ICANN71 | Prep Week – ICANN Community Focus: The Netherlands, Youth, and Internet Governance
Wednesday, June 2, 2021 – 13:30 to 14:30 CEST

ADAM PEAKE:

Okay. Well, it's 1:30 European Central Time. Welcome to this session with representatives of the Dutch Internet community, younger people from the Dutch Internet community, and members from different Internet policy and governance organizations.

Magali, would you like to begin with the introduction to the session, please? And we will continue.

MAGALI JEAN:

Yeah, sure. Thank you, Adam. Hello, everyone, and welcome to ICANN Community Focus: The Netherlands, Youth, and Internet Governance. My name is Magali, and I'm remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and follows the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior.

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With that, I'll hand the floor over to Adam.

ADAM PEAKE: Thank you Magali. Good afternoon, everybody. My name's Adam Peake. I work for ICANN, our global stakeholder engagement group, and I live in The Hague, the Netherlands. Magali, could you put the first slide up, please, with the names of the speakers for this session?

So, as Magali mentioned, if you have a question for any of the speakers, please put that in the chat. Begin your comment with the word <QUESTION> so that we can identify it as a question. And then we can begin.

So, beginning the session. Oh. I should also say that, in addition to the speakers you'll see listed here, we also have Maarten Botterman, chairman of the ICANN Board with us. Maarten, of course, in addition to being chairman of ICANN, he's also a very active member of the Dutch Internet community, and so we're welcoming him here today for that.

Because it's the Dutch Internet community that we really want to highlight with in this session.

One of the things that we know as people working in engagement for ICANN is that the Dutch Government and Dutch Internet organizations, particularly SIDN—the country code manager for the Netherlands—have been very supportive of younger people getting involved in Internet governance and Internet policy. So, we thought we'd take this opportunity to highlight three of those younger people to give us a sort of brief introduction to how they got involved, what they've been doing, and where they are now after that.

So, we have Nadia Tjahja NADIA who is with the United Nations University based in Bruges; Auke Pals who is working for GÉANT which is the research and education network for Europe; Gül Akcaova who works for SURF.nl which is the education network for the Netherlands.

So, these are the younger people who will give us their stories of how they got involved in Internet governance. And then we'll have a discussion with representatives of three organizations working in Internet governance, Internet technical standards, and policies. Maarten Simon is the Legal & Policy Manager at SIDN, the manager of the .nl ccTLD. Gergana Petrova and Chris Buckridge work for the External Relations Group at RIPE NCC, the regional Internet registry for the Netherlands. And Siranush Vardanyan and Ergys Ramaj work for ICANN's Public Responsibility and Support Group. And you'll know many of these from the Fellowship Programs and NextGen Programs and ICANN Learn and many other things.

So, what we'll try and do is begin with Nadia introducing Auke and Gül and then giving her own presentation. And then we'll have a discussion with the others about how we can better include younger people into their organizations. And they will describe how they have programs or activities related to newcomers and younger people; how we can bring them into the policy and the work of the organizations themselves.

So, I think with that, I can pass over to Nadia. Welcome, Nadia. And let's begin. Thank you very much.

NADIA TJAHJA: Well, thank you very much, Adam. But also, to the entire ICANN Community for having us. So, today there's the three of us—Auke, Gül, and myself—and we come from kind of three different stages of our youth participation in Internet governance. Auke started at a very young age and has grown with and in the ecosystem. Gül is starting at the beginning of her journey. And, myself, I'm just kind of a little bit halfway in between them.

So, we hope to be able to share with you our experience and what we have encountered. But I thought we'd start with Auke. Perhaps he would like to start and share his experiences with us.

ADAM PEAKE: Not this slide at the moment, please, Magali. Sorry about that. My fault. Thank you.

AUKE PALS:

Thank you very much for the floor, Nadia, and everybody for organizing this session. My name is Auke Pals. I graduated from [Master] Information Studies at the University of Amsterdam last summer, and I now, since October, joined GÉANT which is a pan-European network working in research and education.

At the start of my—let's call it—career, I wouldn't say that Internet governance was an obvious choice for me. It's not like a career which you tell at a certain age, "Yes, become active in Internet governance." At high school, I wanted to be a pilot, actually.

But from my 13th year onward, I started my own company designing websites and setting up a class for elderly, teaching how to cope with computers and the Internet. And meanwhile, I joined a digital youth advisory board from the organization ECP, which is the organization in the Netherlands facilitating in public and private partnerships benefitting the Internet society.

And from [inaudible], I actually learned that I also really like the advisory role, and I got into contact with multiple IT consultants which introduced me also in consultants. But by the time … I was still 17, and after a few years I had some big national clients. And meanwhile I was still in high school after some delays by going with my consultancy.

And at that point, actually, it made me realize that I had more affinity with information in the Internet instead of becoming a pilot which I mentioned earlier. So, after that I went to the University of Amsterdam and studied a Bachelor and Master of Information Science. And actually, from that point on, I also still hadn't heard from Internet

governance before. It was from the Dutch organization ECP which is also leading the Dutch Internet governance community. Yet they gave me, really, an opportunity to get more [feel] for this. And they also are taking the lead in the Dutch Internet governance project in collaboration with SIDN where Maarten Simon works for, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

And from that point on, I was brought attention on an EU project called NERDY which means a Network of EuRopean Digital Youth. And this project actually had the aim by training five youngsters from a few European countries on aspects on Internet governance. So, this was actually a two-year program with five trainings with a duration of a week or so. And that really allowed me to get to know what Internet governance was because when somebody at first told me what it was, I literally had no idea.

But they gave me the opportunity also to participate at the Global IGFs in 2015 and 2016. And from that point onwards, my network in that also started to expand, and I learned how broad it actually was. And also, from that point onwards, I learned to meet other people. And at each global Internet governance meeting, also due to the support of SIDN, we had a day spent to meet with all the [Dutch] and went in a van to some place just to meet the Dutch.

And after the meeting was finished, we went back into the Netherlands and we debriefed somewhere. And after that, with the support of the Dutch Internet governance community, I organized, myself, the Dutch Youth IGF at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. And also,

from there on, I recruited—I wouldn't say it like that—but other youngsters who were interested and active.

And the Dutch IGF really brought youngsters also to other IGF meetings where, after a while because of all the trainings I got, I also coached them. So, from being coached myself, I went into coaching. And that was, for me and also for the other youngsters, a fantastic opportunity.

But moreover, there was also another track, EuroDIG, which was formerly, before that, a new media summer school which was led by Martin Fischer which also initiated the NERDY project. And EuroDIG also had really fantastic opportunities to allow youngsters to participate in these Internet governance meetings.

And from that on, yeah, it has really expanded. And I was also asked to train other youngsters myself. Also, for instance, at the Youth IGF in Azerbaijan, for instance. And meanwhile, I did my studies. So, I finished my studies last summer, and I joined GÉANT which is a pan-European network facilitating research and education. And in that role, I'm now responsible for cloud projects and also for our internet governance outreach which is starting up. So, actually, when I joined, it started again. And the lessons that I learned in [the past,] I can now implement myself and also take into account with our involvement.

So, yeah, a few important steps are mostly trust, because without trust I hadn't been able to start [my company] myself, but also not getting the support from other organizations by representing youth. And I guess also without support of the Dutch community and the informal atmosphere that was there and, yeah, that really was key in keeping me

involved in this. So, without our community I wouldn't be able to be active in this.

I would like to thank you for your attention. And if any help is needed, I would like to pass on my knowledge. And with this, I would like to pass on the floor to Gül.

NADIA TJAHJA: Wonderful. Thank you, Auke, for sharing your contribution. Please, Gül, go ahead.

GÜL AKCAOVA: Thank you. Well, for me, it also started … Well, the journey started for me as a student entrepreneur. And along the way, I was hinted by some mentors on articles and events happening in the Netherlands when it's all related to the Internet and Internet governance and then accountability kind of things. So, that's where it more or less started for me, my involvement in Internet governance.

Along the way, I applied also for EuroDIG and got involved with NL IGF as well. And by accident, I also got involved at the EuroDIG session, which was not meant for me, but somehow I got involved in the mailing list and then things started going off from that point. And I got in touch with EuroSSIG and went to EuroSSIG last summer because I also wanted to gain more knowledge on Internet governance and what was happening and how things more or less are working now with stakeholders and other things around Internet governance.

But along the way, I got also in touch with several communities more or less online. And what bothers me the most is that there is a lot of communities and then there's a lot of activities going on around Internet governance, but somehow I didn't feel integrated and then got an opportunity feeling some kind of an engagement. There is a lot of mailing going on.

At the same time, I'm also a student, and since two years also working at SURF. But I still [didn't get] an opportunity or a chance to reply or respond to any of the documents that were going around for feedback and I couldn't attend any meeting because it's on very short notice and I couldn't reschedule my agenda to join events.

So, it's something that bothers me from being active as much as I want or would like to be active in Internet governance. And at the moment I'm working at SURF as a project manager. And lucky for me, SURF is also involved in Internet governance by several communities in the Netherlands, in Europe, but also international, I believe. And I hope pretty soon we could do more at SURF on European dialogue as well. And that's short on what I have to tell you.

NADIA TJAHJA: Well, thank you so much for sharing your experiences and your concerns. Hopefully, these are some of the points that the speakers after us will be able to address.

So, I think I'll then share my story. And, actually, I'm going to start with what I'm currently doing. My name is Nadia Tjahja and I'm a researcher

at the United Nations University-CRIS in Bruges. And what I'm working on now is understanding the legitimacy of multistakeholderism in Internet governance specifically. At the moment, I'm looking at stakeholder movements, so how stakeholders from one group move to another.

But also, one of the interesting statistics I was looking at was at the IGF. How many people actually re-attend the meetings and how many people of them are new. So, you see in blue the people who are attending new from 2006 to 2019. That was over 60%.

Those who have been coming back are either red or yellow, where red are the people who will stay in the same job and have been in the same job. And those in yellow—and that's where I'm looking at stakeholder movement—are people who are looking at changing their roles, whether or not they changed their organization, but also whether they change the actual stakeholder group.

And I've been really involved over the last few years. Being involved with YOUthDIG, the EuroDIG youth component where we invite young people from the entire of Europe to learn a little bit more about Internet governance. But also, I was on the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance, a dynamic coalition of the IGF. But I wouldn't have been here if I didn't have the start that I did have. And my start in Internet governance was absolutely miserable.

So, thank you for this slide, but I won't need it anymore.

So, in 2016 I started a project with a small team called Newsworthy, combating violent extremism and online radicalization for which we won a prize from the U.S. State Department where we interacted with 25,000 young people around the world to resolve these issues and teach them fact checking and service verification.

Based on that project, I was invited to the Council of Europe to talk about youth participation in Internet governance, and they actually told me, "Why don't you go to the IGF?" So, I found a private investor, and he packed me off to Geneva. So, [I turned up in] Geneva, a very big building. Absolutely no idea where I was going. Completely lost. I didn't know anyone. I had no clue what was going to happen. I didn't know anything about the structure. But I did know that the Netherlands have a delegation.

So, they told me, "The Netherlands has a delegation. They have a booth. Go and find them." So, I go find this booth. They tell us, "If you have any need, there's a WhatsApp group. You can always contact us and we'll support you wherever we can. And we'll also let you know when other Dutch people are presenting so you can cheer them on if you'd like to."

And so, this is my first interaction in getting involved. So, I quietly got added into this WhatsApp group and [progressed] [inaudible]. I did not engage with it. This was this was my plan about five years ago.

And then I was walking around this building. I had no clue what I was doing. And there was a man standing in front of a door, and he said, "I'm giving a workshop." And I was like, "That's great."

He's like, "Would you like to join?" And I said, "Sure." So, I walk into this workshop and I had no idea what was going on. So, he asked me to sit in front, which nobody wants to do ever. And so, I sit in front and there's me and there's like three spaces beside me.

And there are a couple of people chatting. So, the man next to me turns around and says, "Hi. I'm from RIPE NCC and I'm going to give you my business card." So, he gives me his business card and we talked a little bit. I say, "I'm new." And he says, "Oh, you know, if you have any questions whatsoever, just let me know and I'm happy to explain it to you." I did not ask anything. Absolutely terrified. No idea who this man is.

So, okay, we go into this workshop. I share my experiences as much as I can based on what I knew, but some of the concepts were really confusing. So, after the session he asked me, "How was the session?" And I said, "Well, there were some concepts I didn't really understand." And he said, "Oh, that's not a problem. Let me explain to you."

And I'm like, "Oh, there's quite a few, so …" And he's like, "Oh, no worries. Let's walk and talk if you have the time." And I was like, "I mean, I'm not doing anything. I don't know what I'm doing next." So, okay.

So, we walk and talk. RIPE NCC being RIPE NCC, if there's one person from RIPE NCC walking on day zero, you have to rest flocking towards this group of RIPE NCC people. So, at some point I'm standing there, this man explaining to me things like IPv4, IPv6, what's the meaning of IoT. And I was like, okay, learning things.

So, I'm surrounded now by RIPE NCC people, and when I meet these people, he introduces me to them and explains to me what they do, what they're involved with, what kind of connections we could possibly have between us.

And then everybody's introducing themselves to each other. He turns away. And when he turns away, I'm standing in this group of people and they're talking to each other, and I feel a little bit lost. When he moves away from the conversation suddenly, it's as if they don't really see me or understand me anymore. And then, when he pulls me back in, we become cohesive again. So, I feel really included.

At some point I was kind of like, okay, I need to get myself organized. So, I say thank you. I said goodbye. And I go around, and during the IGF there was … I was trying to meet a bunch of people and I got invitations. People asked me to come to all the different types of countries, to all different events to participate in projects and stuff like that. But only if I can pay my flight, my accommodations, my participation fee.

And I just sat there and I was like, "Well, you give me this great opportunity to meet this ministry person, to meet the founders of the Internet. You're inviting me to meet people from ICANN"—and I didn't know who ICANN was. But everybody was like, "Oh, meet people from ICANN. Really big deal. You're going to get senior staff members and everything."

And I was like, "That's great." But only if I could pay, and only if I contributed, and only if I wrote articles for them in advance, and if I provided marketing, and only if I provided social media coverage. And

these are things that I just didn't have the possibility of doing at the time, so I felt really nervous then to start approaching people because it seemed that people wanted to have things for me or offering me things that I couldn't have. Which is also kind of disappointing, you know, if you're from a place where you're like, "Oh, you have all these opportunities," but you can't have it. It's sad.

And then I was meeting other people, and sometimes I was just completely alone. I didn't really understand how to get involved, so I had to really put a lot of effort into it. But then I got elected as a Youth Coalition on Internet Governance representative for the Western Europe and Others Group, and I thought, you know, this is my moment. This is the time where I'm going to ensure youth participation.

And the focus of that year was young girl participation in Internet governance. And I went to just one session, and I still remember [inaudible] clearly. And it was a great session. Super interesting. Very approachable for new people.

And in the crowd there was a woman, and this woman was—is—absolutely phenomenal. She is bright, well spoken, extremely critical of the topics that were spoken. But polite. So, she brought things where she was like, "No. This is absolutely 100% wrong," in such a way that everybody is like, "Oh, but I agree … I understand … Let's have discussions about this rather than being disheartened about it."

So, I thought, I'm going to approach this woman. So, this woman then walks out of the session and I follow her and I tell her, "I'm new and I really admire the way that you're speaking and how you're engaging

with the environment. I'd love to talk a little bit more about how to promote youth participation and female participation in the dynamic coalitions, but also in Internet governance."

She said, "Sure." She took my phone and she typed in her e-mail address. So what I did is, I see her walk off. I sit down, grab my laptop, open it, and start typing. So, immediately I sent out an e-mail—super eager—and it bounces. And I was like, "Oh, maybe I made a mistake." And it bounces. I then check online. What's your e-mail? And this woman exists only in press releases. She does not exist as a profile or anything else. And I was like, "Wow, okay." That's a shame. Maybe I can catch her later. And then a few hours later was lunch. I met the person that I met at the Council of Europe. And I was talking to him, and he was saying, "Oh, I know her. Let me give you her e-mail."

And he gave me three e-mail addresses, and I realized that the e-mail address she gave me was fake. So, she gave me a fake e-mail address, and I was devastated. I was absolutely horrified that she didn't say, "I'm sorry. I don't have time. I need to go somewhere." She actually actively gave me a fake e-mail address for a company that didn't exist. And I was heartbroken, and I said, "Oh, you know. After being surrounded by opportunities that people seem to have goodwill, but is it really goodwill? And then showing me goodwill, but not actually providing that kind of access?"

And I was really devastated, and I thought, I'm going to go to the rest of sessions. I'm not going to do anything anymore. After today, I'm out. I'm going to go and see a fountain. I'm going to see a big chair—because

we're in Geneva. I'm going to eat all the cheese fondue. That was like my main priority. Not going to do anything else. So, I was done.

At the end of the day, I was standing there talking to other young people. They asked me if I was coming the next day. I said, "No. I'm not coming back ever." And then this man, this RIPE NCC man, stands at the other side of the hall. And he says, "Hey, Nadia," and I was like, "Oh, hello." So, I walk over. He's like, "Hey. Me and RIPE NCC are going out for dinner. Would you like to join us?" And the first thing in my mind, I was like, "But why?" Like, why do you care? Why would you want me to come?

And I was kind of like, "Oh, you know …" And then the second thing was, you know, stranger danger. I'm a woman. So, you know, stranger danger. And then I was kind of like, but you know, this is a really great group of people. There are men and women. And I went with them.

I really took the chance, and I sat there and I learned, really, a lot about how the structure was set up in terms of Internet governance. I learned a lot about the history. We talked about upcoming topics like greening the Internet and about how IPv4 is at some point going to run out and what we're going to do about it. We talked already about how platforms are going to be held accountable. Facebook was being, at the time, held accountable for content moderation. We were talking about whether or not domain name registries, etc., will be held accountable for this.

So, I learned a lot about upcoming topics, and I really appreciated it. And then the thing that really changed for me was that he asked me, "Well, I'm going to the session tomorrow. Are you coming?"

And I said, "Oh, yeah. Of course." And the next day I turned out at the session, sat somewhere in the back. And he noticed me. He was sitting somewhere in the front. He noticed me and then he stood up, came to sit with me, and he said, "Let's talk about the session." And we talked a little bit.

I didn't see him for the rest of the week anymore until the very end at the final party, but it really changed my desire to be involved. And afterwards, he introduced me to EuroDIG and also introduced me to YOUthDIG. And that's how I ended up staying involved, and that's also something that I noticed for the two speakers before me. Gül and Auke also had people that were cheering them on, and that makes all the difference.

When you want to try to integrate as a young person within Internet governance, it can be very difficult. And it has manifested for us in very different ways. Gül already mentioned, in terms of structure, about the community building, managing your scheduling. And integration for Auke has been more holistic and supportive, which would help him towards a future in which he has a very strong hold in Internet governance and he feels very welcome and empowered to take on something like setting up a Youth NL IGF.

And for me, I ended up using my experience to drive me in my research where I'm looking at stakeholders and participation in Internet governance to create the type of access and participation. And when we're also talking about youth participation, I want to talk about the

fourth person. We invited a fourth person. We actually invited multiple fourth people from government.

But the problem is that if you're a young person in the structure, you need to ask permission to talk about your participation in these types of events. And they weren't allowed to come. Even though they were available and they had the time and wanted to share their story, they weren't allowed to share their story by their organizations. And what I think is particularly striking, because I want to end this on a good note, is that both—well, I say both, the three of us.

I had no knowledge about this in advance, but Dutch people, innovation, we all work on projects and we will work on something towards a future to create the changes that we want to see in our societies and to try to contribute. And I think that's a very strong [asset] of what Dutch people in Internet governance have. That we tried to be disruptors, to try and support the digital transformation.

And with that, I would love to hear more from the community themselves. So, thank you very much for having us.

ADAM PEAKE: Thank you very much, Nadia. I apologize if it looked like I was smiling inappropriately while you were mentioning that story because I do know the person. It reminded me halfway through who the person you were talking about is, and of course it was Chris from RIPE NCC who gave you that help. And I know because I was part of the party that you joined, and it was very good to meet you all those years ago.

So, I apologize to everybody who might have seen me smiling and thinking that was an inappropriate thing to do. But it was just remembering the story and the help that I know Chris gave you and the other RIPE NCC people gave you. And I'm pleased that I was a little bit part of that as well, but probably less so than they were.

But, anyway, thank you very much for that. And I think that the message is of building trust, of receiving help. It's what you need, especially when you walk into a group of people who recognize themselves as a community. And I think ICANN is very proud of that. We like to talk about ourselves as a community, but communities can sometimes be quite hard to break into. So, I think this awareness of new people, of being welcoming, and making sure that people are not feeling out of place and not lost is one of the key things that we can do to encourage people to get involved.

So, thank you very much for all the stories that you've come across. It's been a pleasure to work with you.

Auke, I see your hand up. Would you like to make a comment?

AUKE PALS: Yes, one short comment on the story of the government enforcement of the trainees that were also invited. And in my experience—I don't want to start a debate—but is government also quite supportive? In the past years, they allowed for 20 trainees to come to the IGF and also invited them or supported them in travel. And one of the people from that group that I invited was unfortunately on holiday, so she couldn't join.

ADAM PEAKE: Thanks, Auke. I know that the Dutch government has been very supportive of younger people, both within the government organization itself but also others. So, thank you for that.

So, let's move along and we'll move to the responses and the comments from the organizations, as for want of a better word. Maarten, would you like to kick off and give us a few comments? Maarten Simon from SIDN.

And Maarten Botterman, I'll come to you after Siranush and Ergys, please.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Make sure you use the surname as well.

ADAM PEAKE: All right. I'll call you Sir, sir. And Maarten, yes. Anyway, thank you.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: You used to call me "Maarten [2]". That's why.

MAARTEN SIMON: It makes it really complicated. We usually meet each other at ICANN meetings and then say, "Hello, Maarten" to each other.

Hello. This time it's Maarten Simon. I'm with SIDN, the registry for the .nl. the Netherlands domain names. I am involved, of course, in ICANN

because of my work. I'm the Legal and Policy Manager, and also in the Internet governance environment in different ways.

And I must admit, it took us some time to discover the failure and the need to do something to bring young people into the Internet governance environment, for ourselves—for .nl during the zeros—a number of consultations around policy for .nl. And we never invited, specifically, younger people or even, well … And I must admit, they weren't there also because they weren't coming spontaneously—certainly in not very specific discussions if it's around domain names or something.

And then for us, we started with Internet governance a number of years, also in the zeros, I think, and trying to push for more involvement of people at all, not specifically younger people, but having people involved in Internet governance. As we found that it's a very important discussion. There are very important discussions going on, and we found that the bigger or broader participation from the Netherlands would be very valuable.

And so, we started to push that, together with the Dutch Government always, and also together with ECP which was already mentioned by Auke. And we formed the NL IGF. Well, we started with that and got more and more people involved. And I think, as it be, suggested to have a youth version. I must say I was sort of like, okay, that's good for educational purposes. They may learn something about the old topics [inaudible] the discussion.

But we also included a competition. And the winner of the competition, during the Youth NL IGF, could come to the next IGF. We would pay for all the expenses—flights, everything. And what we do when we go out with the Dutch delegation, we all try to organize a few things. Usually, we're in the same hotel. We try to be in the same hotel as much as possible. We try to, before the meeting, have a day where we do something with all the people from the Dutch delegation.

And then I found out that having young people around makes a difference. It was more fun. But it's also that they are not so … They are fresh. For them, the discussions are often new, and while we are sometimes … Well, we do this discussion already for years, so 10 years. Some longer. And, yes, we know where we came from. But, hey, we evolved our discussions and we're there.

And it's really good to sometimes be taken back to the beginning because the questions younger people—outsiders anyway—ask are the questions that we were dealing with in the beginning and we sort of lost somewhere along the discussions.

And what I also found is that younger people have a tendency to not restrict themselves because they are not sure if they are aware of all the facts and all the information. And they are more in a learning curve, and therefore stand out and just ask things or propose things because they just feel like that's a good idea. And then, okay, it brings new points in the discussion that are very helpful.

And, of course, it's their future we're talking about. It's always an argument. And there's a lot of people that … Yeah, you need fresh

people anyway in Internet governance discussions, but also in your organizations themselves.

But it opened our eyes and I think we tried to … SIDN tried to stimulate the participation and always also be open to questions to inform people about, okay, but do you understand things? Is there something going on? Can we help? Or things like that.

I must say, yeah, I understand the struggle because I, of course, I heard two big struggles. One is, of course, the financial part. How is it possible to go to an IGF? It's not a cheap event. If you go to … Well, the event itself is for free, but traveling there and staying there. And you have to eat and drink a bit, too. Well, we at the SIDN support, together with the ministry and ECP, always a few people to go to the IGF. Well, of course, it's limited somewhere. It's a few.

And the other one, really getting involved. I would say I think the Dutch delegation is a very good example of how to get people involved. And we also support EuroSSIG, the summer school Internet governance, for example, and always support two fellows to be able to join there to get to know a bit more and get more background to discussions and meet, at the same time, all kinds of people that are in the same position and people that are very experienced in this field.

Can I say more now? Maybe not. Maybe I'll just turn to my friends from RIPE NCC.

GERGANA PETROVA: Thank you.

CHRIS BUCKRIDGE: Gergana, please.

GERGANA PETROVA: Should I start? Okay. So, my name is Gergana Petrova. I work at RIPE NCC. I have prepared two main things that I want to talk to you today. First of all, a little about my journey how I started with Internet governance, similar to what Alke, Gül, and Nadia already shared with you. And, secondly, I want to talk a little bit about what RIPE NCC does for youth.

So, my journey in Internet governance started some seven years ago. And even then, I was not really youth since I was already 10 years into the workforce. But still, if you are in kind of my shoes, already been working for several years in completely different fields, I would still encourage you to get involved because it's a really interesting field.

So, the first thing that I ever did was to read this book—and I'm pasting the link in the chat—Introduction to Internet Governance. It's by Diplo. And when you click on the link, you would actually see that there are also translations of the book in French and in Spanish. I know that this session is also translated in French and in Spanish, so maybe you might be interested in that.

The book has seven or eight chapters, and what I really liked about it is that they update it periodically. So, when I was reading it, I think 2013-14, there were things that had happened the year before. So, especially

in the Internet when things develop so rapidly, that was really nice. I definitely had the feeling, oh, I'm reading current stuff.

Then the next thing I did, I went to summer school on Internet governance. The one that I went to is EuroSSIG, and I'm pasting the link in the chat as well. Every year it's in Meissen. It lasts about a week. I think there are options for sponsorship if you cannot find it yourself.

I really liked my week there because they're inviting, also, a lot of very high-level speakers. So, it's great for networking, but also to just introduce you into everything that's happening in the Internet governance sphere. And then we also did quite a lot of practical things, especially in the evenings. I really liked that.

Just to also paste in the chat about two more summer schools. So, there's the SIDI. I think they started two years ago, the School on Internet Governance, Digital Policies, and Innovation. Actually, it's taking place this week virtually, so if you're interested in that, may be apply next year.

And then there is also YOUthDIG that is the 26th and 28th of June. Again, for this year, I think they have already closed the applications round. But keep it in mind for next year.

And I think both of them also offer a sponsorship option, so just keeping in mind what Nadia was talking earlier about—how do you afford all the travel and hotels.

Then other things that I did. I did two online courses, and I'm going to paste also in the chat some information about that. The first one was

from Diplo. So, the same organization that wrote the book. The online course that I took was on cybersecurity, but they also offer others like Introduction to Internet Governance, IT and Policy, Digital Commerce.

I don't remember exactly, but I think this course was paid. And there were two different options like if you actually want it to count towards, for example, a Master's degree, you had to pay a little bit more. But you also had to take an exam. So, they give you an official certificate. And then, if you just want to take it because you find the public interesting and you're not interested in a certificate as such, then you pay a little bit less.

I really liked the Diplo course. It was virtual and every week we had to read like a chapter and then, in the chapter, we could put our comments or questions. Other people could see our comments or questions and respond. So, it was really nice. We could talk to people from Africa, Asia, the States. They could not always make it in the online sessions due to the time differences, but you could read their comments and it was really like a global experience and having different perspectives on a certain Internet governance question.

Then the other course I did was from GSMA. So, that one was for free, I think. And the one that I did was for mobile privacy, but you can see that they have quite a lot of other options—5G and things like that.

And then the last thing. Basically, I have attended also quite a lot of Internet governance events—the Internet Governance Forum, but also the European one which is called EuroDIG, and also the one for Southeast Europe which is called SEEDIG. So, I'm going to paste the link

here for EuroDIG because it's coming up the end of this month, the 28th to the 30th of June. And registration is free. It's going to be virtual, so there's no cost to attending. If you would like to get involved a little bit more and find out about what's current, attend this event. It's going to be a really good introduction.

So, that is kind of like my journey in Internet governance from an attendee. I'm now a little bit more actually involved this year. I'm helping EuroDIG with forming a few sessions. So, there is really … I mean, you just start slow and then—as Auke, Gül, and Nadia shared— you slowly build up your participation if you're into it.

And now, to the second part of what I wanted to share, what RIPE NCC does. Very briefly, RIPE NCC is a regional Internet registry. We give Internet blocks to, basically, network operators—to companies that want to have their own network—mostly Internet service providers, but also others such as universities, governments, banks, airports. And we have a huge database where we say who has which block.

So that's, in a nutshell, what we do. But we also have a few auxiliary works, which Internet governance is one of those things. We organize … We have a few opportunities for youth, and I'm going to paste them in the chat as well.

So, the first one that I have included in the chat is the RIPE fellowship. We organize, twice a year, a big meeting. It's called the RIPE Meeting. When it was in person, we would have maybe 500-600 people. Online, a lot more register—more than 1,000.

So, this meeting is a little bit technical but also has some policy discussions. So, when I'm talking about technical, I'm talking about things like Address Policy Working Group, open source, measurement and analysis, Internet of Things, DNS. But we also have a working group on cooperation with governments and other organizations. So, that is probably the one that is most interesting for people interested in Internet governance.

The fellowships that we offer are for people in our service region. So, that's Europe, Middle East, and parts of Central Asia. There is a little bit of a string attached, as Nadia mentioned. We do ask that all fellows write a report after the meeting just to tell us how it was for them, what they liked, what they didn't liked. Just to make sure that the people are actually interested in attending the RIPE Meeting but don't make a holiday out of it.

And then another opportunity that we offer is the RIPE Meeting Mentoring. So, that is not really financial help to come to the meeting, but when you're at the meeting, you can get a mentor who can basically introduce you to other people.

ADAM PEAKE: Sorry, Gergana. Could I stop you there because we're going to run out of time? We've only a few—not too long left. I'm sorry the session was rather short today. So, thanks very much anyway.

GERGANA PETROVA: Yeah, okay.

ADAM PEAKE:

We've got to move on to Ergys and Siranush before we close. But, thank you. And thank you for all the links. They're extremely helpful. Chris, I hope you're good. Thank you very much.

Could we move to Siranush and Ergys, please? Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thanks, Adam. Hi everyone. Much appreciate the opportunity to participate in this discussion. Lots of different threads and fascinating stories here.

My name is Ergys Ramaj, and one of my responsibilities at ICANN is to help oversee our newcomer programs. ICANN as an organization and as a community has put a lot of effort and resources towards lowering barriers to participation since its early days. And this continues to be a major focus of our collective work today as well. That means making sure that individuals and groups that come from underrepresented communities who otherwise could not participate in ICANN get a chance to do so. And as ICANN continue to evolve, so do the needs of our community, and our goal is to make sure that these programs reflect those needs and priorities.

And this brings me to the specific subject of youth engagement. And if I had to qualify our approach, I would say that it is quite comprehensive and hands-on. And the reason I say this is because it's multi-dimensional. Right? So, it comes in the form of official programs. Some of you may be familiar with the ICANN Fellowship and NextGen

programs through partnerships with outside organizations and institutions, as well as sponsorships. And we want to be able to attract and support individuals who are keen to participate and contribute to the work that we do.

So, what and how do we actually do it? We financially support people to participate in ICANN meetings through our newcomer programs. And that's about 180 individuals per year. We place a lot of focus on capacity development activities. There are a lot of skills and knowledge building efforts before, during, and after ICANN meetings.

We have also built an online learning platform which we call ICANN Learn, and that is central to building that knowledge which also helps satisfy certain prerequisites and eases people's onboarding into ICANN.

And last but not least, we have a well-established mentoring program that is led by individuals who are appointed by the ICANN community to these programs. And that mentoring component is quite important, I'd say, in particular because it creates a safe learning environment and builds a lot of trust between existing and future community members. And we've heard in a lot of the discussions today how important that is.

And our programs are both regional and global in nature. And, of course, they cater to different age groups. Our colleagues from the Global Stakeholder Engagement Team are very hands-on at the regional level, and they also do a great deal of work outside of ICANN meetings to help build those strong networks and to continue to educate and engage youth in their local environment.

I will stop here in the interest of time, Adam. I know we only have two minutes, but happy to take any questions or comments, or engage in a discussion if we have time.

ADAM PEAKE: Thanks very much, Ergys. Siranush, would you like to say a word? And then I think, rather than me trying to conclude, Maarten Botterman, the ICANN chair of the Board is here. And Maarten may like to say something.

So, Siranush, a very quick something and then over to Maarten Botterman, please. So, Siranush, if you could hand over to Maarten when you've said hello at least. It would be good to hear from you. Thank you, everyone.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Adam. And I will be really very brief because I posted the links to the Fellowship and the NextGen programs, and also the link to the ICANN Learn portal. Those who are interested in those programs and in taking some courses in ICANN Learn, please feel free to get there. And if there are any questions, we'll be happy to take them. And you can always e-mail me and ask questions.

Ergys talked about the capacity development. So, this is what we start with by providing mentoring to all Fellows and NextGeners who are being selected two or three months prior to the meeting. So, during that two months before getting into the meeting, they are receiving [a handful of] training by the mentors, and they are prepared as a

newcomer to understand what is the ICANN ecosystem before they come to the meeting.

And also, they are taking someone that really learned courses where we explain about the ICANN ecosystem and about different ICANN communities. So, they learn a lot before coming to their first meeting. And then at the meeting, we have one-week, on-site training for them. Now we've moved to the virtual training, but this is how we build their capacity.

With that, I will just stop here because there are a lot to talk, but I know we have no time. Adam, back to you.

ADAM PEAKE: Thank you, Siranush. And over to you, Maarten. Thanks very much.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Okay. Thanks, Adam. Thanks, Siranush. Thanks, Ergys. Thanks, everybody. When Adam said I was very much involved in the Dutch Internet governance community, I must say over the last year, I haven't met any of you. But that's true for all of us. And I also must say that being a chair does take you a little bit out of other processes. I had to step down from a number of initiatives, including some in the Netherlands where I also participated in just because of lack of time.

But it felt like a good choice because this is a space, the Internet, that serves us all. And it's such an inspiration to be able to contribute to that and do that from a good place. So, I think some of you have tasted that

already, and in particular, some of the younger speakers I've had the pleasure of having dinners, coffees, and beers with before—or even being managed in a panel by one of them. And that's what's really good.

As Adam said, the multistakeholder community cannot evolve unless new people come in all the time from different places in the world, new places in the world. But also, renewal of those that are getting gray beards and, like Auke, are losing some hairs already. You need to think of the next generation, Auke.

So, again, welcome very much. You'll find the e-mail addresses and the links to contact the people like Ergys and Siranush online. The Board is really very much conscious, as are the Org and the community, about the importance of this continued renewal. Hence, this is my first two sessions for newcomers and Fellows and NextGen. And I saw that some Fellows and NextGen are in the room. Actually, Siranush is one of them. And two of my Board members also started as fellows.

So, even when it may look overwhelming in the early phase, you will find that in the Internet governance there's a lot to do, a lot to contribute to. So, find your place. Looking forward to meeting you and seeing you if not before, then at least next year in The Hague when we are there with ICANN74.

ADAM PEAKE: Thank you very much, Maarten. Thank you, everybody for joining. Please think about getting involved.

So with that, I think we can close the session. Thanks to the speakers. Thanks to Magali. And thank you very much, tech support. See you in future sessions and ICANN71 in, oh, just over a week's time. So, thank you very much, everybody. Cheers. Bye-bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]