We would like to express our gratitude to members of the Middle East DNS Forum Program Committee (PC) for working on the agenda, and for their valuable contributions along the way.
Executive Summary

The 5th edition of the Middle East DNS Forum took place in Ankara, Turkey on 25-26 April 2018 with a generous host from the Information and Communications Authority of the Republic of Turkey (BTK). Attracting 122 attendees in-person and another 10 remote, the forum was inaugurated by the Chairman of BTK Dr. Omer Fatih Sayan, and was followed by keynotes from Mr. Nick Tomasso, Managing Director, Middle East and Africa, Istanbul, ICANN; and Mrs. Sally Costerton, Senior Advisor to President and SVP, Global Stakeholder Engagement, ICANN.

During the 2-days of the forum, 6 main topics were discussed as part of panel discussions:

1. The Domain Name Industry: A Global Perspective;
2. Efforts for Improved Security and Stability of the Domain Name System (DNS);
3. Geographic Top-Level Domains: Sharing Some Experiences;
4. Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs): What is Still Missing for Full Adoption;
5. Middle East country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) Market Trends; and

The forum also had three Short Talks; one on the DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC), another on ICANN’s Nominating Committee (NomCom), and a 3rd on ICANN’s Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC).

The first session entitled “The Domain Name Industry: A Global Perspective” covered how the TLD space looks like today in-light of the 1000+ TLDs delegated into the root. Experiences from Neustar and CentralNIC were shared. ICANN’s Registry Services and Registrar Services shared updates on projects their respective departments are undertaking in-light of this expansion.

The next session covered two “Short Talks”; one on the DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC) and the services they provide and projects they are working on, and another talk on ICANN’s Nominating Committee (NomCom) and the caliber of expertise they are seeking. Both talks were more of promoting respective mandates.

The next session was entitled “Efforts for Improved Security and Stability of the Domain Name System (DNS)”. The session kick-started with a 30-minute talk by our very own Dave Piscitello entitled “The Now and Future of Cyber Investigations”. The talk was followed by a panel of 4 experts in the field of DNS Operations and DNSSEC, and covered updates on DNSSEC deployment, KSK Rollover, ccTLD experiences in deploying DNSSEC, and the importance of properly configured DNS infrastructure in overall IT infrastructure operations.

The final session on day 1 was entitled “Geographic Top-Level Domains: Sharing Some Experiences” where representatives from .ist/.istanbul, .moscow, and .wien/.cologne/.koeln shared their experiences in running their Geo TLDs within their respective communities. Experience sharing was quite candid and rich during the session, and this is due to the agreement amongst GeoTLDs operators that they are not competing with each other.
Day 2 started with a session entitled “Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs): What is Still Missing for Full Adoption”, and had 3 X 30-minute presentations. The first presentation was on the 2017 IDN World Report where findings of the report were shared. The next presentation shared an update on ICANN’s IDN Work, UASG, and the TF-AIDN. And the third and final presentation was by SaudiNIC where they shared their experience of working on Arabic Script IDNs for the past 10 years or so.

The next session entitled “Middle East country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) Market Trends” had the objective of listening to ccTLDs and Registrars on their respective experience in the Middle East. The session had the GM of the APTLD talk about ccTLD Best Practices within the Asia-Pacific region, and was followed by a panel that had 2 ccTLDs (.TN and .TR) and 2 Registrars (KuwaitNET and AEServer). The session also touched upon Registrants issues rights within the industry and the mistakes they fall in when their domain names are held hostage due to lack of awareness.

A 30-minute short talk entitled “Registrants Rights in the Domain Name Space” was followed where an NCUC member from Turkey shared these rights.

The final session of the day was entitled “Data Protection Regulations in Turkey”, and was organized and moderated by local experts who have worked on data protection and privacy laws in Turkey (i.e. Turkish Data Protection Authority and Istanbul Bilgi University), as well as Microsoft Turkey. The session had a couple of presentations made by local experts where they shared experience in working on data protection laws in Turkey, and some touched upon the GDPR at a very high-level. The session concluded with ICANN providing an update on GDPR in the context of Domain Names, and the work undertaken at ICANN to comply with this new directive.

The forum concluded with a stock tacking and final remarks session.

In terms of attendance, and as stated earlier, the forum attracted 122 participants who attended in-person. Of this number, 76 (62.3%) identified themselves as being from Turkey, 18 (14.75%) from the wider Middle East excluding Turkey, 9 (7.38%) were from outside the Middle East, and 19 (15.57%) were ICANN staff.

Content related to the forum can be found on its dedicated website at http://mednsf.org/.

As the forum celebrated 5 years, the GSE Middle East team are embarking on a process to evaluate the forum, and conclude a way forward. The process will be through a survey sent to attendees of past forums. The results could either suggest leaving the forum format as is, alter the format, or replace the forum overall in favor of a new DNS event. The results of the survey will be studied, summarized, and shared with the GSE in due time.

Appendix ‘A’ shares more details on the discussions that took place during each session.
Appendix A: Detailed Discussions

The following provides more details on the discussions that took place during the forum.

The Domain Name Industry: A Global Perspective

Moderator: Mert Saka | Manager, Registry Services and Engagement, ICANN

Panel:
- Mohammad Zeidan | General Manager, Neustar MENA
- Raedene McGary | Head of Policy, CentralNIC
- Mukesh Chulani | Senior Manager, Registrar Services, ICANN

The domain name industry expanded its name space on the right side of the dot from only a few hundred of Top Level Domains (TLDs) to over 1500. Before the New gTLD Program was announced and started delegating new TLDs, there were only a few tens of generic names and country code TLDs. Today, our choice of domain names can have a related New gTLD such as a generic term or a geographical name.

The panelists stated that the New gTLD Program was needed for innovation, customer choice, competition and a secure, stable and resilient internet. Pointing out to the registration statistics of the New gTLD Program, Radeane McGary (CentralNIC) explained that the New gTLD Program has seen four tipping points. First two of these tipping points were observed due to Chinese New Year promotions in Feb/Mar 2016, and aggressive price campaigns (a.k.a. ‘penny promotions’) during June 2016. The third tipping point was the drop of names in August 2017, largely due to lack of renewals for promotional names.

Raedene McGary also explained that the registration statistics were stabilized after September 2017, as there are not many more TLDs to launch and consolidations happening within the Registry Operator Back-End landscape. Raedene McGary was optimistic about the future of the market and explained that they expect a steady growth. Ms. McGary also pointed out that the most registrations for the New gTLD Program originating from China, followed by U.S.A., Germany, U.K, and Japan. Regarding the MENA region, she explained the most registrations come from UAE for the extensions .gdn, .xyz, .online, .club and .shop being the first five.

Ms. McGary’s presentation continued with the list of ongoing opportunities and threats for the New gTLD Program and she provided some case studies from CentralNIC clients. During her presentation, Ms. McGary also pointed out that the .brand domains are most actively used in insurance, real estate, automotive, IT, industrial, banking & finance, media, retail, manufacturing and health areas. She also pointed out that 63 new companies started using their .brand domain names in 2017 and 20 companies shifted their home pages to a .brand domain name.
Next panelist was Mahammad Zeidan (Neustar) who also presented statistics that are similar to Raedene McGary’s, with more focus on the key trends. Lack of domain name activation/utilization under Generic New gTLDs was one of the trends he pointed out. New gTLD Program being at its early stages, Mr. Zeidan expressed that they see the traditional TLDs still being the first choice for registrants, if the desired names are available in one form or another. He also mentioned that the registry operators are still focusing on registering more names, which results in marketing activities towards more registrations. He also added that this overall trend leads to speculations in the market and about the future of New gTLDs.

Following a few example domain names under generic and .brand TLDs, Mr. Zeidan explained that GeoTLDs have proven to be more credible, which may partially be due to being owned by governments or requiring government support. He also explained that GeoTLDs were less likely to be speculated, which is another reason for their credibility.

Mohammad Zeidan thinks the market has reshaped since the introduction of New gTLDs. ccTLDs had to adapt their strategies accordingly and New gTLDs proved themselves that they are in the market to stay. He expressed that the utilization rates of ccTLDs and traditional TLDs are still higher than New gTLDs, but the growth rates being promising. Mr. Zeidan also pointed out that the industry becoming more competitive for New gTLDs and therefore, registry operators are moving towards surrounding themselves with the right partners to better position their TLDs in the market.

Last but not least, Mukesh Chulani (ICANN) presented his slides about the Domain Name Marketplace Indicators current status and project overview. He explained the efforts of ICANN with the data and metrics from other ongoing projects such as the Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR), Identifier Technologies Health Indicators (ITHI) and Open Data Initiative (ODI). Following brief information about these projects, he explained that the project is a piece of a broader, cross-organizational key performance indicator dashboard, which is now in beta.

Mr. Chulani also pointed out that the existing metrics were developed in consultation with an Advisory Panel formed by the ICANN Community in 2015 and that they are still under development. Latest being published in December 2017 with 26 beta metrics and 267 individual data points across three categories, the beta metrics are being published every six months to provide a picture of marketplace evolution.

## Efforts for Improved Security and Stability of the Domain Name System (DNS)

**Moderator:** Luna Madi | Communications Director, EMEA, ICANN

**Keynote:** The Now and Future of Cyber investigations
- Dave Piscitello | VP, Security and ICT Coordination, ICANN

**Panel:**
- Patrick Jones | Senior Director, Global Stakeholder Engagement, ICANN
Attila Ozgit | Director, NIC.TR  
Chamseddine Riahi | DNS Engineer, ATI (.TN)  
Mohamed Abou Abed | DNS Expert

The session kicked off with a keynote presentation titled “The Now and Future of Cyber investigations” from Dave Piscitello. The presentation highlighted the efforts for improved Security and Stability of the Domain Name System (DNS); how ICANN’s SSR team engage with the global security community on DNS abuse and misuse.

This was followed by a series of presentations on DNSSEC deployment and the Root Key Signing Key (KSK) rollover.

Geographic Top-Level Domains: Sharing Some Experiences

Moderator: Mert Saka | Manager, Registry Services and Engagement, ICANN

Panel:
- Abdurrahman TIG | General Manager, Medya A.S. (.istanbul/.ist)
- Maxim Alzoba | Special Projects Manager, FAITID (.MOSCOW/.MOCKBA)
- Ronald Schwaerzler | CEO, Domain Worx (.wien/.koeln/.cologne)

Attendees to the “Geographic Top-Level Domains: Sharing Some Experiences” panel had the opportunity to listen to real-life experiences from the Geographic Top Level Domains (Geo TLDs) with the names of three well known cities: Istanbul (.IST, .ISTANBUL), Moscow (.MOSCOW, .москва) and Vienna (.WIEN). All being older than a year-old, the unique perspectives of these three registry operators contained wide range of experiences about operating TLDs that are city names. The challenges and opportunities of the cities are likely to guide those who are planning to step into the industry, or understand the benefits of registering a domain name under these TLDs.

Abdurrahman Tig (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the operator of .ist/.istanbul TLDs) provided their vision for the city TLD and the advantages they provide their registrants. Providing multiple examples of domain names registered under their TLDs, Mr. Tig also related how various “smart city” concepts can work with the city TLDs from tourism, transportation, health, security, energy, environment and social services in future. Expressing their approach premium domain names, he also expressed .ist being a complementary extension for the short and meaningful domain names (a.k.a. ‘domain hacking’ – e.g. dent.ist, journal.ist, capital.ist).

Mr. Tig’s presentation was followed by an overview of their marketing strategies, together with some examples of their marketing communication activities around the various corners of Istanbul. Indicating that they target a renewal rate of 90% while increasing their domain name registrations, he also pointed that their target is to preserve their place among the most registered city TLDs.
The next set of slides were presented by Maxim Alzoba (Foundation for Assistance for Internet Technologies and Infrastructure Development, the registry operator of .moscow and .МОСКВА). Mr. Alzoba focused on the future applicants of city TLDs and advised them to prepare well in advance of the subsequent procedures of the New gTLD Program. He also mentioned the benefits of having various launch programs, including a qualified launch program for the benefit of the city itself.

Mr. Alzoba explained that the Geo TLDs are somewhere between ccTLDs and Generic New gTLDs. Considering their obligations towards the local governments, he pointed out some of the difficulties they have with keeping up with the contractual obligations they have with ICANN org, which are at the same level with a generic New gTLD. When registration statistics are concerned, he also pointed out that comparison with the ccTLDs are not helpful.

One of the surprise elements for FAITID was that the Internationalized Domain Name registrations under both TLDs (.moscow and its IDN version) being similar at almost 50%. Focusing on the local market, Mr. Alzoba also pointed out that city TLDs represent public interest and they see continuously working with the stakeholders as a key for success.

Last but not least, Ronals Schwaerzler’s (domainworx, the registry operator for .wien, .koeln and .cologne) presentation focused more on their model to get ready for the subsequent procedures and continue to survive in a competitive industry. Explaining the consolidation of the three city TLDs under their company, Domainworx, Mr. Schwaerzler sees knowledge and cost sharing as keys for success in the market. He also stated that they recently shared their registry back-end operator among the three TLDs.

As an Executive Member of the GeoTLD Group, which is part of the Registry Stakeholder Group, he also mentioned that the members of the group value the experience sharing among themselves. Mr. Schwaerzler added that lobbying activities within the ICANN community as well as sharing pricing experiences with each other being their key factors and provided some examples about their interactions with thin the GeoTLD Group and invited all participants to view more on their web pages at geotld.group.

**Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs): What is Still Missing for Full Adoption**

**Convener:** Baher Esmat | VP, Global Stakeholder Engagement, Middle East, ICANN

**Talk:** The 2017 IDN World Report
- Giovanni Seppia | Manager, External Relations, EURid

The IDN World Report is a long-standing research project of EURid, UNESCO and Verisign. The project started in 2011, and is supported by the regional ccTLD organisations, and by numerous individual ccTLD registries who share data each year on their IDN experiences.
EURid is committed to enhancing multilingualism in cyberspace. EURid provides customer support and documentation in the European Union’s 24 official languages. To reflect the scripts used in the European Union, EURid has supported internationalised domain names (IDN) in Latin, Greek and Cyrillic scripts at the second level under .eu since 2009. In the same year, EURid also applied to ICANN for the Greek and Cyrillic script equivalents of ‘eu’ at the top level. In 2016 it launched registrations under .ею (.eu in Cyrillic).

The presentation focused on the findings of the 2017 World Report on Internationalised Domain Names. At the end of 2016 there were 8,7 million of registered IDNs, taking into account those registered under IDNs at the top level and those at the second level under ASCII extensions. Such figure represents 3% of the worldwide registered domain names. Han, Cyrillic and Latin scripts make 90% of the world’s IDNs. The research team has measured the language of websites associated with .eu IDNs. Through our collaboration with Verisign and access to open gTLD zone files, we have also measured languages associated with IDNs in gTLDs. Based on what we discovered from the open zone files, we have extended the analysis to include content of ccTLD IDNs, which form the majority of IDN registrations. Compared with last year’s results, there has been a growth in Chinese language associated with IDNs, which reflects the growth of IDNs under .cn during the year 2016.

The 2017 report considers the links between IDNs and linguistic diversity online, facts and figures relating to IDN deployment, progress on so-called universal acceptance (the usability of IDNs), industry opinions, a focus on EURid’s deployment of IDNs, and much more. The report has noted the gap between the drive for increased linguistic diversity in popular web applications, and the continuing challenge of ensuring universal acceptance of internationalised domain names. According to the report, the increased adoption of IDNs will allow for citizens to use their own identity online as well as a better promotion of local and regional content.

All the information is available at [http://idnworldreport.eu/](http://idnworldreport.eu/).

**Talk:** Update on ICANN’s IDN Work, UASG, and the TF-AIDN

- Fahd Batayneh | Manager, Global Stakeholder Engagement, Middle East, ICANN

The presentation shed some light on the initial days of IDNs, and how it was perceived as a driving tool to bring the next billion Internet users from the developing world. It also spoke about the current work of Generation Panels for various scripts, and mentioned the Arabic Script GP as an example. There was a call for participation in this work.

The next topic was the work on Universal Acceptance and why it is important. It gave examples of how some software platforms are incompatible with IDNs and some TLDs, and the work required to overcome this. The intervention also covered briefly the work of the UA Steering Group, and how to get involved in their work.
The third and final topic of this presentation was on the work of the Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs; what have they achieved so far, and what are they working on. It demonstrated how joining hands can help overcome many of the problems associated with IDNs. There was an open call for the need for more volunteers from Arabic Script languages community with linguistic expertise that are not currently available within the current group.

**Talk: IDNs in Applications**
- Raed Alfayez | General Manager, Internet Services, Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC)

The presentation focused mainly on SaudiNIC experiences in supporting Arabic domain names. It started with an introduction on Arabic Domain names and some technical aspects of Arabic domains including domain name variants, then it covered the major efforts that was done by SaudiNIC in the past 15 years with regards to Arabic domain names (such as project, tools, systems), and at the end it listed some of the major challenges that are related to Arabic domain names. SaudiNIC documented their experience, and can be found at [http://www.nic.sa/en/view/news_166](http://www.nic.sa/en/view/news_166).

**Middle East country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) Market Trends**

**Moderator:** Hadia Elminiawi | Director, DNS-EC

**Talk:** ccTLD Best Practices from the Asia Pacific Region
- Leonid Todorov | General Manager, APTLD

**Panel:**
- Wafa Dahmani | Chief Engineer, Tunisia Internet (ATI)
- Banu Acartürk | Director, Administration and Finance, NIC.TR
- Bashar Al Abdulhadi | Founder and CTO, KuwaitNET
- Munir Badr | Founder and General Manager, AEServer

This session discussed the ccTLDs best practices and market trends, Mr. Leonid Todorov General Manager of Asia Pacific Top Level Domain (APTLD) gave insights about the challenges that face the wider Asia Pacific region and the means to mitigate them. Afterwards, Ms. Wafa Dahmani, chief engineer at Tunisia Internet, Ms. Banu Acarturk administration and finance director at NIC.TR, Mr. Bashar Al-abdulhadi, founder and CTO of KuwaitNET and Mr. Munir Badr founder and general Manager of AEServer shared their experiences and best practices. Ms. Hadia ElMiniawi the director of the DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC) moderated the session. Mr. Leonid Todorov began his talk by giving the participants a glance at some common features of the Asia Pacific region, and then he identified the ccTLD challenges related to the institutional, legal, policy and technical areas and associated with the business and marketing sectors. Mr. Todorov then highlighted the challenges and the best practice responses associated with each of the previously identified challenges; starting with the institutional and governance challenges.
pointing out that the challenges relate to understaffed and underfunded bodies, blockage of international exposure due to national security concerns, registry sizes and changes in the managing bodies and charters. Mr. Leonid then identified the best practices to mitigate the aforementioned challenges: looking for “NextGen” leaders from the ccTLD world, exploring good international practices via APTLD fellowships and information exchange, pro-active networking, cost & staff optimization and paying attention to the importance of data collection and evaluation. He then continued by saying that the challenges related to the legal and policy domains are non-homogeneous legislative and legal environments across the region, obsolete domestic legislations and ccTLDs policies in addition to low exposure to good peer practices. Mr. Todorov then identified the best practice responses: engaging and building bridges with policy makers, engaging in bilateral projects, reaching out to APTLD for counseling and reviewing ccTLDs policies. He then pointed out the technical challenges: obsolete and technical platforms, shortage of trained staff and again lack of exposure to good peer practices. He then highlighted that the responses that included reaching out to APTLD for guidance and counseling as well as benefiting from APTLD trainings and webinars in addition to possible fellowships, technical trainings and capacity building. Mr. Todorov then noted the business and marketing challenges mentioning that they included staff competences and retention, business continuity, increase in international competition, working within small domestic markets in addition to the low interest from the registrars and the small businesses preferring cheaper solutions like Facebook. Mr. Todorov indicated the responses to mitigate the business challenges to include trying to have greater effect by launching IDNs, embarking on community awareness and outreach projects in addition to direct marketing campaigns and looking for unconventional marketing strategies and learning from APTLD experiences on staff retention practices.

Following Ms. Wafa Dahmani talked about the operation and management policies at .tn starting by highlighting .tn second level domains then she talked about the registration process starting from the registrant and ending with the registry back office. Ms. Dahmani then followed with the administrative and technical reforms that started at .tn in July of 2010 saying that .tn had three reforms in 2011, 2012 and in 2013. Ms. Wafa then showed the participants the increase in the domain name registrations from 1997 until 2017 saying that .tn currently has 39926-registered domain names after that Ms. Dahmani talked about the pricing of the domain names. Ms. Dahmani then mentioned that .tn had 27 local registrars and shared with the participants the market shares of each. Then she said that in spite of all the regulatory, administrative and technical reforms .tn did not reach its target yet where the target was to reach 50000-domain names by 2012, accordingly they are now thinking of their fourth reform, which could include opening .tn for non-Tunisians and accrediting foreign registrars.

Following Ms. Banu Acarturk started her presentation with a brief history about .tr ccTLD starting from the delegation of .tr in 1990 and having the first Internet connectivity in 1993 until 1998 where an Internet executive committee was formed providing a forum where all voices can be heard. After that Ms. Acarturk talked about the Internet ecosystem following with a brief history about the registry from the year 2000 where they started a DNS-Working group that exercises counseling functions regarding domain name dispute resolutions until 2005 where a dispute resolution mechanism was developed then she talked about the DNS name servers and the
secondary name servers. Ms. Acarturk then shared with the participants the second level domains that require documents to register under and the reasons behind it and the second level domains that do not require any kind of documents. Then she gave a glimpse about dispute resolutions from 2000 until 2017. Ms. Acarturk continued with a brief history about .tr registry from 2006 where non Ascii characters including Turkish characters became possible to register until 2008 where they started registrations through the registry-registrar model and the Electronic Communication law was passed. Then Ms. Acarturk presented a graph showing the increase in the number of domain name registrations under .tr from 1997 until now, pointing out that the number of domain name registrations under .tr is now more than 350000 domain names. Then she continued by talking about the IDN domain names pointing out that they currently have 9246 registered IDN domain names. Then Ms. Acarturk, followed with a brief history about .tr from 2010 till 2017 after which she spoke about the .tr market saying that the total domain names registered under .tr are currently 397440 domain names and that the domain name annual fee ranges from $1.5 to $5. Ms. Acarturk concluded by saying that looking beyond 2018 they are looking for an increase in the number of registrars.

After, Mr. Bashar Al-abdulhadi talked about the Middle East ccTLD market trends. Mr. Al-abdulhadi started by describing KUWAITNET as being ambitious and looking for constant innovation. Mr. Bashar followed by saying that the company is the first specialized domains and hosting provider in Kuwait since 1997, it became an ICANN accredited registrar in 2006 and is .kw ccTLD registry technical operator since 2016. Mr. Al-abdulhadi then talked about the registrants’ issues namely, hosting companies, domain theft, language barriers and lack of awareness on how to reach ICANN and the legal authorities. Mr. Al-abdulhadi then opened the floor for discussion where he identified cases where KUWAITNET helped registrants with some of the problems mentioned above.

Following Mr. Munir Badr talked about his experience as both .ae and .qa registrar and gave some insights on some ccTLDs in the GCC region.

This session was one of the most interactive sessions where there was extensive dialogue between the floor, the presenters and the moderator.

**Data Protection Regulations in Turkey**

**Moderator:** Faruk Bilir | President, Turkish Data Protection Authority

**Panel:**
- Leyla Keser Barbar | Director, IT Law Institute, Istanbul Bilgi University
- Cem Kubilay | Microsoft
- Cengiz Paşaoğlu | Board Member, Turkish Personal Data Protection Authority

**Talk:** GDPR in the Context of Domain Name WHOIS
- Nigel Hickson | VP, IGO Engagement, ICANN
The Data Protection Regulations in Turkey panel began with an introduction by the President of the Turkish Data Protection Authority, Faruk Bilir. Faruk Bilir gave an introduction on the importance of the right to privacy, Turkish data protection law, and the similarities and differences between European privacy law and Turkish privacy law.

Next, Cengiz Paşaoğlu, a board member of the Turkish Data Protection Authority gave a background to how the Data Protection Authority works. He began with the history of data protection law in Turkey. He then explained what difficulties organizations might have when they have encounters with the data protection authority. In order to help organization comply, Cengiz Paşaoğlu discussed the importance of guidelines and meetings across the country to explain the data protection law to the public and encourage the adoption of privacy preserving practices.

Cem Kubilay, a representative of Microsoft, discussed technological solutions to data protection. Cem Kubilay elaborated on how technological solutions to data security can make the life of a data controller easier.

Leyla Keser, Director of the IT Law Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University, discussed the obligations of a data controller in the Turkish Data Protection Law. Leyla Keser discussed certain difficulties imposed on data controllers under Turkish law like the obligation of filing a data inventory.

Lastly, Nigel Hickson, Vice President of IGO Engagement at ICANN, discussed the upcoming General Data Protection Regulation. He gave a brief overview of the regulation and then went on to discuss how the GDPR would impact both ICANN and the WHOIS. After this, Nigel Hickson discussed the timeline of ICANN’s compliance process with the GDPR and future steps in this process.

**Short Talks**

**Talk 1: The DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC)**

Ms. Hadia Elminiawi started her presentation by giving a brief background about the center, highlighting its vision and mission, adding that to realize the mission the center had a three-year strategic plan that would end in June of 2019. Hadia then shared with the participants the center’s key achievements, what they are looking forward to accomplishing and the challenges that they face.

Ms. Elminiawi said that to support the development of the Internet ecosystem in Africa and the Middle East the center has been working on developing capacities in relation to the DNS industry. They have embarked on a youth outreach and capacity building program and are continuing to provide workshops and training. She said that the center has become a trusted body within the academic community in Egypt; they now conduct
a yearly workshop during the summer break at the faculty of computer and information sciences at Ain Shams University.

Hadia talked about some of the projects that the center undertook with the Nile University, more specifically, a project where the center came to the university and presented the students with a prompt for a project, and assisted them in the completion and evaluation of this project.

Elminiawi added that last November the center, in partnership with IBM, conducted a hackathon; four teams were trying to extract meaningful data from some gTLD zone files. Hadia said that currently she is in contact with one of the Hackathon’s participants who is a student at the faculty of computer and information sciences and founder of the entrepreneurial and innovation center at Al Manya University. Hadia then added that she would be going to Al Menya on Sunday to participate in an event called Starta organized by the entrepreneurial and innovation center there.

Hadia continued highlighting DNS-EC’s activities by saying that they conducted a business workshop and participated in a career fair at Zewail University in addition to workshops at the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) and The Information Technology Institute (iTi).

Regionally they conducted workshops in Morocco in addition to other countries in the Middle East and participated in online workshops in Benin (Marketing for DNS Business growth in Africa) and in Botswana, Hadia then noted that the center has been helping with the Universal Acceptance Program in Egypt.

After that, she started talking about the way forward, where she said that the center has just started, and that they have promising opportunities ahead and important goals yet to achieve. Hadia then stated the center’s targets. Namely, branching out to the Egyptian governorates through partners like the information technology Institute (iTi) and the Egyptian Universities Network. Moreover, the center wants to have a presence in more countries across the region: in this regard, the center is looking forward to establishing a partnership with the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) and Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NIRA) academy; however, the latter has been developing slowly. The center is also looking forward to building a network of trainers across Egypt and the region with the aim of building a network of instructors that can deliver DNS related courses. Hadia said that they are trying to achieve this through partners in Egyptian governorates. She added that they are continuing with the youth outreach and capacity building program and embarking on new projects, where the center will take part in shaping the future of the Internet by exploring the use of emerging technologies. Finally, Hadia mentioned that they are looking forward to developing tutorial material in cooperation with ICANN and that they will continue helping with the Universal Acceptance project in Egypt. Hadia then briefly mentioned the challenges facing the center to be the lack of resources and sustainability.
Talk 2: ICANN’s Nominating Committee

The objective of this session was to introduce ME DNS Forum attendees on how to get into ICANN leadership positions through ICANN’s Nominating Committee (NomCom).

The talk started with a brief about ICANN’s multi-stakeholder structure and its board of directors highlighting the eight seats of the board members that the Nominating Committee is tasked to fill when gaps occur each year. Listing the other vacancies that might be available for the GNSO, ccNSO and ALAC positions. Furthermore, although these positions are on volunteer basis they are highly competitive due to the importance of ICANN and its role in the global Internet ecosystem. Adding that only board positions are given the choice to receive fixed compensations.

The talk also touched on how the NomCom is designed to function independently from the ICANN board, SO/AC, but at the same time to be in adherence to the ICANN Bylaws. Also, the way the NomCom seek advice from board member(s) and the current chairs of the SO/AC to have a better understanding of specific requirement for the particular year. Adding the knowledge and experience shared by the NomCom members about their constituencies complements this.

Talk 3: ICANN’s Non-Commercial Unser’s Constituency

The talk focused on registrants rights in the domain name space - especially for generic top level domains (gTLDs). The rights are outlined in ICANN’s Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) although RAA seems to highlight responsibilities of registrants rather than rights. Important points under RAA include the obligation to provide WHOIS data, registrar’s responsibility to take reasonable precautions to protect the Registrant’s data from "loss, misuse, unauthorized access or disclosure, alteration, or destruction." While registrants must agree that its registration is subject to "suspension, cancellation, or transfer".

Whenever there is a dispute between a registrar and registrant, it is attempted to be resolved under the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP). Examples of these disputes may be a domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark or a domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. However, in addition to trademark protection registrants have rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and privacy that need to be protected. The presentation ended by touching upon privacy and proxy services and how “awareness about Privacy and Proxy Registration services is not high either as only 20% of the domain name registrants use privacy proxy services on the whole in the Middle East, and in some countries, it is lower than 10% in total.” Therefore, efforts such as having more rights focused sessions in DNS Forums and Schools of Internet Governance should be a priority.