EuroSSIG Participant Report - Anastasia Vladimirova (HURIDOCS, SecDev Foundation)
10. 09. 2021

The opportunity to attend the 15th European Summer School on Internet Governance meant a lot to me as a professional working in the field of digital rights. The program covered many topics which were new to me in addition to those that I already had familiarity with; the program gave me a chance to not only expand my understanding of Internet governance overall, but to also learn more about the topics I am not as knowledgable about, such as technical regulation and management, and business and Internet governance. Apart from a great mix of formats such as presentations, discussions and breakout groups that allowed for direct and meaningful engagements between the participants and the faculty, there was always an opportunity to speak to individual faculty members, to ask specific questions and to receive guidance on where to continue looking for more information on the topics of interest.

As someone who has worked in the field of human rights for more than 5 years, I was especially interested in the human rights related part of the program.This year a few of us who specialize in human rights were asked to participate in the presentation and I found that to be a great experience. Even though initially this was not planned, it was an opportunity to connect with the fellows and the faculty on a deeper level, as we prepared the presentation and discussed topics that could be relevant and interesting for everyone. It was especially wonderful to meet two fellow Central European University Human Rights Masters program alumni, as I am one myself, and to collaborate with them on the human rights presentation.

Some faculty members have agreed with my observation that so far the human rights dimension, even though recognized as important and influential for Internet governance, has not received as much consideration as it probably should have. I believe that apart from covering some of the most obvious topics and rights directly implicated into the matters of Internet governance, such as freedom of expression and privacy, there are also many other types of rights and human rights issues that are as worthy of multistakeholder consideration and should receive more attention in discussions. These include access to information, Internet shutdowns, gender-based violence, and many more. It would be great to see the human rights discussion cover a broader scope of human rights that get directly affected by Internet governance decision-making, legislation and policies.

One of the highlights of my participation was learning about the intersection of human rights and technical regulation of the Internet. Apart from learning in-depth about the responsibilities and functions of the most important Internet governance bodies, I also learned about concrete efforts to ensure compliance of Internet infrastructure with human rights. Thanks to Avri Doria, I now know about the ways to get involved into Initiatives like The Human Rights Protocol Considerations Research Group at IETF and others. I hope to find the time soon to learn more about this work to gain a better understanding of the connection between Internet architecture and human rights, a new and exciting area for me.

I want to thank all the faculty members for their thought-provoking and informative presentations and discussion contributions, the event organizers for thinking through the safety aspects given the pandemic reality, and the sponsors of the event whose support made it possible for me and others to participate and to have a truly rewarding time with like-minded individuals from all over the world.