



national

internet

domain

registries

the European association of

SUBJECT: ICANN European Strategy – 2013
Input from the Council of European National Top Level Domain
Registries
30th August 2013

The CENTR Board of Directors is happy to provide ICANN with the following considerations and looks forward to reading a consolidated European Strategy paper in order to elaborate further. This feedback is based on the document that ICANN circulated during the ICANN 47 meeting in Durban in July 2013.

Setting the strategy

CENTR believes that ICANN should have a structured approach to the European region, and that therefore a strategy is needed. The strategy should:

- Take into account the actions already developed;
- Evaluate these actions through a SWOT analysis;
- Prioritise all the stakeholders and listen to their needs/wishes;
- Determine the priorities considering the available budget, human resources and, above all, the contribution to the ICANN Strategy Plan. As a matter of course, all regional strategies must contribute to achieving the objectives of the organisation's Strategy Plan;
- Include measurable goals for a specific timeframe;
- Foresee regular assessments of the initiatives and possible adjustments wherever the developed actions fail to reach the objectives.

Document presented in Durban

The document submitted to the attention of the few representatives of the European region that were still in Durban on the very last day of the ICANN 47 meeting (at short notice) has several inconsistencies which have already caused concern at multiple levels. The definition of the European region is of paramount importance in order to avoid possible confusion for those countries that might believe themselves to belong to another region.

Potential elements of the Strategy

ICANN should always act within the limit of its scope and mandate as stated in its bylaws.

As stated by various CENTR members who have attended the Durban meeting, the ICANN European strategy should always make a clear distinction between the engagement strategy, that is, per se, desirable, and the lobbying strategy, that should be dealt with very carefully, as it may not reflect the diversity of European stakeholders positions on high level political issues.

CENTR wishes to highlight the following:

- The CENTR community remains ready to help and cooperate with ICANN in educational actions towards different stakeholder groups, including international organisations;

- The CENTR members are the natural partners to play such an educational role within their local communities;
- It is essential that ICANN maintains a consistent, constant, bi-directional and non-discriminatory communication channel with all the ccTLDs of the region, as their models and expertise represent an added value for the whole Internet community;
- With reference to the “Operations” section of the Durban document, it would be more efficient to address issues which are specific to the region concerned. Otherwise repetition and duplication are likely to occur, which could undermine the efficacy of the strategy. For instance, new gTLDs and IDNs (including IDNs at the top level) have raised sensitive issues in Europe, therefore ad-hoc actions should be planned;
- As for the “capacity building” element, it should be tailored to specific situations, especially when referring to governments. Policy consultation could be better structured and intensified, for instance through the EU High Level Group. ICANN should partner with the local TLD to reach out to their national government and underline the importance of becoming more involved in ICANN activities. Recent exchanges between European governments, the EU and ICANN in the context of the new gTLDs process showed the need for stronger and structured dialogue, which must end with precise follow-ups;
- On the same note, since 28 European Countries fall under the EU privacy laws, it is recommendable that ICANN take this aspect into full account when discussing any WHOIS related matter;
- Concerning the so-called “political issues” in the document, several of those listed go beyond ICANN’s scope and mandate. Therefore, it would be desirable for ICANN to participate in the dialogue with interested parties on these matters, but provide its views only when appropriate. The list in the Durban document is quite broad and should be narrowed to focus on key priorities where ICANN can help at research level. ICANN should also look into the priorities already set in macro-action plans for the region (like the EU Digital Agenda) and see where its actions can complement, support and/or eventually, improve the existing efforts. Furthermore, at cyber-security level, ICANN should engage with the various initiatives that are in place to make the Internet a safer environment;
- As for the “foresight issues”, the aspect of “future of the DNS” is something that ICANN should look after and, eventually, investigate. The introduction of the new gTLDs, the advent of social media and other recent developments in the Internet have highlighted that the Internet will continue to evolve and adjust to the needs of civil society. In the interest of all the constituencies, a scientific analysis of what DNS could be in ten years, or an even longer period, might be beneficial even to ICANN itself from a research perspective.