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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Internet Governance - Information from the Commission

Delegations will find annexed an information note from the Commission on Internet Governance, which will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 11 December 2015.

Information Note on Internet Governance

IANA and ICANN: The US government, specifically its National Telecommunications and Information Administration Agency (NTIA), currently is responsible for stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), based on a contract between NTIA and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). For many years Europe and other stakeholders have called for a transition of that stewardship to the global multistakeholder community (see e.g. Council conclusions of November 2014¹).

In March 2014 NTIA announced its intention to launch the transition process. It was hoped by many that this could be achieved before the expiry of the IANA contract between NTIA and ICANN, which was to expire on 30 September 2015, with an option for two two-year extensions. However, as negotiations progressed it became clear that more time was needed by all stakeholders to finalise the transition. For that reason, NTIA prolonged the IANA contract for one year until 30 September 2016 to permit the multistakeholder community to finalise its proposals and for the US government to carry out its internal procedures.

The contract extension was necessary to finalise details and implementation provisions for the IANA transition and associated necessary improvements in ICANN accountability. However, this extension is cause for slight concern as the UN General Assembly in New York this month (December 2015) will finalise the World Summit for Information Society (WSIS+10) review process and issues of Internet Governance will be raised. Some countries may claim that the one year extension of the NTIA contract shows the multistakeholder model does not deliver results and that stronger governmental control over the Internet is needed (see Council Conclusions of June 2015²).

¹ Council Conclusions on Internet Governance of 27 November 2014.

² Council Conclusions of 12 June 2015 on the transfer of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the multistakeholder community.

The October 2015 **ICANN 54th meeting in Dublin** was dominated by discussions on improvements in ICANN accountability that must be implemented before the IANA transition contract can take place. **Stress Test 18** (related to handling advice issued by the Governmental Advisory Committee by the ICANN Board) has divided both European Member States and other countries, in part because of mistrust between opposing sides, misunderstandings about the implications, and some feeling that the "rules were being changed along the way". The Commission encourages Member States to continue their active and constructive coordination to ensure a successful transition of the IANA function to the multistakeholder community, in conjunction with the necessary and appropriate improvements in ICANN accountability.

World Summit for Information Society (WSIS): Preparations for the 10-year review of WSIS are ongoing in the UN in New York. The review is important because (1) WSIS is the birthplace of the multistakeholder **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**, and (2) there is still a threat that intergovernmental forces could alter the multistakeholder model of Internet Governance. EU Member States have so far coordinated well in New York. The Commission encourages them to keep this up and support a coherent, common position following the COREPER guidelines of June 2015³.

European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG): At European level, preparations have begun for the next EuroDIG meeting on 9-10 June 2016 in Brussels. Broadening interest and awareness about EuroDIG, and raising it to the highest political levels, will further underline the importance of Internet Governance in Europe and showcase European support for the successful multistakeholder model of Internet Governance. The Commission invites EU Member States to encourage participation of their national stakeholders at EuroDIG.

³ COREPER I guidelines of 3 June 2015 on World Summit on the Information Society – Draft lines to take to guide the EU and its member States in the preparatory process of the World Summit on the Information Society +10 ("WSIS+10") Review Process.