

ccTLDs: Time to speak up on IANA

The DNS community is facing many challenges on the horizon. In this open letter as new Chair of the CENTR Board of Directors, Giovanni Seppia explains how CENTR can play a crucial role in this important transition period.

First of all, I would like to thank all the CENTR membership for its trust in appointing me Chair of the CENTR Board of Directors for the year to come. As stated during my short speech at the last GA in Copenhagen on 18-19 March 2015, the upcoming twelve months are going to be quite crucial for the DNS community: the IANA transition, the enhancement of ICANN's accountability, the WSIS+10 process, the discussions on the renewal of the IGF mandate and the future of the NetMundial initiative are all crucial topics which will appear on our agendas.

Compared to ten years ago, the internet landscape has changed considerably, mostly for the better. Think about the levels of responsiveness of IANA in 2004, but also about the complexity of the current international debate on internet governance, and the services you receive from the CENTR Secretariat at present! What has not changed is the capacity of the CENTR community to respond to challenges, provide valuable input regarding ongoing changes, to be united – with some constructive dissent – in underlining the ccTLDs' leading role at local and international levels. We ought to remember the work accomplished to change the ICANN bylaws section concerning the ccNSO constituency.

'The IANA Stewardship Transition process is at the heart of the ccTLD community...'

The IANA Stewardship Transition process is at the heart of the ccTLD community because of what we experienced in the past and because – I believe – we would like it to continue to be performed at the highest possible standard. It will not be an easy transition. The US government has set certain boundaries for it to happen and the expectations of the ccTLD community vary considerably. The internal or external solutions do seem to represent the ultimate dilemma for the DNS environment. It is not an easy topic either.

Only 38 ccTLD representatives responded to the Cross Community Working Group survey on the IANA transition. ccTLDs tend to be very operational and pragmatic, which means that to a certain extent they do not speak their minds as they should.

But this is the time to become proactive and become engaged in a process that may change IANA's future performance. During the last CENTR General Assembly, we managed to draft a document that summarises some key points that our community would like to see in any transition proposal. They include reassurances of service continuity and service level expectations, the need for a Customer Standing Committee that looks at IANA's technical performances, periodic reviews of the tasks and possible escalation mechanisms. The role of CENTR is of paramount importance in the process. CENTR will keep providing updated information to its membership on the next steps and, at the same time, steer the dialogue and input of the ccTLD community, which can rightly claim to almost three decades of experience and expertise in registry management.

It's time to speak up and make sure our voices are adequately heard. I will be delighted to listen to your thoughts and ideas and work with the CENTR secretariat so that we are subsequently well represented in the dynamic DNS landscape.



Giovanni Seppia
Chair of CENTR's
Board of Directors



EU Policy Update

By Nina Elzer, CENTR Policy Adviser

Update on the NIS Directive

Negotiations within the Council but also in trilogue (i.e. the Council of the European Union [CCL], the European Commission [COM] and the European Parliament [EP]) on the NIS directive continue, as the Latvian Presidency is committed to wrap up the discussions before the end of its term. The next trilogue meeting is scheduled for 30 April. Even though the EP had refused to continue these meetings for as long as the CCL did not have a negotiation mandate, things have moved.

Regarding the **scope**, Member States seem to have found an agreement, which would leave it up to them to decide whether an entity would be covered by the Directive and would therefore need to comply with requirements related to incident reporting and security audits. There is no support for the EP's proposal of a 'fixed list'. At the moment, it is not clear whether there has been agreement on who would qualify as 'Internet enabler', as the implications are not clear. One reason for this is that the Commission's Impact Assessment does not cover certain subsectors, so information regarding their 'essentiality' is missing. However, this discussion does not seem to cover national domain name registries in particular. Regarding **cooperation**, Member States seem to agree on cooperation at policy level and a network of CSIRTs (Computer Security Incident Response Teams) at operational level (i.e. not as far-reaching as the COM's proposal).

'Internet exchange points', 'national domain name registries' and 'domain name system service providers' are still named in the Council's compromise text, with which it will enter into the trilogue meetings. For ccTLDs this would mean that depending on how Member States choose to apply the directive, they would be impacted differently in different countries. Some might have to comply with requirements regarding incident reporting and security auditing (which would be fleshed out by national law), some might not. Still, gTLDs and geoTLDs are not included. Multinationals, offering products and services across the EU, fear that they will be required to comply with 28 different sets of legislation. Yet, Member States seem rather unimpressed by these concerns.

See the [CENTR Board of Directors Statement on the NIS Directive](#)

Update on the trademark package

In February, CENTR co-signed a letter calling on the EU institutions not to extend trademark protection to domain names. Parliament contacts have now confirmed that **domain names were dropped and will not be included in the scope of the directive** or regulation. While trilogue discussions are still ongoing – with the last meeting taking place at the end of April – agreement over excluding domain names has already been achieved.

See the [letter co-signed by CENTR](#)



The way forward in the 'Digital Single Market'

On 25 March 2015 Commission Vice-President Ansip sketched out his plans for a Digital Single Market Strategy, and concrete ideas can be expected in May. The objectives are to reduce barriers to shopping online and accessing content (films, music, books, etc.) outside the home country.

On e-commerce, the focus will be on identifying competition problems, e.g. when 'tangible' goods cannot easily be sold outside the home country. To this aim, the Commission plans an inquiry among websites, platforms, content owners and broadcasters.

Another of Vice-President Ansip's priorities is 'geoblocking' (which he considers 'unfair'), i.e. the practice of blocking an internet user from accessing websites, videos or other content from abroad. In the Commission's view, this is linked to competition and consumer protection (rather than broadcasting rights, copyright or digital distribution strategies).

The issue is likely to be taken up in the Commission's proposal to modernise existing copyright rules, which is expected to be presented after the summer. Preceding this step the European Parliament has already started debating a copyright reform – up to now in non-binding 'own initiative reports' (INI). In doing so, they hope the Commission (which is the sole EU institution that can initiate laws) will take up some of their ideas.

Formal negotiations (in trilogue) on the telecoms package (the 'Connected Continent' legislative package) are expected to start this week. An informal meeting took place on 23 March. As things stand, the draft includes a chapter on net neutrality and mobile roaming. Broadband operators would not be allowed to discriminate between applications, content or services carried over their networks and roaming charges would be further reduced (yet not abolished). A chapter on frequencies (including auctions) was taken out by the CCL, as Member States did not want to give up control over the management of wireless spectrum.

More information on selected topics

- ★ [Hands-on guide to EU policy](#) (available to CENTR full members only)
- ★ [Data retention: ECJ judgment creates legislative patchwork across the EU](#)
- ★ [Big Data: EU regulation looming?](#)
- ★ [Regulating platforms? Commission wants to reach common understanding](#)
- ★ [Priorities of the Latvian EU Presidency](#)
- ★ [Commission work programme 2015: Focus on Digital Single Market](#)
- ★ [New Commission structure](#)
- ★ [Zooming in on Digital Agenda Commissioner Oettinger](#)
- ★ [Transparency Register: Don't forget to update your profile!](#)

Acronyms

BoD = CENTR Board of Directors
CCL = Council of the European Union, 'the Council'
COM = European Commission
DG = Directorate General
DSM = Digital Single Market
EP = European Parliament
EU = European Union
GAC = Government Advisory Committee at ICANN
ICANN = Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
MEP = Member of the European Parliament
MS = Member States of the EU
NIS = Network and information security

Elisabeth Farstad (.se) and Danko Jevtović (.rs/.CPB) were elected Board members at the 53rd CENTR General Assembly on 19 March 2015. In this short interview, they talk about their background and share their hopes and priorities for CENTR in the coming years.



Can you tell us a bit more about your background?

Elisabeth: After several years as Legal Counsel within the IT and telecommunications sector I joined the .SE team in 2005. I am currently Head of Legal and Policy, including Internet Governance. I also have working experiences with Internet Service Providers, an internet consultant agency and from operating my own law firm.

What I enjoy most at .SE is the constant development of our business and the legal challenges it involves. In a few weeks' time the main hearing will take place in the special forfeiture proceedings directed at .SE regarding the domain names thepiratebay.se and piratebay.se. In 2011 .SE successfully challenged the Swedish Tax Authority after its decision regarding the submission of the entire customer database.

Danko: I am the CEO of the RNIDS Foundation, the Serbian ccTLD registry .RS (and Cyrillic .CPB/SRB). My involvement in the domain names industry began in 2000, with the reform initiative of the Yugoslav .YU ccTLD. I was a member of the Board of Governors of the RNIDS at the time when we launched the new .RS registry in 2008. In July 2013, I returned to the registry after my appointment to the position of CEO.

Originally I am an IT entrepreneur. With partners I founded two successful companies in Serbia: The first, 'Jugodata', was founded in 1988. It assembled and sold personal computers and related equipment and services. The second company called 'SezamPro', launched in 1994, grew to be the largest independent ISP in Serbia and was sold in 2009.

What are some of the issues you would like to see discussed at the level of the CENTR Board?

Elisabeth: Initially I will work with the review of the rights and obligations of observers, a question that was brought up at the last CENTR General Assembly. In addition, I consider it crucial to listen to the members' expectations on CENTR to ensure that CENTR's future strategies will keep CENTR as an organisation that involves, serves and enlighten its members.

Danko: In my opinion, the main role of the Board is in the future, in envisioning how the organisation should evolve, and in supporting the management to meet the needs of the members. I believe that CENTR, as our association, is set in a good direction. We have an open exchange of best practices and information, and great international networking. I highly value the efficient and low-overhead model of the association as well as the working efforts of the CENTR secretariat. I will give my best to contribute by bringing my entrepreneurial experience and a fresh view from one of the Europe's youngest ccTLDs.

What are the challenges you see European ccTLD operators facing in 2015-2016?

Elisabeth: The European ccTLD operators are facing challenges from a business-, legal and technical perspective, such as declining demand for new domain names, making sales activities more important together with measures ensuring a diversification in their business portfolios. Also, the pressure is increasing on ccTLD's from both national regulators, for example attempts to regulate responsibility for content, and EU-regulations such as the NIS-directive.

Danko: The domain names industry is changing, and if we look back we can see that we are facing new challenges with an ever increasing pace. I believe that the main challenge to the whole industry is a global slowdown of the number of domains registered. The centre of innovation in the industry is now in the new gTLD space, and ccTLDs have to evolve faster, to be more market-focused and innovative.

The domain names industry is, at the moment, is preoccupied by the IANA stewardship transition. We have to ensure that our voice as stakeholders in ICANN continues to be respected by staying involved in creating policies that concern ccTLDs.

Organisations such as CENTR are crucial for these complex processes and to all of its members. CENTR is making us stronger in facing all these challenges, by organising exchanges of experiences and best practices. I also see the importance of CENTR's role in facilitating the process of building a common position, which can help us to become more influential in the global internet governance arena.



Q&A

Elisabeth
Farstad

Board Member
CENTR

Danko
Jevtović

Board Member
CENTR



CENTR elects new Chair of the Board and Board members

CENTR announced that its 53rd General Assembly elected Giovanni Seppia (.eu) as Chair of the Board of Directors, as well as Elisabeth Ekstrand (.se) and Danko Jevtović (.rs/.CPB) as members of the Board. All terms are effective as of 19 March 2015.

New CEO of DIFO and DK Hostmaster Jakob Truelsen has been appointed new CEO of DIFO and DK Hostmaster.

Annual report from DNS Belgium on evolution of .be The report covers stats and facts on .be domain names for the 2014 period.

Cooperation between SWITCH and OFCOM extended In March, SWITCH signed an extension of the existing registry contract to 30 June 2017. The transfer of .ch domain names from SWITCH to the registrars is proceeding as planned.

AFNIC opens 1 & 2 character domains under .fr In March, registration of 1 & 2 character domains become possible in the land rush phase.

Nominet consults on contact data collection and publication in WHOIS Nominet is consulting on a proposed policy to clarify what data about domain-holders is published in the .UK WHOIS and ensure accurate data.

Blog post: Masters of the Internet, by Dušan Stojičević, Chair of Board of Governors, Serbian National Internet Domain Registry (RNIDS). In this blog post, Dušan shares his experience regarding the very successful DIDS 2015 conference, which was held on 10-11 March in Belgrade, Serbia. DIDS 2015 was the sixth annual conference on the development of the internet globally and in the Serbian .rs and .cpb domain spaces, held this year under the slogan 'Which Internet Film are you in?'

16th CENTR Marketing Workshop

On 26-27 March 2015, CENTR held its 16th Marketing Workshop in Bari, Italy. The workshop was kindly hosted by Registro .it and focused on several key topics, including domain name growth, market analysis and strategies, big data, diversification of revenue streams, change management as well as strengthening of the collaboration with registrars.



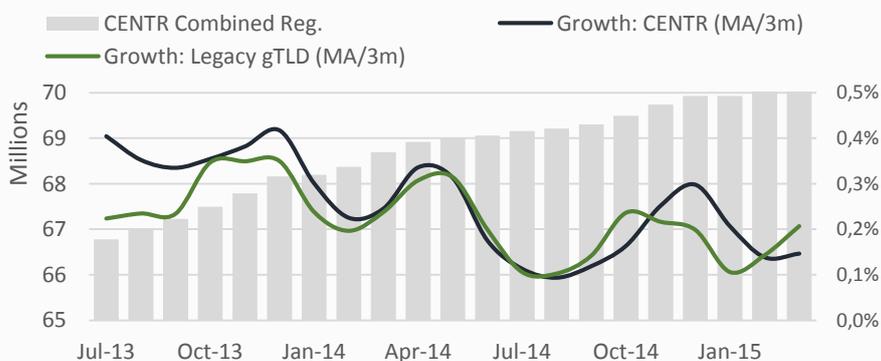
Upcoming CENTR Events

1-3 June 2015

CENTR Jamboree 2015 (Stockholm, Sweden)

The CENTR Jamboree is an annual event running over 3 days and includes all CENTR workshops: Security, Legal and Regulatory, Technical, Administrative, Marketing, RnD.

Domain Name Statistics



Source: CENTR (based on 57 ccTLDs), ICANNwiki
MA = Moving Average * Refers to CENTR full members only

CENTR Combined Registrations*

70.2 million

Combined registrations among CENTR members has recently crossed the 70 million mark!

The chart (left) shows registrations and growth (using 3 month moving averages) of CENTR members with the equivalent growth in legacy gTLDs.

Combined registrations have grown 2.4% over the past 12 months with a median ccTLD growth over this period 3.7%