# Implementation of the .eu Top Level Domain

2000/0328(COD) - 18/12/2015 - Follow-up document

In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 733/2002 on the implementation of the .eu Top Level Domain (TLD), the Commission presents a report concerning the implementation, effectiveness and functioning of the **.eu TLD** over the past two years, in particular during the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2015.

**Registration and use of .eu domain names**: the Commission states that the .eu TLD model has been **implemented successfully and is operating effectively**. In the period covered by this report, the .eu ccTLD continued to grow steadily in line with the other European ccTLDs. In 2014 the .eu annual growth was **exceptionally high** (5.3%). The .eu ccTLD had a total of almost 3.9 million registrations at the end of Q1 2015, representing a 4.3 % net increase of .eu registrations since the last report and making the .eu ccTLD the **fourth most popular in the EU.**

**Changes in domain name landscape**: the domain name landscape has changed dramatically in the past two years because of the **introduction of new gTLDs** following the opening of the gTLD space by the *Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers* (ICANN). At the same time, **the advent of social media** has led to a dropping-off of interest in domain names, as younger Internet end users and dynamic new companies prefer to communicate their online presence via the faster social media avenues.

However, **the eu. TLD remains successful** despite the continued, albeit slower, growth of the 28 Member States ccTLDs and the increased availability of gTLDs, with which the Registry has been able to cope thanks to the quality label associated with the .eu TLD.

The .eu TLD and its Registry have shown that they are able to cope very well with the challenges to date, although the **environment is expected to be even more competitive in the future**.

Considering the historical trend, the current market situation and the prediction for future growth, the goal is to **maintain a growth rate in registrations of around 4% per year.**

**Internationalised domain names (IDN):** the introduction of IDNs at the top level, is a matter that falls within the competence of ICANN. On 16 November 2009, ICANN launched the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process to facilitate the introduction of Internet Top Level Domain extensions representing country codes (e.g. .gr, .bg, .eu) using non-Latin characters (e.g. Cyrillic, Greek, Arabic and Chinese characters).

Five years after EURid's application for the .eu string in Greek and Cyrillic, ICANN has not approved the Greek . on the grounds that it is confusingly similar to other strings in upper case

The Commission has repeatedly urged ICANN to complete this process as soon as possible. It has stressed that the rules for a 'permanent' IDN application procedure should be set out so as to avoid undue delay. This is one of the public policy issues that the Commission will continue to raise in the Governmental Advisory Committee, which provides public policy advice to ICANN, as well as in other ICANN constituent bodies.

**Functioning of the Registry**: to recall, EURid is a Europe-wide non-profit organisation with its head office in Diegem (Belgium) and regional offices in Stockholm, Prague and Pisa. It comprises two founding members: *DNS Belgium* (the .be registry) and the *Istituto di Informatica e Telematica* (the .it registry), and eight associate members. The main EURid servers are located in Belgium (Brussels) and in The Netherlands (Amsterdam).

The Registry has **launched its own registration platform**, which went live on 15 September 2014 after intensive and structured communication with the .eu registrar community.

Over the past two years EURid has **conducted multiple marketing activities** at two levels:

- by establishing a sound partnership with its registrars to promote the .eu TLD via the co-funded marketing programme and other incentive schemes;
- by recourse to direct marketing to raise awareness of .eu through dedicated online display actions and a regular billboard campaign at the Brussels Airport.

The report notes that **the financial situation of the Registry remained stable** during the reporting period.

**Legal proceedings and disputes concerning domain names**: any disputes between .eu domain name holders or claims against .eu Registry decisions, can be submitted to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provider, which is the Czech Arbitration Court.

The Commission **monitors the use of the ADR system provided by the Arbitration Court**, which allows for the protection of registrants' rights in all EU languages. Following recommendations by auditors, EURid has reduced fees to improve access to the system for individuals and SMEs who have reasons to believe that their .eu names have been improperly registered by third parties.

**Conclusion:** over the past nine years, **the .eu country code TLD profiled itself as an innovative and modern extension**, very much able to catch up both with the TLDs which have been in the domain environment since the late nineties and to compete with the new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) that have been introduced in 2014. With almost four million registrations, the .eu TLD has become a valued option for Europeans when choosing a domain name for their Internet presence.

The Commission has a regular and constructive dialogue with the Registry to investigate and identify **possible ways of dealing with the new DNS landscape** while keeping the .eu space secure, reliable and worthwhile for current and future stakeholders.