

Expression of Interest – GNSO Nominated Mentor for the ICANN Fellowship Program

Overview:

This call seeks members of the GNSO community interested in serving as a volunteer mentor for the ICANN Fellowship Program.

Please complete, save and submit this form by email to gnso-secs@icann.org. **The deadline is Friday 7 December 2018 at 23:59 UTC.**

The entire contents of this template, as well as any other supporting documents will be published on the [GNSO Standing Selection Committee](#) wiki page. Accordingly, please be mindful of any personal information submitted, and please inform us if any of this information should be redacted from the public posting.

How to complete your application:

1. This application includes fields for you to fill in personal details, as well as 7 additional questions.
2. You need to fill in all sections of the form. If a given criteria (e.g. expertise) does not apply to you, leave the box empty.
3. Once you have completed the form, save it on your computer/tablet/smartphone.
4. Create a new email message addressed to **gnso-secs@icann.org**, attach the form which you previously saved and submit the application.

You must submit your application before **Friday 7 December 2018 at 23:59 UTC.**

Applicant Information

First Name: Desara

Last Name: Dushi

Gender: Female

Country of Residence: Italy

Stakeholder Group/Constituency Affiliation: NCSG/NCUC

Questions

1. Current employer and position. Please describe the type of work you perform:

Researcher in Law, Science and Technology at CIRSFID, University of Bologna. Conducting research in ICT Law, Cybercrime, online child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

2. Education:

Completing the PhD at an international, interdisciplinary programme in Law, Science and Technology, funded by the European Commission, with a focus on ICT Law at a consortium of 6 European universities, respectively: University of Bologna, University of Turin, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Mykolas Romeris University, Tilburg University and University of Luxembourg. I have already submitted the dissertation and the defense is set for end of March 2019. Joint MA degree in Human Rights and Democracy from University of Bologna and University of Sarajevo. Msc degree in Criminal Law from Hena e Plote Beder University in Albania and Bachelor of Laws from Luigj Gurakuqi University in Albania.

3. Please identify any GNSO Working Groups and/or chartered teams in which you are participating:

4. Please describe any past involvement in the ICANN Fellowship Program, if applicable. For example, have you previously been a fellow or served as a program mentor?

I have been a fellow at ICANN61 Meeting in Puerto Rico.

5. Please assess and explain how your knowledge, experience and expertise address the criteria listed below. Leave the response blank if not applicable to you.
- **Active participant in GNSO structures and policy development processes with a track record of engagement**
 - **Previous experience serving as a mentor, teacher, or learning facilitator is a plus**
 - **Strong written and verbal communication skills**
 - **Project management and coordination skills**
 - **Networking skills**

- **Networking skills**

Three years ago, my life changed completely. From being a lawyer from a small Balkan country, I started an interdisciplinary PhD, that involved an innovative way of looking at law by combining it with technology, another field very dear to my heart since teenage years. One of the best characteristics of this PhD programme is its high mobility structure, which requires spending one semester in each of the consortium universities. So, in 3 years, I spend at least 6 months conducting research in 6 universities around Europe, which gave me a unique networking opportunity. Besides this mobility, I involved myself in many other activities and conferences, starting with a winter school in cybersecurity organized by the DiploFoundation and DCAF. There I got introduced to the world of Internet Governance and heard about ICANN and EuroDIG for the first time. It attracted my attention so I participated at my first EuroDIG in 2016, both as part of an organizing team and as a flash session organizer on my own. From networking in this event, I learned about the ICANN NextGen programme, where I decided to apply and was successful. My first ICANN was one of the best networking opportunities that I have ever experienced, which opened the door to many other opportunities and long-lasting friendships.

- **Mentoring/teaching experience**

I started as a NextGen and then become a fellow, and then after understanding how important mentoring is for newcomers in the huge and complex ICANN environment, I decided to return as a NextGen Ambassador. And just a few days ago, I was promoted as a member of the Selection Committee for the NextGen program. As an academic, mentoring comes very natural to me and I enjoy it a lot. I have teaching experience since my high school years, when I held private courses for pupils, and was also giving extra classes of computer science to my high school students with the request of my professors. I have also worked as trainer at the Central Election Commission of Albania before starting my PhD.

- **Project management skills**

My project management and coordination skills are demonstrated from my work as National Academic Coordinator of the ELSA (European Law Students Association) Italy legal research group in preparing a research on the freedom of expression and the protection of journalistic sources for the Council of Europe; by my internship experience at the EU Info Center in Albania where I helped in the coordination of their projects; and by working for two years as member of the editorial board of the ELSA Law Journal. Now I am member of the organizing team of the first Albanian Youth IGF which will be held early in 2019.

- **Written and communication skills**

My written and verbal communication skills are demonstrated by my PhD research activities, my various publications and my presentations in various conferences around the world, with a main focus on IG, cybercrime, criminal justice and human rights.

- **GNSO involvement**

Lately I joined NCSG and NCUC and have been following all the discussions from the mailing list. I decided to first follow the discussions without being involved, in order to get a better understanding of how it functions from within. Now that I am done with my dissertation, I decided to start getting actively engaged in the policy development process and I think this mentoring opportunity will influence me in getting engaged in a better way, by learning from the eyes of new-coming and returning fellows and comparing with the experience of old members. My main aim is human rights policy development.

6. Please assess and explain how your knowledge, experience & personality meet the desired attributes listed below. Leave the response blank if not applicable to you.
- **Member of a GNSO Stakeholder Group and/or Constituency**
 - **Understanding of the ICANN's mission, structure, and multistakeholder model**
 - **Willingness to devote the necessary time and resources prior to and during the ICANN meeting**
 - **Ability to create a supportive atmosphere for mentees by being open, accessible, and approachable**
 - **Robust network within the ICANN community and ability to leverage and share that network**
 - **Ability to present information in a manner that is simple and easy to understand**
 - **Ability to establish weekly projects and deliverables for mentees using a clear and consistent learning approach**

I am a member of NCSG and NCUC. I have participated in three ICANN Meetings, each time in a different position (NextGen, Fellow, NextGen Ambassador) which gave me a vast opportunity of looking at ICANN from different perspectives and understanding its mission, structure and multistakeholder model at its best. I have a two year experience in organizing sessions at the EuroDig conference, both as part of a team as well as individually, where I organized my own flash session at my very first EuroDIG engagement. In June 2018 I was invited as a cybercrime expert at the Octopus Conference on Cybercrime from the Council of Europe. I am both member of youth groups as well as “grown-ups”, forming a perfect bridge between the two. I am member of the organizing committee of the first Albanian YouthIGF, which will be held in early 2019, and I contribute also to the organization of the SEEDIG conference and occasionally to the SEE Monthly Summary. Currently, I am also leading the creation of ISOC Albania chapter which will influence in gathering the Albanian IG community in one platform and increase collaboration between stakeholders in the country. As a researcher from the University of Luxembourg, I am also conducting research on ICANN GDPR compliance process which will be published as a working paper.

As a lawyer and an interdisciplinary researcher, I was already familiar with the bottom-up multistakeholder model, but ICANN gave me the opportunity to see how it works from a closer look, by giving me the chance to be a part of it.

Mentoring is a responsibility which needs devotion, time and passion. This mentoring position came at the right moment in time for me, just when I handled my PhD dissertation, which means that now I have the necessary time to devote to this position both before and during the ICANN meetings since my workload is much reduced now. I think my abilities as a mentor within ICANN have been demonstrated already by my position as NexGen Ambassador, a mentor for the NextGens, a position which I decided to accept despite having to submit my final dissertation just 5 days after the ICANN63 Meeting in Barcelona, by nevertheless devoting my time and resources to the NextGens both before and during the meeting. I loved mentoring the NextGens, and I would like to continue doing it, with time with the fellows, something which will lead me to see the differences and similarities between the same role in two programs and how can I influence in a higher networking between the nextgens and the fellows.

My teaching, training and presentation experience are proof of my ability to clear and consistent learning approaches. Together with my interdisciplinary studies, my research work at the intersection of law and technology, and my multicultural working experience prove my ability in presenting information in a simple and easy to understand manner for people coming from different professional and cultural backgrounds.

7. Please explain your interest in serving as a mentor and what you will bring to the Fellowship Program if selected.

I think a good mentor shares some common characteristics with a leader. They both help you grow by showing you all the right paths towards success, but at the same time, they give you enough freedom to decide on your own which path(s) you want to follow. Mentoring does not only mean having a clear and structured plan of action and following that plan with precision, it also means stopping to listen to your mentees requests and amending your plan accordingly.

I think one of the key things that a fellow needs is understanding the importance of networking and communication at the ICANN multistakeholder model, which is very different from networking in other conferences and events. Second key point is making them understand, believe and endorse the multistakeholder model and that no stakeholder is superior or dominant to the others in the ICANN policy making and in the IG ecosystem in general. Once they understand these two key issues, they will find getting engaged in ICANN much easier than thought at their first ICANN Meeting days when everything seems so complex and difficult to get through.

At my first ICANN Meeting, as a NextGen and newcomer, everything seemed so complex and I had a hard time figuring out how things work, since my ambassador was not very helpful in the process. At my second meeting, this time as a fellow, I had the chance of having a great coach, which made me understand how a good mentor, like a good teacher, could make your life easier at ICANN Meetings. I believe in the power of the fellowship programme in shaping the future leaders of the IG system and I believe in the importance of effective mentoring of new and also returning fellows towards this path, which leads me in wanting to become one of those mentors, who can one day proudly point at her “students” surpassing the “master”.

Prior communication with the fellows is key to establishing a good relationship with the team and in providing them the first impressions of how their ICANN experience is going to be. I think a prior common online session with another team, would also help in both establishing better connections between the mentors, but also in creating a closer networking opportunity to the fellows and in giving them a good example of team work. It is important that regular communication is kept also during the meeting and create daily objectives to be achieved as a team and for each individual separately as well, by providing them advice on drafting their own daily agenda, not only for the session to follow but also for networking.

A good mentor at ICANN needs to have a working plan that fits both newcomers and returning fellows, be flexible and provide need-based individual advice adopted in accordance with each fellow’s experience at ICANN and their background and level of expertise, help them network with other community members and keep in touch with them also after ICANN to help them figure out how can they get further engaged and contribute to the ICANN policy making.

This week I was appointed by Deborah Escalera as a member of the Selection Committee for the NextGen program for 2019/2020 rounds. I think having a role in both NextGen and fellowship during the same rounds is a very good opportunity into creating a much asked for bridge between the two programs, a concern which was highlighted by the fellows in the ICANN Fellowship Program Post-Meeting Report of ICANN63 and also by expressed by NextGens during ICANN63 in Barcelona. As an individual with experience from both the programs, I think I know better than any other the requirements of participants of these programs, therefore I make the right candidate for this mentoring position in helping them network, stay involved and create future collaborations with each other and with the other community members in a way that is productive for both the fellows and the community.