
ICANN80 | PF – Geopolitical Legislative and Regulatory Developments Update
Monday, June 10, 2024 – 13:45 to 14:45 KGL

BECKY MCGILLEY:

My name is Becky and I am a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior. During this session, questions or comments will be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod, and the questions will be held until the end of the session.

If you would like to speak during the session, on-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak, so please queue towards the end of the session. If you are remote, please place your questions or comments in the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session will include French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and Portuguese. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking the language other than English.

Please speak at a reasonable pace for our interpreters. All are welcome to use the chat. Please note that private chats are only possible among panelists in the Zoom webinar format. Any message sent by a panelist or a standard attendee to another standard attendee will also be seen by the session's host, co-hosts, and other panelists. Thank you for joining us today, and I will now hand it off to Elena Plexida, Vice President for Government and IGO Engagement and head of Global Legislative and Regulatory Developments. Elena.

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ELENA PLEXIDA:

Thank you, Becky. I hope you can hear me okay. Thank you for being here. I have a fun at the wrong place, it's behind me. If it was in front of me, I will be like Beyonce, but unfortunately next time, better luck next time. Thank you for being here.

I know there are many other sessions going on at the same time. This session is a collaborative effort between several ICANN Org teams. The Government and IGO Engagement team, known as, for short, GE team, is our global team of subject matter experts who work with governments and the government organization and analyze and follow their activities when they touch on ICANN's mission. We'll update you on some of these activities momentarily. We've worked closely with all our colleagues in different functions. Join panelists. Thank you. Today we will hear from members of the government engagement team.

My colleague, Elizabeth Oluoch, who covers IGO activities and processes, is online. My colleague Maeva Devoto, who helped coordinate the HLG. We will hear from our GSC team in Africa. My colleague June Okal, next to me, will provide a regional update.

For additional updates, you will have me on the US and the EU. We also have several members of the ICANN staff on hand to provide responses for our Q&A time set aside at the end. Today's presentation will begin with the update on Africa, so over to June. Thank you, June.

JUNE OKAL:

Thanks, Elena. And on behalf of the GSE Africa team, welcome to Kigali. So there has been a lot happening within the ecosystem across the African continent. Top of mind is a lot of our policy makers, regulators, governments, and different authorities are having a lot of conversations around emerging tech, specifically around artificial intelligence.

Several countries are working together to see how they can put together different national strategies, policy papers, potential and proposed laws as well. Data governance continues to be a big conversation, and we're seeing this both at the national and regional level, specifically for Africa, the Malabo Convention that covers personal data protection, but also cybersecurity.

The other conversations that are happening a lot around the region are with regard to cybersecurity. And we are seeing them trying to pull together, you see different countries coming together to benchmark and learn from each other, but also share knowledge and share insights from in between. So that's a lot and those conversations are still happening around the continent.

Pertaining to connectivity, as you are aware, Africa's investments in connectivity are increasing and there's different actors, different stakeholders that are working together collaboratively towards this. We are seeing a lot of infrastructure investment on the continent, specifically both-- too slow.

Okay, too fast, slow down. Investments in infrastructure, so we are seeing a lot of undersea cables investments, different parties, private

sectors coming together collaboratively to help pull together to solve for that, terrestrial fiber as well. So we just had a new launch from several partners last week for cable on the eastern side of the continent that comes across through several Eastern African countries, Kenya, Uganda, DRC to increase and enhance connectivity on the continent from that side.

I think one thing we've noticed are cable disruptions. Over the past few weeks, we have had cable disruptions on both coasts of the continent. So both on West Africa, four out of the five were affected by an anchor pull, and the same on the Eastern African side as well. That really affected and impacted a lot of African's connectivity.

Thankfully, a lot of that was resolved pretty fast, and the different operators and mobile network operators had redundancy options that were able to keep the continent connected, but that's become key concern for most of the continent. I think something that's important to highlight is we're seeing a lot of improved satellite connectivity. Starlink that's sponsored by SpaceX has made a big push on the continent, currently a presence in 15 African countries and growing. So it's great because then we're able to get more Africans connected to the internet and enhance those conversations.

The digital trade protocol, so the African continental free trade area has been negotiating and working together with different partners, parties, and stakeholders to put together this digital free trade protocol. It was finally accepted and agreed to in February of 2024. It

covers different aspects of digital technology, cybersecurity, infrastructure sharing, data sharing between the different countries.

And so that's a good stride and a good win in terms of moving the continent and the ecosystem forward. The other thing that has been important and top of mind for a lot of the countries on the continent, especially through the EU Commission, has been the African Digital Compact.

My colleagues from the GE team will speak further on the global digital compact, but it was interesting to see for the African continent specifically, the AU commission brought together all stakeholders from across the continent, including ICANN, to have conversations on the proposed African Digital Compact, which covers different aspects of connectivity, multi-stakeholders. Too fast? Oh, okay.

ELENA PLEXIDA: But slow down. Yes, please.

JUNE OKAL: Okay. yes, but the negotiations were done, different stakeholders from different stakeholder groups were invited into the room to have those conversations by the AU commission, including private sector, industry, academia, technical support, and a draft was put together that is ready to be submitted on behalf of the African Union at the New York meeting, and plug into the conversation for the Global Digital Compact.

Key important highlight as well is elections. We're having a lot of elections on the continent this year, 15 specifically. Some of them have happened, some of them are on course including in Rwanda, our host as well. So it's interesting to see that and the impact that it has on connectivity and connection across the continent. I'll briefly speak about the Coalition of Digital Africa. Next slide, please.

So the Coalition for Digital Africa is an initiative that has come together and has been put together by 14 different partners, this original and international organizations from across the continent with one main purpose, which is to work together to avoid duplicity of efforts and spreading of resources across the continent to all pull together and work towards enhancing and improving connectivity across the continent.

This was launched in December of 2022. ICANN is one of the partners, we have 14 other partners, that include the African Telecommunications Union, the ITU, AFNIC, which is the African French Network ccTLD, we have the Network Startup Resource Center, that's NSRC, we have LusNIC, which is the Portuguese speaking ccTLD group, Smart Africa Secretariat, we have AFNOG, which is the Africa Network Operators Group, the African Association of Universities, which is AAU, we have the Internet Society, the Africa SAT, ICANN, and we have just gotten two new partners that we will be announcing later on at this meeting, the lawyers have, as well as the Commonwealth Telecommunications Union.

In terms of updates and where we are at so far with the different projects happening under the coalition. We recently announced and launched two IMRS servers, which are ICANN managed root servers, one based in Nairobi, one in Cairo, and we're working to identify and work with other partners to ensure that there's more IMRS classes set up in different countries.

Expansion of the TLD performance monitoring, we set up two new prop nodes for the slum management system in Lagos, Nigeria, and Nairobi, Kenya. We'll be publishing, we have already published, but we will be launching the African Domain Name Study, the Domain Name Industry Study that was commissioned by ICANN.

Just to give a state of what the ecosystem looks like, what the industry looks like, what the learnings are, how different ccTLDs are performing, where the gaps are, and how we can all solve for that. So you're invited to our session on Wednesday, the Africa Space session for the launch of that. On the cybersecurity side, together with our OCTO team, we have been doing a lot of trainings and deployment of DNSSEC, which is DNS Security Extensions.

We had two countries and we've concluded one, which is Botswana for .bf. On the capacity development front, we have several projects that work in parallel to ensure training and sharing of information for different groups and different stakeholder entities. One is for the policy makers and parliamentarians that we have. I'm not sure if we have them in the room, but they are around. So this is together with the Africa Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance, which is

APNIC. We had 22 legislators from across the continent attending a two-day workshop and the ICANN meeting from 15 African countries over the weekend.

We also have a program for governments and regulatory authorities in partnership with Smart Africa Secretariat, and we also just had the first phase of the trainings for African Top Level Domains. So we had 10 African ccTLDs attend a two-day workshop. This specific one was focused on business and marketing, and we'll have another one in Nairobi next month that's focused on the technical side of it. So I'll hand over back to you. Thank you.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Thank you very much, June. If I can have-- yeah, let's go to Legislative and Regulatory Developments. Next slide, please. As regards updates, you might recall Jamie provided an update during our last geopolitical session on the US cyber incident reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act, CIA for short. It's a public law that requires reporting of significant cyber incidents. It includes an exception for the DNS for entities that are owned, operated, or governed by multi-stakeholder organizations such as ICANN or IANA. The update here is that the rulemaking, there is a rulemaking required for the legislation. The rulemaking has been launched and comments are due by July three.

In the section discussing the DNS exception, it is proposed that the exception should apply to ICANN, PTI, ARIN, and the Root Server Operators. Comments are invited on a number of questions related to exceptions, including how should the US government support for the

multistakeholder model inform, how this exception should be implemented, and whether the exception should apply to registries and registrars.

Again, comment, view by 3rd of July. Next slide, please. Turning the EU, NIS2 implementation is ongoing, we have no updates really to share with you on that front. I will only remind that a public consultation in respect to specifying the cybersecurity measures and reporting obligations for DNS operators is expected. And in the case of NIS2, registries and registrars are under scope.

In March, and that's the slide that you are looking at in the screen, after our last meeting, we had the publication of a recommendation on combating counter fading or else known as toolbox for counter fading. This is not legislation, it's a set of best practices, recommendations, as it says itself, that the European Commission alone, so not together with the co-legislators, is putting forth and encourages following them.

This recommendation has been long anticipated, it has been announced long, long time ago, but it was being delayed. ICANN had provided comments, but in April, 2022 when comments were invited for this recommendation, it seems it was delayed to anticipate the adoption of NIS2 and the adoption of the two regulations on geographical indications that we talked about in the last geopolitical plenary in Puerto Rico. Apologies for the very dense slide, we are putting the link to the accommodation in the chat.

The recommendation now, the aim is to enhance cooperation and clarify roles and responsibilities between rights holders, intermediaries, and public authorities when it comes to fight against counter fighting. One of the intermediaries is the domain name ecosystem.

So top level domain registries and entities providing DNS registration services established in the EU and or offering services in the EU, this is very common, we see it all the time, are encouraged to follow a number of good practices, including, and you can see some of them in the bullets like in the second bullet at the end for registries, replicating the information and alert system that is in Europe between EU IPO and .eu, and expand to also cover geographical indications.

Why am I singling this out? Because this was considered under the two regulations, which is legislation of geographical indications, and it was not included at the end, but now we see it back as a recommendation in the third bullet to provide for verification procedures by using e.g. Electronic Identification Solutions.

We have that in NIS2, but not in that level of specificity. And in the last bullets, we have voluntary measures to detect and correct data and take measures to correct them. And the next night, please. Sorry for that. I'd like to bring to your attention a policy paper that was adopted by one of the three biggest political parties in the European Parliament. The paper is on internet governance. It takes stock of what happened during the previous legislative mandate, that is 2019 to 2024. It has two parts. It speaks to lessons learned. So what did we

see and what lessons did the European Union, according to this policy paper, learned? Very interestingly there, and this is very encouraging actually.

The management of the root servers should not be regulated under the EU legislation. Another lesson learned that is highlighted there is that the management of the top-level domain names system and the top-level domains by ICANN should be safeguarded. So the papers have specifically refers to these two regulations from geographical indications, and it says that regulating TLDs under the DI's regulation would have circumvented the multi-stakeholder community in making such policies.

Further to lessons learned, this policy paper is making recommendations for the next mandate, so for the next five years. And it says that EU legislation should preserve the open approach to internet governance without undue interference, and there should be deepening of the trust between the technical community and the legislators, specifically, it says they should ensure that entities like ICANN, ISOC, or RIPE NCC are consulted when drafting digital legislation.

Now, I would like to highlight that this paper, of course, it's very nice, it does not reflect the position of the European Parliament as a whole, as an EU institution. It is nevertheless, definitely a hook to engage and commit the next parliament in the new mandate for the next five years. While we're on that, I would be remiss not to mention very quickly the elections.

Yesterday, the elections for the new European Parliament were concluded. There will be a period of positioning between the new parliamentarians. We'll also have a new European Commission leadership, which will bring their priorities and their agenda for the next five years. This agenda and these priorities we care about. For example, last commission had said it's a geopolitical commission, and it totally was. We felt that in our space too. So we will keep an eye out for these priorities. Turning to updates closer to us from within our community. In the next slide, please, and one next.

Thank you so much. Allow me to refer to the contracted party summit and then pass it off to Maeva, Maeva, come here, for the High Level Governmental meeting that took place yesterday of the GAC. The contracted party summit took place in May in Paris. During the summit, a range of issues were discussed, including recent and ongoing geopolitical developments, and the participants agreed and issued a statement of issues of importance.

This is excellent, and I do not want to steal the thunder here, I just wanted to make sure that it is included. It should be included in our updates. And I would invite Ashley, who I see standing there to make the proper announcement and then turn it over to you,

ASHLEY HEINEMAN:

Don't get too excited in terms of an announcement. But just wanted to make sure everyone was aware that when the contracted parties met in Paris this past May, we did for the first time ever, draft and issue a statement that works to memorialize our priority issues, at least for

the next year, and also outlines our commitment to addressing them. And just to very quickly capture what those issues are, the first being to continue to support and work through the multi-stakeholder approach to internet governance. Second being advancing efforts to better engage and share information with the global internet community.

Third, continuing registration data related efforts, and that includes the accuracy of the data. Fourth, continuing work aimed at combating DNS abuse. And last but not least, continuing efforts to preserve and protect the privacy rights of our registrants. Thanks.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Ashley. Thank you so much. Sorry to put you on the spotlight, and as I said, I think this is excellent. And with that, I will turn it over to Maeva to speak about the High Level Governmental meeting that took place yesterday. Before I do so, I really want to give a very, very, very, very, very big shout out to all my colleagues that worked for that. It was quite a lift. Maeva, over to you.

MAEVA DEVOTO:

Thank you. So the High Level Governmental meeting is the GAC meeting that was hosted by the Rwandan government. So thank you to the Rwandan government and to her excellency, Mrs. Paula Ingabire for hosting this HLGM.

The last HLGM was done six years ago in Barcelona, so it has been six years since the last HLGM. We had good levels of participation, we had

delegations from more than 50 countries physically with us yesterday. The HLGM had four sessions, the first one was about ICANN and the multi stakeholder model, the second one was about cooperation and governance, the third one was about digital inclusion, and the fourth one was a special focus on Africa, support the development of meaningful connectivity in Africa.

During the opening remarks, we had her excellency, Mrs. Paula Ingabire, as well as Mrs. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary General of the ITU. She would've been with us in person, but because of the ITU council, she had to prerecord a message.

In terms of the takeaways, we heard a lot of support for the multistakeholder model. We heard a recognition of ICANN's role in fostering an interoperable and secure internet. We heard that although ICANN has been doing very great in the past 25 years, we have to expand and evolve because we need to be doing better, we need to shape a better future based on inclusiveness.

And we heard from several speakers that there's a need to improve the conversation between the technical community and the government. This meeting, as I was saying, had a special focus on Africa because we're in Kigali, and we had the opportunity to learn about the region and its needs. The minister of Chad, for instance, highlighted that 600 million Africans have a lack of access to electricity so that they cannot access the internet. And in a couple of weeks, there will be a chair's report for the meeting.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Maeva, thank you so much. I would like to turn it over to Elizabeth, who is with us online for the UN and IGOs updates. Thank you. Elizabeth, we cannot hear you. No, we cannot hear you. While we're trying to fix this, we can go maybe to the slides about OECD. Thank you very much. This is a project proposal that is currently being discussed at the level of OECD that we wanted to bring to your attention.

The proposal is that the OECD produces a paper about volunteers and non-commercial organizations supporting the security and availability of the internet. The aim here is that it is a paper that will explore this ecosystem, which is of course, our ecosystem through an economic lens, and particularly focus on the degree to which the models, the funding models are viable.

Where does this stand? At this present moment, the way it works is that the OECD secretariat gives you a proposal for how the paper should look like and invites comments by the membership. That's where we are now. So OECD has put forward the proposal and it's receiving feedback from the members.

We'll see what comes next. We know that there is a survey planned for this work, Q3 or Q4, 2024, and the draft report should be sometime next year. Something to pay attention to, again, the OECD is taking a look into our ecosystem through their lenses, but it's important. Is the sound fixed? I am not a technical person, but can I suggest something, that she speaks and the microphone is in the laptop.

Would that work? Is there a chance that would work? I will take over then. Can we go-- Yeah, we're on slide 15. Okay. As regards-- Veni, please come here. I will start, and if there are questions, you can take them. On this slide, there are two activities that Elizabeth, if she was able to, will touch on.

First is the WSIS+20 high level event. Two weeks ago, May 28 to 31st, ICANN participated at the ITU WSIS+ forum high level event in Geneva. ICANN had the four-person delegation led by the chair of our board, Tripti Sinha and Veni Markovski. The event was a commemoration of two decades of progress achieved on implementation of WSIS. The agenda cover the wide range of topics including cultural diversity, digital divide, digital inclusion. ICANN's key objective at that event were to emphasize messages on the importance of the technical operation of the internet as a fundamental pillar for global digital society and the multi-stakeholder model.

Additionally, our objectives were to engage with governments and other stakeholders, particularly through bilateral meetings. The next one has to do with WIPO. The 47 sessions of WIPO Standing Committee on the law of trademarks, industrial design, and geographical indications took place in mid-March.

The agenda topics included trademarks and geographical indications. The session has a standing committee on developments in the DNS and receives ICANN related updates from the secretariat. The standing committee was informed that WIPO is monitoring domain

name disputes, such as the two EU regulations from geographical indications we're talking about.

The protection of not trademark identifies, especially geographical indications in the DNS was discussed. So this issue's becoming more and more prominent. And expressions made by some of the delegates to have WIPO renew discussions to consider incorporating geographical indications into the UDRP.

The standing committee agreed to hold two topics for the information session at the 48th session that they will be having. These two topics will be, one, value of geographical indications around the world, and two, the recognition of geographical indications as valid rights in the domain dispute resolution procedures. The first topic was proposed by the US and the second topic was proposed by the EU. And the next slide, please

BEECKY MCGILLEY:

Elena, one second. We're gonna try to get Elizabeth back online. Elizabeth, can you speak one more time to see if we can hear you in the tent?

ELENA PLEXIDA:

There is no sound. Let's go to slide 16, please. Thank you. The Ad Hoc committee to elaborate on International Cyber Crime Convention held the concluded session in February, however, it failed to adopt the global Cyber Crime Convention. Concessions could not be reached on the scope of the convention and on human rights issues. The Ad Hoc

Committee decided to reconvene a concluded session in New York this summer. There's an ICANN due publication on the topic, and you can find it in the link with our publications. Next slide, please.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you. How much time do we have actually? Until 2:45. Yeah, so on the global digital compact, many of you who are following the WSIS+20 mailing list that ICANN organized, have seen that we did two webinars to discuss the Global Digital Compact or the GDC. There is a revision one, which was published about a month ago, and it included all the inputs from member states that are provided in between the publication of the zero draft.

As we speak actually, the negotiations, the reading of the revision one was on Thursday and Friday. Today is, I think Monday, so there is another reading later this month, and there will be a new revision published by the end of the month and a new reading sometime in the beginning of July, I think July 2nd, if I'm not mistaken.

The key elements for ICANN's community, which are of importance. First of all, the technical community was recognized as a stakeholder. This is important because you may remember in the Washington DC meeting last year around this time in June, we had to publish a blog, and then in August, ICANN, RIPE-- sorry, ICANN, APNIC, and ARIN published a statement, the CEOs published a statement to argue with the secretary general's tech envoy, that the technical community is a separate stakeholder.

And there was a serious pushback against this statement, and we were being told that no, the technical community is part of civil society. Well, now in the GDC, it's recognized as a separate stakeholder. The IGF is recognized also, and there is some strong words of support for the IGF.

And the last thing, which was circulating against in the Secretary General and the Tech Envoy's policy briefs, was that there should be a new digital cooperation forum, a multilateral body which had the potential to eliminate the need for having the Internet Governance Forum. So I already told you about the next steps, so we'll see what happens with the next revision. We can go to next slide or if Becky wants to try again, Elizabeth. Next slide.

ELIZABETH OLUOCH: Can you hear me?

VENI MARKOVSKI: Oh, Elizabeth, say something.

ELIZABETH OLUOCH: Yes, can you hear me?

VENI MARKOVSKI: It's working. Okay. I'll give it to you.

ELIZABETH OLUOCH:

Excellent. Hello, everyone. And just thank you so much to Elena and as well as Veni. Just quickly on ITU updates because I know we wanna take some questions. So ITU council is meeting currently, the meeting began last week and it will wrap up this Thursday. They were 28 member states contributions, these included multi-country contributions.

Some of the main topics really were around the theme, proposals for the theme for the ITU World Telecommunication Policy Forum that will take place in 2026. There was also a contribution by a member state that suggests there's a need for a revision to the ITRs to consider issues such as the impacts of trends and emerging technologies on telecommunication ICT networks.

I just wanted to point out that there is an expert group on the ITRs that was reconvened for the 2023 to 2026 period that is currently reviewing the ITRs and looking at trends and emerging technologies. And this specific topic will be discussed at the next meeting at this-- there's another meeting that's coming in September, but there was one in January, and they're gonna look specifically on emerging technologies.

On the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly or the WTSA 24, as some of you may be aware, this is the main meeting for the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Assembly that sets the four-year work program for ITUT, so that will be 2025 to 2028. Preparations are ongoing at the regional telecommunication organizations meetings right now. Some of the hot issues for WTSA 24

include artificial intelligence, new IP related issues, the metaverse, digital transformation, OTT taxation, the key issues for ICANN.

WTSA has several internet related resolutions, some of them deal with internet resources and IP-based networks. So key issues for us here are IDNs, IP addressing, identifiers, new IP related issues, internet governance. So currently at the WTSA regional preparations we have been participating at the Asia Pacific Telecommunicate community, the APT, ICANN is an affiliate member as well as the Inter America Telecommunication Commission, OC Tel.

And closer to WTSA, we'll certainly have a better sense of what are the main contributions, internet contributions that are going to WTSA. So we'll come back to you and let you know what those are, and if there are any potential impacts to ICANN. I will stop there, and that concludes the updates on UN related activities. Thank you very much.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Thank you, Elizabeth. This concludes our updates, and we sincerely apologize for the really bad sound throughout and all the technical problems. The floor is now open for questions, if you have any. I understand that we have one or two remote questions, so let's start with those if others have questions in the meantime, physically here. Becky.

BEECKY MCGILLEY: Yes. Thank you, Elena. We have the first question from the pod is from Sabelo Zimu, and this is I think for June. In the DNS study, were the role players such as Mark Elkins consulted?

JUNE OKAL: Thanks for that question. Yes, different industry and stakeholder players were all involved. We also had a public comment period that closed in February, and we got different comments that are also public available. And yes, that particular individual was involved as well.

BECKY MCGILLEY: Thank you, June. We have another for you as well, June. This one's from Amina in the chat. Can we please have more details about the capacity development for policy makers, such as where to apply and how to apply, and then followed on with specifically on the Coalition for Digital Africa project in collaboration with Smart Africa.

JUNE OKAL: So that's still back in progress, but in terms of what we did with the parliamentarians it was closed to the members of Parliament that are part of that network, but that was just the first phase of the project. We're still having conversations to see how we can expand that so that we have more representation from across the continent.

With regards to the Smart Africa one, the details are still work in progress and we'll share those. But happy to receive your application on our email, which is info@cda.africa, our website is also

coalitionfordigitalafrica.africa as well. We are also around the whole day and for the rest of the week, and we specifically have a booth set up right outside with beautiful baobab trees. So we are more than happy to take those questions and answer them on a case to case basis. Thanks.

ELENA PLEXIDA: Thank you. May I turn to you? Thank you.

MAARTEN AERTSEN: Hello, this is Maarten Aertsen with NLnet Labs. I really appreciated the slide on the OECD work, and I'm wondering if you have some more details to share with us. Like, where did this originate?

ELENA PLEXIDA: You said OECD, right?

MAARTEN AERTSEN: Yes. Ah, sorry. So the sound broke up. My name is Maarten Aertsen. I really appreciated the pointer to the OECD work, and I was wondering if you can share a bit more about it.

ELENA PLEXIDA: Right. So the OECD divided in different working groups, right? This originates from the CDEP, I don't remember what it stands for, but it is the committee that discusses digital. The way OECD works, the

secretariat has a role, a heavy role in the work that is being done. Of course, it consults with the membership.

And in this case, the secretariat came with a suggestion that this environment is being looked into more closely. And as I said before, because of the nature of the work of the OECD, particularly the financial sustainability. Now that's the origin of the work, the membership will direct the work. And right now is the time for comments. So if the membership, and I mean by the membership, the countries give comments and they say, good idea. Maybe you should also check out that one, not only the financial sustainability.

Then the paper will go to that direction. I also have to say that OECD has multi-stakeholder participation and the place, so it has businesses, it has civil society, and it also has technical community. All technical community, including the RIRs, ICANN, ISOC partners, we sit in the part that is called iTech, and we have a formal position there. So we can ourselves give input to this paper and suggest, no, great idea, maybe think about that too. And actually, we're working on that with our partners in the technical community to submit, yes, our comments. Hope that answers your question.

MAARTEN AERTSEN: Thank you. We appreciate it.

ELENA PLEXIDA: Okay. I see we don't have any other question. Pierre. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS: Thank you, Elena. Just a point of clarification that I discovered in your presentation, the initiative by the EU to recognize the IG in the domain, in the dispute resolution system. But I didn't quite understand in which context it was proposed.

ELENA PLEXIDA: Yeah, it's a little bit complicated, you're right. There were these two regulations, right? Legislation, and in there the proposals themselves, they did consider that there should be this alert system at initially for European ccTLDs only.

Then they said, let's make it for all ccTLDs, sorry for all top level domains, so extra territorial across the board. At the end, the regulations did not include that, but they do have a clause that says the European Commission has to go back and see whether it is feasible and actually a good idea to do it. So the commission, within one year and a half, they will come back maybe with another legislative proposal. That's the one part. Then we have the recommendation that was on the slide. The recommendation comes just from the commission.

It's not regulation, it's a set of guys, it's a good idea to go do that. What I was trying to highlight is that it's very interesting that something that didn't go through in the regulations, now we see it in a recommendation as an encouragement. And thank you for the question, I forgot to say that the recommendation finishes with saying

that the commission within three years will review how the recommendations work and consider other initiatives. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS: Thank you very much. And a follow up because I think I misunderstood your presentation. I thought that at one point you were talking about two initiatives, but I didn't quite understand in which organization, one by the US, one by the EU, and the EU initiative was to, if I understood well, recognizing the IG in the UDR piece. Am I misunderstanding what you said?

ELENA PLEXIDA: I was the one who misunderstood. Apologies, Pierre. So the first part was in the European regulations, but also it was brought into the WIPO discussions, same issue. In the WIPO discussions, there was also this discussion proposal by the US. Generally, we see this in geographical indications issue is becoming prominent in different sites.

PIERRE BONIS: Okay, thank you

ELENA PLEXIDA: Chris.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Good afternoon. Chris Disspain. Elena, I know this is very early days, but I just wondered if you had any thoughts you might like to share with us on likely moves following the European elections, and what do you think that might mean for the internet governance environment in the commission and Europe generally? Thanks.

ELENA PLEXIDA: Always the best questions. So it's quite early, yes, it's only the first day after the elections. I would say out of, I don't remember how many are the seats in the European Parliament? Seven? 7, 0, 5. This time we'll have around 100 that are non-aligned, meaning there will be a lot of bargaining here, there, left, right.

Where they will land and how the composition of the European parliament will be, will be important in the sense that we might see even more strengthened trend towards sovereignty. And if we see that, yes, the sovereignty is likely to come back to us, we've already seen manifest in some ways in the previous mandate, it is likely we see it manifest even stronger.

Now that said, it's not only the European Parliament that sets the EU direction, it's also the European Commission, but that is a combination of what we see in the Parliament and the back in the countries, yes, trends into a direction for more state led ideas and all that. And this is just my preliminary comments, very, very off top of my head.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Thank you. And as I said-- sorry, it's Chris again. Thank you. And as I said, it's very early days, I wonder if we can agree that we should be carefully monitoring this over the next few months and that ICANN should work with the community to create a specific strategy for engagement and ongoing liaison with the various parts of the commission, given its current propensity to try to govern for the whole world.

ELENA PLEXIDA: Yeah, again, off the top of my head, I would agree there has to be some sort of strategy, and it doesn't have to do only with Brussels. We should always keep in mind that what happens in Brussels is a combination of what happens at the US elections. So yeah, seeing all these kind of movements, and of course China. Yeah. Thanks. Thank you, Alex.

WISDOM DONKOR: There's just about two minutes left. Let me ask the last question. Thank you very much for your presentations. I just want to seek from the entire panel what your views are in terms of how you guide the engagement of ICANN with government.

This is in view of the fact that certain foreign institutions are averse to engaging with lawmakers and governments in foreign countries out of concern that there'll be influencing local legislation. So I want to get your guidance, your overall policy, and the approach you have on that

so that whatever good you want to do is not misinterpreted, it'll be influencing legislation in foreign countries.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Alex, thank you very much for the question. I will respectfully say that the word influence is not something that we do, it's not about influencing the direction of any legislation. So we are a technical organization, we have no say on whether there will be more privacy or more security, or more this or more that.

The only thing we do when we engage is-- actually, it's not the only, it's the two following things. We provide factual information about how the internet works. So no, this is how the internet works, you have to know it, then up to you to decide what you decide because you're sovereign governments. And the other thing that we do is we highlight the multi-stakeholder community and the policies it produces and whether there is relevance for what the policy makers are thinking, we bring that to their attention and what kind of work is being done here at the community.

So again, two things, this is how the internet works and this is what the multi-stakeholder model is working on for you to be aware, and then of course, you are sovereign governments, you take your own decisions, informed decisions. I hope that answers. Thank you so much.

Do we have another question? No? I think we can-- then I will wrap up the session, and thank you very, very, very much and I will apologize

again for the technical issues and thank you for being here with us.
Thanks.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]