



On 23 and 24 September 2019, mySociety hosted the third international AlaveteliCon, our Freedom of Information (FOI) technologies conference, in Oslo.



A few days ahead of International Right to Know Day (28 September), AlaveteliCon brought together 46 activists, journalists, technologists and campaigners from 18 countries who use Freedom of Information laws, data and technologies to create public-interest investigations and campaigns.

This time we focused on catalysing collaborations on cross-border European public interest investigations and campaigns, in order to strengthen the use of FOI across the region. This focus is in part due to our latest Transparency project, funded by Adessium Foundation. This Transparency project seeks to enable journalists, campaigners and citizens in Europe to make greater and more effective use of their right to access information, in particular to generate public interest stories and campaigns that hold power to account.

## Conference resources

The conference is over, but you can revisit it in a variety of places online:

- [See the agenda below](#). Click on the links to read notes from the sessions and to view presentation slides
- Presentation slides can be viewed on the [mySociety SlideShare account](#), as well as from links on the agenda below
- Experience the conference in tweets by following [#alaveteli](#)
- [Here are photos from AlaveteliCon](#)
- Read our [wrap-up blog post](#)
- List of [AlaveteliCon 2019 attendees](#)
- [Muckrock's preview blog post re. AlaveteliCon](#)
- See resources from previous AlaveteliCons: [2012 in Oxford](#) and [2015 in Madrid](#).

## Sponsors

Many thanks to [Adessium Foundation](#) and [NUUG Foundation](#) for supporting AlaveteliCon. Also to [Sticker Mule](#) for providing the conference stickers.

AlaveteliCon sticker partner:



## AlaveteliCon 2019 agenda:

### AGENDA

#### 22 September

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19.00 **Informal drinks reception (optional) in central Oslo:** Location will be emailed to attendees

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#### Day 1: 23 September

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09.30 Registration and refreshments

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10.00 **Welcome to AlaveteliCon!**  
*Opening notes by mySociety*

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10.15 **The power of FOI generated stories and campaigns:** what have FOI platforms helped to reveal/change since the last AlaveteliCon? Presentations and discussion. Short presentations from:

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- [Jenna Corderoy](#), Freelance journalist who recently [won an FOI tribunal battle](#) for Brexit research. [See presentation slides.](#)
- [Arne Semsrott](#), journalist and coordinator of German FOI platform [FragDenStaat](#). [See presentation slides.](#)
- [Michael Morisy](#), founder and CEO of US FOI platform [MuckRock](#)
- Krisztina Zala, project manager at Hungarian investigative centre [Atlatszo](#) (operators of [KiMitTud](#) FOI platform). [See presentation slides.](#)
- [Richard Hunt](#), campaigner and coordinator of Czech FOI platform [InfoProVšechny](#)

[Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

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11.15 Refreshment break

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#### **Training: How to use AsktheEU Pro for investigations and campaigns**

AsktheEU.org is being upgraded to Alaveteli Pro, so will have extra functionality to help journalists and campaigners to send and manage complex FOI investigations/projects.

11.30 Helen from AsktheEU and journalist Jenna Corderoy will provide training on how to use the platform, and advice on getting the information you need from EU bodies.

[See presentation slides](#)

[Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

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#### **Feedback on Alaveteli Pro and using FOI for campaigns and investigations**

Following on from Helen and Jenna's training on AsktheEU Pro, the mySociety developers behind Alaveteli Pro would love to hear feedback on the toolkit in order to inform future developments. They're also interested to hear about problems people face when using FOI for investigations and campaigns and what tools/techniques are working well and what is missing.

12.30

[See presentation slides](#)

[Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

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13.15 Lunch + From 13.30: Open surgery with mySociety's Alaveteli developers – come and discuss your tech and admin needs! [Sign up here.](#)

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**Campaigns to actively make governments more open and improve FOI legislation:** Experiences and discussion. Short presentations from:

- 14.15
- [Claude Archer](#), coordinator of Belgian FOI platform [Transparencia](#). [See presentation slides.](#)
  - [Stefan Wehrmeyer](#), coordinator of German FOI platform [FragDenStaat](#). [See presentation slides.](#)

[Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

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15.15 Refreshment break + group photo!

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**Algorithm Transparency:** Using FOI to uncover how governments are using AI, and how we could possibly work together on this as a global group – Led by Beryl Lipton from MuckRock

Presentations from:

15.30

- [Camilla Graham Wood](#) from Privacy International on their [Neighbourhood Watched](#) campaign
  - [Miguel Ángel Gavilanes](#) from Civio on their current court case asking for the source code of an application developed by public employees. [See presentation slides.](#)
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[Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

16.30 **Practicalities of how to run a cross border investigation (using FOI)** – Experiences from attendees. [Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

17.00 **RightToKnow Day 2019: What are people’s plans? Should we all coordinate and do something as a global community? What has worked well in the past?** [Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

17.20 Closing remarks

17.30 End of Day 1

19.30 **AlaveteliCon attendees dinner in central Oslo:** Location will be emailed to attendees

## Day 2: 24 September

09.30 Registration and refreshments

10.00 **AlaveteliCon’s version of ‘Cards Against Humanity’ (with less of the offence!)**  
A fun, energetic start to Day 2 – a card game to spark thought-provoking conversations on using FOI and technology 😊

### More inspiring (and frustrating!) campaigns and investigations using FOI

- [Mago Torres](#) (freelance journalist, USA/Mexico) on the FOI methodology she used for [this investigation into Mexico’s 2,000 clandestine graves](#). See [presentation slides](#).
- [Stefanos Loukopoulos](#) (Vouliwatch, Greece) on the FOI battle to expose Greek political parties who mishandle public funds
- [Miguel Ángel Gavilanes](#) (Civio, Spain) ‘Why do we want an Official Secrets Law in Spain if the Transparency Law is more effective in hiding information?’. See [presentation slides](#).

[Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

11.45 Refreshment break

12.00 **Dealing with takedown requests and GDPR:** What different approaches and experiences do we have? [Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#)

12.30 **Unconference sessions:**

12.30 -12.55 **Session 1:** Are there any other global cross border campaigns people are interested in working together on? Are Alaveteli sites used as sources? [Collaborative hackpad \(please feel free to add your notes to this!\)](#).

12.55 -13.15	<b>Session 2:</b> Privacy vs. freedom of speech: The conflicting interests of privacy and freedom of speech as it pertains to Alaveteli websites (Led by Haavard Ostermann) <a href="#">See session description and collaborative hackpad.</a>
13.15	Lunch + From 13.30: Open surgery with mySociety's Alaveteli developers – come and discuss your tech and admin needs! <a href="#">Sign up here.</a>
14.15	<b>Unconference sessions:</b>
14.15-14.35	<b>Session 3:</b> Integrity of FOI responses: The lack of consistency in the application of FOI laws is a problem when asking multiple authorities the same thing. Discuss. (Led by Rebecca Rumbul) <a href="#">See session description and collaborative hackpad.</a>
14.35-14.55	<b>Session 4:</b> Our User Contract: Creating Terms. As public records communities grow, inevitably you run across bad actors or challenging users, ranging from spammers and stalkers to conspiracy theorists and sock puppets. What should be acceptable? What should not? (Led by Michael Morisy) <a href="#">See session description and collaborative hackpad.</a>
14.55-15.15	<b>Session 5:</b> How can requests lead to successful trials? As FOIA portals administrations, how can we provide answers to those who need to go to court? Can technology make lawsuits more simple? Is it in Alaveteli's scope? (led by Laurent Savaete) <a href="#">See session description and collaborative hackpad.</a>
15.15	Refreshment break
15.30	<b>Unconference sessions:</b>
15.30-15.50	<b>Session 6:</b> How to keep a healthy relationship with authorities? (led by Laurent Savaete) <a href="#">See session description and collaborative hackpad.</a>
15.50-16.10	<b>Session 7:</b> Share knowledge about grants for FOI work. (Led by Myf Nixon) <a href="#">See session description and collaborative hackpad.</a>
16.10	<b>What ways can the FOI, transparency and journalist communities stay in touch in order to foster collaboration?</b> <a href="#">Collaborative hackpad (please feel free to add your notes to this!)</a>
16.30	Closing remarks and End of conference

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