

France attacks ICANN as unfit for internet governance

June 26 2014



A press conference hosted by ICANN in central London, on June 13, 2012

France strongly attacked the US-based body that assigns internet addresses on Wednesday, saying it was not a fit venue for internet governance and that alternatives should be sought.

The eurozone's second-largest economy has been at war with the body, which assigns [domain names](#) like '.com' and runs crucial internet infrastructure, over the '.wine' and '.vin' suffixes being rolled out as part

of an unprecedented expansion of domains.

On Wednesday France failed in a bid to freeze the assigning of the domains, which it believes should be restricted to protect trade agreements on region-specific products like champagne.

"ICANN's procedures highlight its inability to take into account the legitimate concerns of states," the French delegation to ICANN's 50th meeting, taking place in London, said in a statement.

"Today ICANN is not the appropriate forum to discuss Internet governance."

France will initiate discussions with European countries and other stakeholders on the future of [internet governance](#), the statement said.

ICANN did not immediately respond to a request for comment. But earlier this week, ICANN's president Fadi Chehade said that France had not yet exhausted all avenues to voice its concerns, and that it should do so.



ICANN President and CEO Fadi Chehade speaks on internet governance on April 4, 2014 in Washington, DC

"We all get frustrated sometimes when we don't get the conclusion that we want," he told a press conference.

Chehade was responding to criticism by France that ICANN lacked accountability and redress mechanisms to challenge its decisions.

A private non-profit corporation, ICANN is ruled by a 21-member board made up of representatives from the domain name industry and other stakeholders, with global governments each represented by one member.

The United States opted to end its oversight powers over the body earlier this year.

Governments including China and Russia have pushed for greater

oversight by states over the body, an idea opposed by critics who say it could provide a valuable tool to repressive regimes.

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Citation: France attacks ICANN as unfit for internet governance (2014, June 26) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-06-france-icann-unfit-internet.html>

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