

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BULGARIAN NATIONAL REPORT IN LINE WITH THE
RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION AND USE OF
MULTILINGUALISM AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CYBERSPACE

1. Development of multilingual content and systems

The national domain” .бг “ in Cyrillic approved by ICANN

<https://www.mtffc.government.bg/page.php?category=92&id=7744>

The national domain “.бг “ in Cyrillic was approved by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, ICANN. A report has been prepared within the process of registration of national domains with alphabets different from the Latin, and it specifies that the combination of letters that will symbolize Bulgaria on the Internet, namely .бг, does not look like any other existing domain.

On the occasion the Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications Nikolina Angelkova commented: “The use of the Bulgarian alphabet on the Internet is a significant step towards the protection of the language and strengthening our cultural identity”. She recalled that 400 million users around the world use Cyrillic. “The national Internet address in Cyrillic is an opportunity for ever more people to use the World Wide Web both for communication and for work. Spelling web page names entirely in Bulgarian will facilitate the use of regional sources of information that matter mainly to local users. Those who are not familiar with the Latin alphabet will easily tackle their work on the Internet”, added the Minister.

The topic of the” .бг “ domain was brought up during the talks with the international organization when ICANN President Fadi Chehadé visited Bulgaria in August. Back then he held a meeting with Minister Angelkova when the issue with the Bulgarian application was discussed. They also discussed the opportunities for closer cooperation and as a result an Agreement for Cooperation between MTITC and ICANN was signed today. The document sets the common activities in the development of Internet names in Europe as well as training of Bulgarian Internet management experts. Fadi Chehadé commented on the signed document: “This partnership acknowledges ICANN’s mission and shows the support for participation of all stakeholders in Internet management. We look forward to continue our cooperation with Bulgaria in the field of Internet policies”.

Five years after the filed application, ICANN approved the registration of the .бг domain. The next step is to receive notification from ICANN on its readiness to include it in the domain names system. In order to use the national address a Register of the names in .бг is needed.

The Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications initiated meeting with all stakeholders – the business, NGOs and academic institutions, so as to discuss the methodology for the selection of an organization to register Internet names in Cyrillic. The register will be appointed by the Bulgarian government following an agreement on the criteria and the selection procedure.

Background of the .бг registration

Bulgaria was the first state to officially claim registering a Cyrillic Top level domain (IDN cc TLD). ICANN announced a Fast Track procedure for registration of national domains in Cyrillic and other alphabets different from Latin, on 16 November 2009. MTITC organized two public consultations in November 2009 – on the register of the domain and the symbols that were to be used in the national domain. The application was sent by MTITC on 19 February 2010 by specifically indicating that the .бг is related directly to the name of the country and it stands for the “Bulgarian” in people’s minds. On 18 May 2010 the registration was not approved with the argument that the Bulgarian proposal is visually similar to other already existing domains in Latin. Back then the procedure could be appealed and reviewed.

In the period July – August 2010 MTITC held new public consultation to look into the opinion of the Bulgarian Internet users on a new Cyrillic name. Over 65 % indicated that they do not want a name that is different from .бг and MTITC took the commitment to protect the choice of the Bulgarian society.

The approval in October 2014 is within the framework of the possibility announced by ICANN in December 2013 for a final assessment of the Bulgarian proposal for symbols of the national Cyrillic Internet address .бг.

2. Facilitating access to networks and services

The "Digital Bulgaria 2015" National Programme was adopted by Council of Ministers Decision № 953 / 16.11.2012

<http://www.mtitc.government.bg/page.php?category=604&id=5985>

The aim of the "Digital Bulgaria 2015" National Programme (the Programme) is to define the parameters (key actions, responsible institutions, deadlines, budget) of the Information Society (IS) development in Bulgaria, as well as to support the implementation of the EU guidelines and tasks formulated in the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) taking into account the social and economic potential of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the Internet by 2015.

The "Digital Bulgaria 2015" National Programme has been developed by the Subgroup to Working Group "Europe 2020". Its purpose is to identify the measures and tasks that the Bulgarian authorities have to pursue until 2015.

The Programme arises the basic assumption that each authority is responsible for the administrative and financial implementation of the measures under the Programme, in accordance with DAE commitments and duties. Various sources of individual project funding such as targeted funding by the state budget, as well as grants under the European programs etc. are available to assure its implementation.

The document is in compliance with the methodological guidelines for strategic planning in Bulgaria, and the conclusions of the public discussions with all stakeholders (universities, NGOs, business groups and citizens) which have been held at a national level. It presents the strategic goals and directions according to DAE which have to be included, so that the socio-

economic structural reform in Bulgaria would be carried out successfully. The purpose of the latter is to meet on a national scale the EU requirements for the development of Information Society in Europe within the next four years.

The document provides legal, technological, economic and social guidelines for the development of an Information Society in Bulgaria. Within this context the Information and Communication Technologies continue to be the driving force for improving the quality of life to all citizens. The program promotes innovation and reflects the new role of the Internet as a crucial infrastructure and essential media for carrying out various economic and social activity.

The Program is being evaluated every six months and the progress is scored in compliance with the DAE Scoreboard as well as NSI statistics and CRC annual data:

<https://www.mtirc.government.bg/page.php?category=604>

<https://www.mtirc.government.bg/page.php?category=604&id=7536>

<http://www.nsi.bg/bg/content/2722/%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE>

<http://www.crc.bg/section.php?id=277&lang=en>

The Program update is under preparation with a horizon to 2020.

The Strategy for development of e-governance in the Republic of Bulgaria (2014-2020) was adopted by Decision № 163 of 21.03.2014, of the Council of Ministers. It was prepared as part of the country's commitments under the ex-ante conditionalities for EU Funds for the programming period 2014 – 2020. Its main goal is to outline the framework for all current and new activities in the field of e-governance.

<https://www.mtirc.government.bg/page.php?category=454>

The National plan for next generation broadband access adopted by Decision № 435 / 26.06.2014, of the Council of Ministers, identifies the resources procedures and timeframes for implementation of the objectives set out in the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020, to provide fast and ultra fast broadband to all Europeans by establishing networks of next generation access <https://www.mtirc.government.bg/page.php?category=619&id=7036>

3.Development of public domain content

In Bulgaria a process is running of PSI Directive implementation into Bulgarian legislation by a Public Information Access Act including open data matters.

We carried out a Study on PSI knowledge of Public administration:

<https://www.mtirc.government.bg/page.php?category=668&id=7238>

On Final comments regarding Guidelines for the Report preparation

1. WSIS about

We participate actively in the WSIS + 10 reporting and forecasting process beyond 2015 by submitting reports, positions, completing questionnaires as well as in the context of initiatives like WSIS stocktaking, WSIS prizes, WSIS Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development /ICT 4D etc. It should be taking into account the schedule of the preparatory process towards the UNGA “WSIS+10” event in December 2015 in all aspects.

2. Internet governance

Nowadays the Internet is a global resource demanding global governance.

One of the actions of Digital Agenda for Europe, being a main Pillar of EU 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, aims at promoting the internationalisation of internet governance and global cooperation to maintain the stability of the Internet on the basis of the multi-stakeholder model.

On 12 February 2014 the European Commission presented its Communication on Internet Policy and Governance: Europe's role in shaping the future of the Internet. This document outlines the foundation for an EU strategy on global Internet governance based on a multistakeholder model and underpinned by human rights and democratic values.

The Internet has become a "General Purpose Technology" and a basic and essential element of citizens' life. The internet is at the heart of seamless cross border services and the 'internet economy' in the EU-28 is expected to grow from 3.8 % of GDP in 2010 to 5.7 % in 2016.

The European Union fully endorses the basic principle that the governance of the Internet should be inclusive, multi-level and multi-stakeholder. When it comes to the Internet everyone, from all social and economic groups and from all parts of the world, should have the possibility to have his or her voice heard in a fair and constructive manner. However, this does not imply that governments and other public authorities can or should relinquish their role in developing and enforcing public policy. There is a clear case for a limited and focused public intervention on the Internet as in any other sphere of human life.

International cooperation is essential to keep internet as a global infrastructure.

EU action is necessary on two levels. The first is strictly European and it touches upon economic, political and social dimensions. EU policies ensure development of European Internet economy in line with the strengthening of the Digital Single Market; aligning policy-making activities to the realities of bottom-up, peer-produced political changes; using the Internet to foster social inclusion, including via digital social innovation.

The second is global and touches on spheres like ensuring respect of human rights, promoting net neutrality, addressing cyber-crime, creating a credible IPR regime and working on a

global legal framework especially for e-commerce. In this framework the EU is a major player in constructing and supporting the Internet governance.

The Republic of Bulgaria welcomes the statement of the USA government of March 14 this year, which demonstrates readiness to withdraw from its central role in Internet governance, as the Ministry of Commerce publicly declared that it shall not renew its contract with the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), which expires in September 2015, and that it will support the globalization process of Internet governance.

The Bulgarian side considers as highly positive and timely the efforts of the European Union to initiate the discussion, identifying the main issues that are to be debated with respect to the internationalization of the Internet governance process, as well as the principles that should be observed during this process. These efforts are very beneficial, in order to develop and uphold a common European position.

Bulgaria supports the efforts of the European Commission to formulate a common position and a concept on the main principles for the development, management and governance of the Internet as a major resource for innovation and prosperity, including the following principles:

- The Internet should remain one single unfragmented space, where all resources should be accessible in the same manner, irrespective of the location of the user and the provider;
- Internet-related discussions and decisions should be based on a strengthened, genuine multi-stakeholder model;
- The current technical architecture of the Internet should be maintained since it has proved its capability to evolve and respond to new and often unforeseen challenges;
- Confidence in the Internet and its governance is a prerequisite for the realisation of the Internet's potential as an engine for economic growth and innovation;
- The Internet must allow freedom of expression and respect for human rights as the fundamental principles of a democratic society.

The Bulgarian side considers the process of internationalization of the Internet Governance as one of the most important issues. The Republic of Bulgaria supports the upcoming transition to a multinational approach in Internet governance as a global resource, with the participation of all stakeholders, observing the following principles:

- Support and enhance the multistakeholder model;
- Maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet;
- Maintain the openness of the Internet.

In order to enable the active participation of national governments, discussions should be organised, to provide a critical evaluation of the impact of the process, to assess the potential outcomes as well as to prevent non-compliance with the security, privacy and interoperability criteria.

The EU needs to continue working for the transition of the IANA functions towards a sustainable model that guarantees a pluralist review and stability of the system and to insist on improvement in ICANN accountability.

We agree that it is necessary to protect the principles identified for transparent, accountable and inclusive governance of the Internet. Those principles include the Digital Single Market dimension (domestic dimension), in which net neutrality, the rule of law, the respect of jurisdictions and privacy are essential.

Moreover, the issue of Internet Governance is closely related to the consolidation of a digital single market in Europe. An open, transparent and multi-stakeholders governance of the Internet is essential both for the full exercise of citizens rights in the digital environment and for the development of sustainable business practices for everyone's benefit .

Setting the process of globalization of the Internet Governance is a key initial step which should be discussed in details in the UN as well as in the context of WSIS post 2015 Agenda (in particular, WSIS Action Lines).

The Republic of Bulgaria participates actively in the Internet Governance activities, initiatives and forums of the international organisations of the United Nations (UN), such as the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), as well as in the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) of ICANN, etc, especially on issues related to respecting human rights and protecting children from harmful content.

We would like to point out that in this respect we closely follow the ongoing process of transformation towards an international approach in Internet governance and we provide our contributions to the relevant meetings and forums of the EC and the ITU.

We support the view that it is essential to set out the next steps towards a single approach to ensure that the NETmundial roadmap for the Internet Governance evolution is fulfilled. The roadmap outlines possible steps forward in the process of continuously improving the existing Internet governance framework ensuring the full involvement of all stakeholders in their respective roles and responsibilities.

Capacity building is important to support the emergence of true multistakeholder communities, especially in those regions where the participation of some stakeholder groups needs to be further strengthened.

More points to be further discussed in the roadmap context are:

- The different roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in Internet governance, including the meaning and application of equal footing;
- Jurisdiction issues and how they relate to Internet governance;
- Benchmarking systems and related indicators regarding the application of Internet governance principles. Evidence of Internet governance: measurement and data-mining.

Without understanding the scope of the problem it is difficult to discuss possible solutions. The first step is to improve measurement of the Internet, and the collection of reliable data that could facilitate more informed policy-making.

We consider that a good approach in this respect would be to expand the circle of stakeholders in order to stimulate the elaboration of Information Society policies. Therefore, we support the idea of establishing a platform as a Global Internet Policy Observatory (GIPO) on Internet policies as a suitable form of innovative online resource.

During the last Internet Governance Forum, in a global exchange of best practices context, EC offered methods for establishing Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), promoting local content, and education tools for ensuring, amongst many others, child safety online .

The European stakeholders- business, academic circles and civil society should dedicate this year and the next one to elaborating recommendations and proposals that could contribute to the reformation process of how the internet is run. The proactive participation of the governments in the process should be encouraged taking into account their leading role in developing and enforcing public policies worldwide.

In this regard, on 4 and 5 June 2015 Bulgaria will host the annual forum "European dialogue on Internet governance" (EuroDIG) - a platform of 47 Member States of the Council of Europe for exchange of views and discussions between the stakeholders on the Internet - governments, international organizations, business and civil society. Our Ministry is institutional partner <https://www.mtirc.government.bg/page.php?category=92&id=7840> .

EuroDIG slogan is: Always open, always inclusive, never too late to get involved.

A day before, on 3 June 2015 will be a regional internet governance forum in Sofia .

3. Information about the activities of the Ministry of Transport, IT and Communications with respect to human rights, diversity and inclusion in the new digital environment

As a national coordinator for the accomplishment of the engagements of Bulgaria as a member of the Council of Europe in the field on media, new services and information society The Ministry of Transport, IT and Communications has put efforts in promoting the standards of human rights, diversity and democracy in Bulgaria. Experts of the ministry take part in the work of the Steering Committee on the Media and Information Society and its groups which deal with a variety of issues related to the right to free expression and free media in the new media environment including the rights of minority groups and communities in society. Despite representatives of MTITC provide expertise to international and national organization.

The contribution of the ministry can be evaluated from three perspectives – assuring expert opinion and experience in the process of elaboration of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers documents drafted by CDMSI, translating these acts into Bulgarian and raising the

awareness of the Bulgarian public about different human rights aspects in the information society and securing expertise at home and abroad.

1. Specialists representing MTITC took active part in the elaboration of a number of Council of Europe recommendations regarding the new notion of media, public service media governance, the protection of human rights when using social networks and search engines and the Internet governance principles.

In Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of human rights with regard to social networking services for instance, it is particularly stated that social networking providers should "provide an environment for users of social networks that allows them further to exercise their rights and freedoms and that various social groups should be encouraged to benefit from the Internet and social networks thus enhancing their integration and full participation in society. In Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of human rights with regard to search engines it is declared that "there is a need to protect and promote access, diversity, impartial treatment, security and transparency in the context of search engines. Media literacy and the development of skills that enable users to have informed access to the greatest possible variety of information, content and services should be promoted having regard to Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2011\)7](#) on a new notion of media". More specifically "as search engines play an increasingly important role with regard to the accessibility of media and information online, media and information literacy strategies should be adapted accordingly". Further to this the Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a new notion of media stresses that the media "can provide a balanced (or positive) image of the various groups that make up society and contribute to a culture of tolerance and dialogue". Public service media keep their prominent key position in the new media environment integrating persons, groups and communities and bringing them closer to culture, education and the common values of our societies.

The MTITC experts contributed to the promotion of the Council of Europe Internet Governance Strategy (2012 – 2015) and to the discussion and elaboration of the Council of Europe Internet Governance Strategy (2016 – 2019).

The Minister of Transport, IT and Communications who was the head of the Bulgarian delegation at the First Ministerial Conference on the Media and Information Society which was held in Belgrade in November 2013 chose as a topic of his intervention the integration and cohesion in the information society dwelling on the necessary conditions to build a human centred and just information society.

2. MTITC is putting efforts in raising awareness about human rights and diversity in the new digital environment and in enhancing media literacy in the country with the purpose of implementing effectively the principles and norms of open and inclusive information society. On its website the ministry is uploading regularly

recommendations, declarations, reports and strategies of EU, Council of Europe, OSCE and WSIS translated into Bulgarian. On its website MTITC has also initiated consultation concerning the adoption of the CoE recommendation on the protection and promotion of the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy in the context of network neutrality. It has also published the conclusions of the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Diversity and coordinated the publication of the consolidated answers of BNT and CEM as a response to the public consultation on these issues. One of the most recent and useful publications relate to the recommendation on the human rights of Internet users and the Internet users guide instructing people belonging to different social groups and generations how best to use and protect their human rights on the net.

Aiming at accomplishing wider understanding of the principles of human oriented information society in 2012 the ministry prepared and published a book focusing on the new problems of media, Internet and e-democracy including also access to the net, diversity and security. The edition was dedicated to the 20-th anniversary of the Bulgarian accession to the Council of Europe (1992 - 2012) and to the First Council of Europe Ministerial Conference on the Media and Information Society (Belgrade, 2013) which took place under the title “Freedom of Expression and Democracy in the Digital Age Opportunities, Rights, Responsibilities”. The idea was to foster public knowledge and awareness about the most topical issues in the digital environment and to boost the implementation of the Internet governance principles based on human rights, openness, universality, integrity, multistakeholderism, decentralization and new architecture. The book was distributed for free among institutions, organizations and universities. The feedback was highly positive and encouraging. Further we refer to the table of contents of the book which comprises the latest and most relevant with regard to Internet governance and e-democracy instruments of the Council of Europe.

Contents of the book “Media, Internet and e-Democracy”, published by MTITC, 2012

Preface

1. Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on measures to promote the respect of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 January 2010 at the 1074th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)

2. Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a new notion of media (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011 at the 1121st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)

3. Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on Internet governance principles (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011 at the 1121st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)

4. Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection and promotion of the universality, integrity and openness of the Internet

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011 at the 1121st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

5. Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on network neutrality*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 September 2010 at the 1094th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

6. Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the protection of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association with regard to privately operated Internet platforms and online service providers *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December 2011 at the 1129th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

7. Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of human rights with regard to social networking services *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4 April 2012 at the 1139th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

8. Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of human rights with regard to search engines *(Adopted by the committee of Ministers on 4 April 2012 at the 1139th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

9. Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the protection of freedom of expression and information and freedom of assembly and association with regard to Internet domain names and name strings *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011 at the 1121st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

10. Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the management of the Internet protocol address resources in the public interest *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 September 2010 at the 1094th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

11. Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on electronic democracy (e-democracy) *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 February 2009 at the 1049th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

12. Recommendation Rec(2004)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on electronic governance ("e-governance") *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 December 2004 at the 909th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

13. Recommendation Rec(2004)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting *(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 September 2004 at the 898th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

14. Council of Europe e-voting handbook *Key steps in the implementation of e enabled elections*

15. European Commission for Democracy through law (Venice Commission) and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) Joint Opinion on the Election Code of Bulgaria *Adopted by the Council for Democratic Elections at its 37th*

meeting (Venice, 16 June 2011) and by the Venice Commission at its 87th plenary session (Venice, 17-18 June 2011)

3. The third line along which MTITC pursued its activities is the assurance of timely and competent expertise.

In this regard experts from the ministry took part in the working groups of the Council of Europe and particularly in the expert groups on the rights of Internet users, on cross border traffic and Internet freedom as well as in other meetings and initiatives.

Experts from the ministry were invited to share views on inclusion of in the digital age during the annual conference of community media in Brno 2013 and to talk about minority programming of public service media during the regional conference of public service media in South East Europe in Pristina in 2014.

In March 2014 the seminar “Web 3.0: Media Skills, Democratic Citizenship and Digital Education” organized in Sofia within “New Media Literacy for Media Professionals” project, EC “Leonardo da Vinci” Programme, Life Long Learning Programme, sector “Partnerships” gathered together experts from MTITC and organizations from Malta, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia to discuss journalistic approaches and ethics for greater professionalism and creativity and for the suppression of hate speech and exclusion in the new digital environment.