



# EAPEC BRINGS BENEFITS TO HOSTS AND PARTICIPANTS

## GROWING CYBERSECURITY SKILLS IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Security of digital information is a major societal challenge. R&E networking organisations in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries have increased efforts to tackle the issue, working with a variety of partners to raise visibility, provide training and overcome potential threats.



The Georgian research and educational networking association GRENA has been leading the charge. Its cybersecurity activities include working with a significant list of partners and supporting the annual national cyber Olympiad 'Cyber Cube'. Any enthusiast under age 25 can participate in this event, which promotes promising students and popularises the development of skills and knowledge. 450 people have participated in the three Olympiads to date.

GRENA also recently launched a cyber exercise portal, Cyber-Lab Tech. IT students – and professionals working in public and private sectors – can deepen their skills with exercises in cryptography, cyber and network analytics and reverse engineering, among others. In the first two weeks after its launch, the portal had been tried by around 120 people.

GRENA's own cybersecurity team, CERT-GE, participates in the international computer security and incident response community through GÉANT's TF-CSIRT and Trusted Introducer activities. It also competes in 'Cyber-EXE' – where representatives of public and private organisations complete cyber exercises. Around 280 people have participated in the five events to date; in December 2018, CERT-GE ranked top among 20 teams.

This growing expertise was shared with EaPConnect project partners during a project workshop last June. Key issues for EaP cybersecurity teams were identified and cybersecurity strategies were compared, with 30 participants from 12 EaP and EU organisations.

Information security was the focus of a conference at the Institute of Information Technology of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) in December. IT researchers and experts from the country's relevant government agencies, universities, research institutes and media took part. Highlighting the

strategic importance of information security in national security, the event covered a wide range of topics including digital heritage, the protection of electronic resources, and child protection in the Internet environment.

A workshop to inform leading Ukrainian universities about the Penetration Test service offered by the Ukrainian research and academic network URAN was held in August. This allows users of local networks to conduct basic security checks using targeted attack simulations. It helps to assess the information system's resistance to unauthorised influence and to identify the main vulnerabilities, the most successful models of attack and the possible size of any damage. A follow-up workshop is now being planned.

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The 2018 Eastern Partnership E-infrastructures Conference, EaPEC 2018, was a great success for host organisation RENAM, the Research and Educational Networking Association of Moldova.

One important outcome was the signing of a contract between RENAM and the university 'Perspectiva-INT', which specialises in studies related to business and international relations. The university's rector attended EaPEC 2018 and learned about the services and connectivity that RENAM offers and how it interconnects the Moldovan research and education community with peers in Europe and other world regions via the pan-European GÉANT network under the auspices of EaPConnect. The signed agreement means one more university in the Republic of Moldova will benefit from the opportunities for connectivity and services offered by RENAM and GÉANT. Conference participation by senior representatives of Moldovan ministries and institutions helped to attract coverage by national TV, radio and press, and brought a high level of visibility to RENAM and to the research and education networking and e-infrastructures community.

EaPEC 2018 was held in Chisinau, Moldova, on 17-18 October, organised by the Eastern Partnership Connect (EaPConnect) project, which is led by GÉANT. Around 180 people from a diverse range of fields from 80 organisations and 20 countries gathered at the event. They learned about research and education networks, other e-infrastructures, and services that can benefit Eastern Partnership research and education communities and bring them collaboration opportunities.

Highlights of the conference included a keynote presentation by Erik-Jan Bos of NORDUnet, introducing the 'Global Network Architecture'. In a session on EC-funded research, Igor Serotila of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova explained how EaP countries can contribute to Horizon Europe. An e-infrastructures session provided overviews of GÉANT, the European Open Science Cloud, PRACE, EGI and EOSC-Hub.

**Pictures**  
Left: Anatol Gonciaruc, Executive Director of RENAM, and Dr. Arina Kraijdan, Rector of University 'Perspectiva-INT'. Right: Peter Bogatencov, Executive Vice-Director of RENAM being interviewed for TV at EaPEC 2018.

In other sessions, activities in Poland to digitise cultural objects were described, an explanation was given why the library community needs NRENs, the value of the music community to NRENs was discussed, and reasons were presented why every country needs an NREN. Lightning talks introduced the Open Source Geospatial foundation, blockchain for fraud-proof video, and the 'DICOM Network' for medical imagery. Panel discussions about women in IT and about the sustainability of NRENs engendered lively debate with the audience.

The conference closed with an invitation to attend EaPEC 2019, which will be hosted in Yerevan, Armenia, by ASNET-AM on 25-26 September 2019.

For EaPConnect information, news and links to the EaPEC 2018 agenda, slides and videos, visit <https://www.eapconnect.eu>