEO, NEO, GEO and HEO enable a wide range of communication and navigation services, adapted to different needs.

- CroCube, the first Croatian satellite, shows that the launch of satellites today is no longer reserved only for states and large companies, but also smaller actors can participate in space projects.
- Standardization through the 3GPP organization will allow all modern mobile phones to work seamlessly with different operators and in different countries, facilitating global connectivity.
- Satellite networks, known as Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN), bring a new communications infrastructure that connects devices via satellites in low (LEO) and geostationary (GEO) orbits, enabling access where terrestrial infrastructure is not available.
- LEO satellites, such as Starlink and OneWeb, have a key role in covering remote and hard-to-reach areas, where the installation of a classic network is too expensive or technically unfeasible.
- Satellite communications offer numerous advantages, including ensuring communications at industrial sites such as oil rigs or ships, and providing key support in crisis situations.
- Satellites and mobile networks increasingly act as complementary systems, and satellite communications are an important part of the future 6G standard, even enabling direct connectivity of mobile devices to satellites.
- Regulation in Croatia clearly distinguishes between spectrum usage licenses and service provision, but the global nature of satellite systems requires harmonization and international coordination.
- The European IRIS initiative highlights the importance of building a secure, independent and resilient satellite infrastructure, as threats such as GNSS signal jamming and spoofing are becoming an increasingly serious problem.
- Direct-to-Device technology brings the possibility of direct communication between satellites and mobile devices closer, which significantly increases the availability of services and the resilience of communication networks in crisis situations.
- Practical examples include the ability to send emergency messages via iPhone using the GlobalStar satellite network, which is an important step forward in security communications.
- The CroQCI quantum communication project represents an advanced infrastructure for secure data exchange and plans to connect Croatia to the European Quantum Communication Infrastructure (EuroQCI).
- Complex systems for the management and interoperability of quantum communication networks are being developed, with an emphasis on verifying functionality and security before their full implementation.
- In the future, Croatia will be integrated into the European quantum communication network, which will significantly improve the security and resilience of communication systems.

Audience

The Forum was attended by around 40 participants. The presence of participants from different stakeholders was evenly distributed among Government and the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society representatives.

Conclusions

The main conclusions of the Forum are the messages generated in its open and inclusive format. The participants recognized that this format is excellent for exchanging ideas and positions that may influence relevant policy processes at the national and international levels. It is necessary to continue

to further popularize such events and to develop a dialogue on issues related to the Internet and in particular Internet governance among all the interested stakeholders.

Special Thanks

CRO-IGF's annual event was made possible by the positive attitude and efforts of all the members of the CRO-IGF Organizing Committee. Special thanks to the MIPRO Conference that hosted this year's forum. Support and sponsorship from the RIPE NCC Organization was very valuable and very important in organizing the CRO-IGF 2025 event. Thanks everyone!

More Information and Contact

It is possible to contact the Croatian multi-stakeholder community for Internet governance issues by email: cro-igf@carnet.hr

Zagreb, 10 July 2025