

# Watching out for the Public Interest

A broader approach including the ICANN context and remit ...

# What happened so far ...

... there is sort of agreement that we cannot find a unique or consistent definition of the Public Interest on the global level due to

- different and diverse historical, political and cultural particularities on regional levels,
- there won't be a "one-fits-all" interpretation on the complex issue,
- but we can discuss and define some "enabling factors" or criteria on how to approach and promote the PI in decision-making processes in ICANN's remit.

For this rough approximation some examples or references may be useful ...

- In Switzerland we have a common term like „provisions for basic supplies“ (in the public interest) what means
- water is considered as a basic and **public good** while **access** to (drinkable) water is a public service (and shouldn't be privatized),
- or access to public education for all (independent whether you are a citizen or not),
- or access to (affordable) health care provided via an obligatory basic health insurance system,
- or the national Public Broadcaster (radio and TV).

... A very important point not be confused is:

- “Public“ in a Swiss, German, Austrian etc. context does NOT mean owned or controlled by the government!
- Public services are usually community based (water, electricity, transport, schools or health care etc.)
- on the national level (like telecom and broadcasting) such services are provided by respective authorities/offices with independent supervising councils – under a governmental service mandate.

# Back to ICANN and our Internet ...

- As we all know, the Internet is considered as a global/universal resource and network (not based on national regulation or the former “Westphalian principles”), nevertheless
- Can the Internet be considered as a “public good”?
- Can access to the Internet (infrastructure and content) be considered as a basic or fundamental right of citizens?

IMO, ACCESS is a key term for end-users and consequently in the Public Interest. It's an “enabling factor” and criteria for users and should be in the center of our discussions ...