

## **High Level Group on Internet Governance meeting, 31 May 2012 - summary**

The HLIIG meeting was chaired by Acting Deputy Director General Megan Richards (MR) and was attended by 23 HLIIG Members (AT, BE, BG, CY, DK, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, IE, IT, LU, LV, HU, MT, NL, PT, SE, RO, UK, NO, CH).

### **1. Opening remarks**

M. Richards introduced Linda Corugedo Steneberg and welcomed Igor Ostrowski, Deputy Minister, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Administration and the Digital Engagement responsible for matters related to the development of digital society and regulation of digital technologies.

Minister Ostrowski stressed his interest on Internet matters and referred to the Polish policy approach englobing Internet, the Information Society and the infrastructures associated with it. He mentioned in particular the importance of digital school and open educational resources in Poland. M. Richards also introduced Linda Corugedo Steneberg, as the DG CONNECT Director responsible for Cooperation, including international issues and the HLIIG, and who has taken over these responsibilities already before the effective change to DG CONNECT on 1.07.2012.

M. Richards informed Group Members that as the HLIIG is now formally a Group of Experts advising the Commission (including reimbursement of travel expenses), there is a requirement to make public the documents of the HLIIG (including Agenda, Meeting report and documents circulated during meetings) except for those restricted according to the provisions of the Regulation on access to documents.

### **2. ICANN issues – visit of Nigel Hickson**

Nigel Hickson, now Vice President for Europe with ICANN, formerly with the UK Government, attended the meeting and several issues were raised:

- *Conflict of interest*

M. Richards mentioned that even though ICAAN is a private company albeit non-profit, it has clear characteristics of a public policy institution, having a monopolistic position in strategic Internet resources and a multi-stakeholder advisory group, and therefore should be held to quite high standards with respect to conflicts of interest. The Commission has transmitted a BEPA study on corporate governance among public institutions to the ICANN Board.

HLIIG members raised concerns about the delays in implementing the Conflict of Interest policy which the ICANN Board committed to deliver for March. Nigel Hickson mentioned that ICANN Board had ordered 3 reports from independent law firms, two of them having already been mostly implemented already.

These steps already undertaken by ICAAN Board were generally welcomed by the Group, notwithstanding that timing was important and that these issues should be resolved sooner than later.

- *New gTLDs procedure*

Mr Hickson reported that the security issues (notably confidentiality and non-authorised access to sensitive information due to the IT "glitch") have been successfully addressed and all applicants whose data had been compromised or that may have received information not concerning them have been contacted. The application procedure was reopened for the last week of May. The number of applications was over 1900. HLIG members expressed concern regarding the need for further discussion within the ICANN community regarding ICANN's proposed "batching" procedures.

#### *GAC /IANA/CEO*

Nigel Hickson confirmed that the IANA application had been submitted to the US Department of Commerce the previous evening.

MR stressed the importance of ICANN's new CEO setting the tone for the future, addressing the issues raised in the HLIG group and by others, and looked forward to information about the appointment. Mr Hickson confirmed that the announcement was imminent. Concluding MR stressed that EU/HLIG looks forward to continued contacts with ICANN on all outstanding issues, noting that the EU continues to support the current model, albeit with a view to improvements being made in a timely manner. Mr Hickson left at this point so that the group could continue discussions *in camera*.

#### *ICANN meetings*

The UK raised the issue of a high-level meeting at the margins of an ICANN meeting, mentioning the intention of UK Minister E. Vaizey to attend the ICANN meeting in Toronto (October 2012) The Commission (E. Hartog) mentioned that an alternative might be the next IGF meeting.

### **3. Internet governance**

The Commission (A. Glorioso) reported on recent discussions at the CSTD Workshop on Enhanced Cooperation (18 May, Geneva) and during the CSTD Session (21-25 May, Geneva). These highlighted the need for a better understanding of the key elements of enhanced cooperation; in particular, what is the current landscape and if there are already fora/processes/mechanisms through which governments and public authorities can discuss (at the global or regional level as appropriate, ensuring the inclusion of all governments and the consultation of all stakeholders) on Internet-related public policy matters.

Under this perspective, the Commission suggested to organise an authoritative "mapping" exercise that will help Europe define and defend more coherently and effectively its position in the months to come. Group Members welcomed the idea.

Discussions then focussed on the proposals tabled by India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) which seem to point to a greater involvement of public authorities in Internet governance, in contrast to the current multi-stakeholder model. The overall feeling was that we need to move forward cautiously, but we also need to show those countries which may prove flexible that Europe is ready to discuss.

#### **4. World Conference on International Telecommunications 2012 - review of the ITRs**

Preparations for the meeting in Dubai are intensifying, both in Geneva at the relevant ITU Council Working Group and regionally in the CEPT, where there was a meeting the previous week in Copenhagen. The main agenda item for the meeting in Dubai in December is the updating of the 1988 International Telecommunications Regulations,

Anders Jönsson, (Swedish Post and Telecom Authority and chairman of CEPT working group Com-ITU) gave a presentation on the ITR process and the CEPT process incl. timelines and possible synchronization with CEPT.

The Commission (E. Hartog) mentioned that the key issue for the EU will be the need to ensure that the "acquis communautaire" is maintained. To this end, and taking account of the changes in arrangements for the external representation of the EU following the Lisbon treaty, the Commission is reflecting on how best to ensure EU coordination. The alternatives include COREPER guidelines or a Formal Council Decision. In order to be timely for Dubai, a draft Council Decision has to be submitted by the end of July.

#### **5. Events/AOB**

- *EURODIG in Stockholm on 14-15 June*

Sweden confirmed the high level of interest to date. The Commission (L. Corugedo Steneberg) announced a pre-event before EuroDIG for national IGFs. The discussion will concern the challenges related to the functioning of national IGFs. Also, the discussion will concern the topics which should be promoted during IGF 2012.

The pre-event will take place on 13 June 2012 at the premises of the Representation of the European Commission in Stockholm. The pre-event will start at 11.45 with networking lunch and it will finish around 17.30.

- IE informed that in 18 and 19 of June a conference on Internet Freedom will take place in Dublin.
- Next meeting will take place on 26 September 2012.