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### Digital Agenda: Commission welcomes improvements in new IANA contract

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

## Digital Agenda: Commission welcomes improvements in new IANA contract

Brussels 14 November 2011 - The European Commission is pleased that its initiative to improve Internet Governance resulted in the introduction of a number of its suggested changes by the US Government for the post-March 2012 Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) contract.

The Commission welcomes the publication by the US Government of tender documents for the contract to manage the naming and numbering systems that keep the global Internet running smoothly. The new tender will be subject to a competitive bidding process and its specifications will strengthen the transparency, independence and accountability of the next IANA contractor within the Internet's multi-stakeholder governance ecosystem.

Neelie Kroes, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda said:

*"The new IANA tender is a clear step forward for global internet governance. A more transparent, independent and accountable management of the Internet domain names and other resources will reinforce the Internet's role as a global resource."*

In particular, the draft contract includes clear and binding provisions on conflict of interest. The next IANA contractor will have to take measures to avoid any activity or situation that could compromise, or give the appearance of compromising, the impartial and objective performance of the contract. They will also have to maintain a written and sanctionable conflict of interest policy covering both potential and actual conflicts based on personal relationships or bias, financial gain, employment and post-employment activities. Penalties can include dismissal of the IANA contractor.

The Commission has long maintained that a strict conflict of interest policy will markedly improve the quality of the decision-making processes of the next IANA contractor.

Furthermore, following Commission demands, the draft contract states that when introducing new Top-Level Domains (such as dot.museum or dot.movie), or modifying existing ones, the next IANA contractor will have to provide specific documentation demonstrating how the underlying decision-making process was supportive of the public interest.

The Commission believes greater respect should be given by the IANA contractor to respecting applicable law (such as EU personal data protection laws). The Commission will continue to take the initiative for such provisions in future IANA contracts as part of its efforts to ensure sustainable multi-stakeholder governance of the Internet, in the service of public interest, as a matter of both principle and efficient practice. In that context, it noted with regret that non-US companies are not allowed to compete for the forthcoming IANA contract.

### Background

IANA is one of the Internet's oldest institutions, with its activities dating back to the 1970s. IANA's activities focus on three areas:

- Domain Names IANA manages the DNS root, the .int and .arpa domains, and an IDN practices resource.
- Number Resources: IANA coordinates the global pool of IP and AS numbers, providing them to Regional Internet Registries.

The so-called "IANA functions" are currently carried out by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) under an agreement with the US Government which will expire in March 2012.

The call for tender specifies that the IANA contractor shall be a wholly U.S. owned and operated firm, with all primary operations and systems remaining within the United States.

### Links

Digital Agenda website: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda>

Neelie Kroes' website: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/kroes/](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kroes/)

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