Europe and the Internet in a global context –
What future, what challenges ahead?

https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/content/europe-and-internet-global-context

CENTR Board comment

CENTR is the European association for country code top-level domain registries (ccTLDs). A ccTLD registry is responsible for the administration of its country's country code on the Internet, such as .de for Germany, .es for Spain.

In 2009, on the occasion of a European Commission hearing on Internet Governance arrangements[1] CENTR acknowledged "Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholder" as one of the key principles of Internet governance. This principle, defined during the WSIS Geneva phase and reinforced at the Tunis phase in 2013, still stands.

The European ccTLDs are deeply involved as a stakeholder on two different levels: 1. On a national level, many ccTLDs have a governance model based on local needs and are actively involved in their local community. 2. On an international level the ccTLD community has continuously contributed to forums like the IGF and cooperated with organisations such as ICANN, ISOC, RIPE.

CENTR and the ccTLDs have always been a strong advocate of the necessity of paying attention to the needs of the local Internet community. Recently, at the IGF in Bali, CENTR co-organised a workshop on the social role ccTLDs play within their own communities.[2]

The CENTR membership is fully engaged in the ICANN processes and CENTR has always been one of the strongest supporters of internationalising ICANN and IANA. However, any change to the ICANN/IANA model should be conducted within the multi-stakeholder and bottom-up approach that has distinguished ICANN so far. The IANA function has incredibly improved in the past decade, partly thanks to the commitment of some individual ccTLD managers in testing and developing some of its systems. Any further modification should be always based on the accountability principle against the community IANA is serving.

Inevitably the ICANN model is imperfect, but it provides accessibility in a way that no other model has ever done before. Of course there are still margins for further improving the ICANN model, starting from the development of a long-term, robust strategy that could help ICANN to better achieve its goals.

The current Internet Governance framework still lacks the full engagement of certain stakeholder groups like those governments that are not yet participating proactive in the dialogue (the European Commission could eventually lead the exercise of understanding the reason behind such lack of participation), as well as other forces, such as the European Internet SMEs that are clearly under-represented in the worldwide Internet Governance landscape. Therefore, the current multi-stakeholder model can only benefit from becoming even more inclusive and we would welcome and support any efforts from the European Commission to achieve that goal.

Link to the submitted text https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/content/centr-board-comment-europe-and-internet-global-context

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[1] European Commission Hearing on Internet Governance arrangements, Brussels, 6 May 2009 –
http://www.centr.org/document/3116
[2] http://www.centr.org/igf2013