

## CREATION OF A EUROPEAN DOMAIN NAME

### UNICE STATEMENT

#### **I. Background**

In the eEurope 2002 action Plan, the Commission proposed to the Council that e-commerce should be accelerated by promoting consumer confidence in electronic commerce and by using new and flexible regulatory approaches. In its response to the public consultation of the European commission<sup>1</sup> in March 2000, UNICE urged European institutions to create an Internet European top level domain name (TLD). It strongly supported the Commission's objective of developing, through this ". EU" domain name, an internal market for e-commerce in order to accelerate its development in the European union.

In December, the European Commission issued a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the top level domain ". EU" and which particularly aims at creating a "Registry" entrusted with the organisation, administration and management of the ". EU" domain name.

UNICE is still convinced that a European domain name will be a powerful tool in ensuring the visibility of European companies on the Internet. ". EU" will be an important stepping stone for European industry to take its place in the new economy.

The TLD ". EU" cannot be considered an ordinary TLD. It has already been recognised by ICANN as the European Union cc<sup>2</sup>TLD. It has to be created with the purpose of enabling European companies to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the European marketplace, such as promoting trust and confidence in European online goods and services amongst consumers.

#### **II. Prerequisites**

- 1) The Commission proposal states that registration should be possible for any legal entity established "within the Community". UNICE wishes that it be made clear that EEA/EFTA countries also have access to registration.

UNICE also recommends that the registration policy and the Registry ensure that an entity has the intellectual property rights related to their registered domain name.

Not only will these prerequisites help to create confidence in electronic commerce in Europe (insofar as consumers and buyers will know that an entity registered under the ".EU" has a legal existence and should respect related European legislation) but it will also help to prevent domain name conflicts.

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<sup>1</sup> Available on : <http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/eif/InternetPoliciesSite/DotEU/Responses/UNICE.html>

<sup>2</sup> Country codeTLD as opposed to generic or gTLD, ie .com, .org, .net

- 2) The Internet provides a highly competitive environment. In order to provide companies with the visibility necessary to being competitive in online trading a structured approach to managing “.EU” is required. UNICE recommends that first-level registration be reserved for companies and second-level registration for the EU’s non-commercial organisations.
- 3) UNICE welcomes the Commission initiative to set up a representative structure with decision-making powers, as the first operational step in creating the “Registry”. To be legitimate, this structure should represent all those concerned by Internet (business, consumers, institutions etc.). UNICE also believes that the Commission should ensure that the “Registry” is granted adequate resources and powers to implement a coherent registration policy.
- 4) UNICE recommends that the registration process includes the creation of a visible multilingual and multi criteria directory. UNICE is also carefully studying the ways to take advantage of the “.EU” first-level domain to provide extra visibility to European self-regulated codes of conduct. This linkage will provide significant added value regarding consumer confidence.
- 5) UNICE welcomes the proposals in the draft Regulation relating to the prevention and resolution of conflicts between domain name registrations and intellectual property rights, but recommends that in order to provide a more complete protection a WHOIS database should be established that is fully searchable, and that all registrants in the “. EU” domain should be required to provide and maintain complete and accurate contact data as a condition to obtaining and retaining a domain name.

### **III. Conclusions**

UNICE reiterates its support to the European Commission initiative to create an Internet European domain name providing that the above-mentioned prerequisites are taken into account.

As a representative of European business users of the Internet, UNICE will continue to collaborate with the Commission on this project and encourages the Commission to provide for industry representatives participation in the “Registry”.

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