

ITU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM FOR EUROPE (RDF-EUR 26)

Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for
an inclusive and sustainable digital future

24 March 2026 | Prague, Czech Republic

<http://itu.int/go/RDF-EUR-26>

CONTRIBUTION FORM

This form is intended to collect inputs from stakeholders contributing to the implementation of the Baku Action Plan and the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe (2026–2029).

ORGANIZATION: Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

FOCAL POINT: Dr. Sarmad Hussain, Senior Manager, IDNs Program

TITLE: Advancing Universal Acceptance of All Domain Names and Email Addresses for a Multilingual Internet

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION: [Provide a brief description up to 500 words]

In today's world, where digital technologies shape how we access information, learn, work, govern, and connect, the Internet must be inclusive of the world's languages and scripts. Yet millions of people remain unable to use domain names or email addresses in their local languages or scripts. While these languages and scripts are well-supported by existing technical standards and are technically feasible to implement, many software applications, websites, and digital services have not been updated to fully support them, preventing these capabilities from reaching end users. This is due to a missing technical requirement called Universal Acceptance (UA) — the state of readiness that ensures all valid domain names and email addresses are accepted, processed, and displayed correctly by all Internet-enabled systems.

The ability to use the Internet in different languages and scripts is a global priority, recognized in the WSIS+20 Outcome Document and in the WTDC 2025 Declaration. It is part of [ICANN's Strategic Plan for 2026-2030](#) to support UA awareness and adoption globally, including in Europe.

ICANN aims to promote UA in Europe through programs focused on awareness raising and technical capacity building of relevant stakeholders, including public sector organizations. ICANN has held [UA Day events](#) in collaboration with UNESCO and the global community since 2023, with 167 events held over the past three years in 82 countries and in 39 languages. This

momentum continues with more than [30 UA Day events](#) planned in 2026 alone, including at least three in Europe. ICANN has also collaborated with UNESCO to develop a UA Policy Brief, an information paper to raise awareness on the need and mechanism to promote UA by the various stakeholders. The UA Policy Brief will be published by UNESCO in mid-2026 and ICANN and UNESCO plan to launch and promote this report to help raise awareness of UA in the public sector, including in Europe.

ICANN provides capacity-building support globally through supporting multiple initiatives focused on UA adoption and plans to sustain this effort in the coming years. Within Europe, ICANN provides capacity building support to two UA initiatives:

- Regional UA initiative in the CIS and Eastern Europe, involving the country code top-level domain (ccTLD) organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, and Serbia.
- Regional UA initiative for the [GeoTLD Group](#) comprised of members from Europe-based generic top-level domains (gTLDs), including .alsace, .amsterdam, .barcelona, .berlin, .brussels, .cat, .koeln, .london, .madrid, .paris, .stockholm, .swiss, .wien.

ICANN also collaborates with academic institutions to include UA as part of the curriculum of technical and Internet governance programs. ICANN's [UA Curriculum Program](#) has been presented to some universities in Europe through the UA local initiatives. ICANN is also seeking further collaboration with academic institutes in Europe for this purpose.

ICANN also reaches out to the technical community to promote UA Adoption at events like [FOSDEM](#) and [Web Summit](#).

COUNTRIES in FOCUS: [Name countries to be impacted by this action]

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, and other relevant countries.

YEARS of IMPLEMENTATION: UA awareness and adoption work continuing since 2015.

- ☒ 2026
- ☒ 2027
- ☒ 2028
- ☒ 2029

RELEVANT ITU REGIONAL INITIATIVE: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☐ EUR1: Digital infrastructure development
- ☐ EUR2: Digital transformation for resilience
- ☒ EUR3: Digital inclusion and skills development
- ☒ EUR4: Trust and confidence in the use of telecommunications/ICTs

- ☒ EUR5: Digital innovation ecosystems

Please find more information on the ITU Regional Initiatives 2026-2029, as defined by WTDC-25, [here](#).

RELATED ITU-D PRIORITIES AS DEFINED BY THE ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025

- ☐ Affordable connectivity
- ☒ Digital Transformation
- ☐ Enabling policy and regulatory environment
- ☐ Resource mobilization and international cooperation
- ☒ Inclusive and secure telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

Please find more information on the ITU-D Priorities, as defined by WTDC-25, [here](#).

RELATED PARTNERS2CONNECT FOCUS AREAS

- ☒ Focus Area 1 – ACCESS: Connecting people everywhere
- ☒ Focus Area 2 – ADOPTION: Empowering communities
- ☐ Focus Area 3 – VALUE CREATION: Building digital ecosystems
- ☐ Focus Area 4 – ACCELERATE: Incentivizing investments

Please find more information on the Partner2Connect Focus Areas Action Framework [here](#).

RELATED WSIS ACTION LINE: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ C1: The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- ☐ C2: Information and communication infrastructure
- ☒ C3: Access to information and knowledge
- ☒ C4: Capacity building
- ☒ C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

- ☐ C6: Enabling environment
- ☐ C7: ICT applications
- ☒ C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
- ☐ C9: Media
- ☐ C10: Ethical dimensions the Information Society
- ☒ C11: International and regional cooperation

RELATED GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ 1: Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals
- ☒ 2: Expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all
- ☐ 3: Foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promote human rights
- ☐ 4: Advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches
- ☐ 5: Enhance international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity

RELATED SDG: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☐ SDG 1: No Poverty
- ☐ SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- ☐ SDG 3: Good Health and Well- being
- ☒ SDG 4: Quality Education
- ☐ SDG 5: Gender Equality
- ☐ SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- ☐ SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- ☐ SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- ☒ SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- ☒ SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- ☐ SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- ☐ SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- ☐ SDG 13: Climate Action
- ☐ SDG 14: Life Below Water
- ☐ SDG 15: Life on Land
- ☐ SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- ☐ SDG 17: Partnerships for the SDGs