



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

from : Commission
to : Council

Subject : Internet Governance : The next steps
- Information from the Commission

Internet governance has been the subject of international discussions since the mid-1990s, with the EU being an ‘early mover’ in terms of identifying key public policy issues to be discussed between EU Member States and with international partner countries.

The Internet’s growing importance for society as a whole, however, increasingly requires governments to be more actively involved in the key decision making that underlies the Internet’s development and deployment, notwithstanding the need to maintain private-sector initiative and without any suggestion that governments should become involved in the day-to-day operation of the Internet.

Internet governance was a major focus during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), where international consensus on a range of principles emerged. Within the range of issues that fall under the scope of Internet governance, the specific issue of Internet naming and addressing has been the subject of EU review for the last decade, with the Commission having been asked by the Council to facilitate the coordination of common EU positions wherever appropriate. The EU was involved in the setting-up of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) in 1998 and has followed this matter closely since then.

In September 2009, the current Joint Project Agreement between the US government and ICANN will come to an end. The Commission is therefore due to adopt in the near future a "Communication on Internet governance: the next steps" which reviews progress on Internet governance and the changing role of governments. The Communication describes a number of public policy principles that should be observed by other stakeholders and proposes an approach for moving international discussions on these matters forward.

This Communication should serve as a basis for discussions in Council as well as in the European Parliament in order to ensure that EU objectives are duly taken into consideration in the preparation of decisions on future Internet governance arrangements, notably in discussions with the US.
