August 13, 2010

Mr. Janis Karklins
Ambassador of Latvia to France
137 rue de Lausanne
SUISSE 1211
France

Dear Janis,

Many thanks for your letter of 3 August, 2010, proposing that UNESCO work with its Member States on the development of an Internationalized Domain Name ccTLD reference table for Cyrillic script. I'm pleased to see UNESCO take the initiative to implement the agreement signed between our organizations. I believe that UNESCO and ICANN share a common objective of making the Internet accessible to the world's language communities, and the introduction of top-level IDNs is an area where our organizations can productively collaborate.

Many countries would benefit from your proposal to create a reference table for languages based on Cyrillic script. It is naturally up to each country to select an IDN ccTLD that is meaningful for their community, and at the same time fulfills the requirements of the Fast Track Process. Cross-border coordination and assistance have proven helpful in other regions, and I have no doubt that UNESCO, with its linguistic expertise, would be able to provide such support through its Member States. I have asked my staff to ensure you have all necessary information about the Fast Track string requirements, which can be found at: http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/idn-cctld-implementation-plan-16nov09-en.pdf

As you know, IDN ccTLDs are currently being delegated in accordance with the IDN Fast Track Process; this will continue until the final policy for the selection and delegation of IDN ccTLDs is in place. Nothing in the Fast Track Implementation Plan requires the development of the reference table. However, the ccNSO is working on a long-term policy for IDN ccTLDs, which may result in a recommendation to require an inclusive reference table for country and territory names in different languages and scripts. While your proposal for a general reference table is worth pursuing, it is important to ensure that participation in its development process is not a prerequisite for a country to receive its IDN ccTLD string through the Fast Track Process.

That said, focusing your initial effort on a specific script is sensible. It would allow UNESCO to test the process with a distinct community and a limited number of Member States. The results could also make a valuable contribution to the ccNSO's IDN ccTLD policy work.

I have directed my staff to work with your team on the implementation details of your proposal. I also look forward to participating in UNESCO's Open Forum on 16 September at the forthcoming IGF meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Finally, I thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment to strengthening cooperation between our organizations. I am sure this is just the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship.

Warmly,

Rod Beckstrom