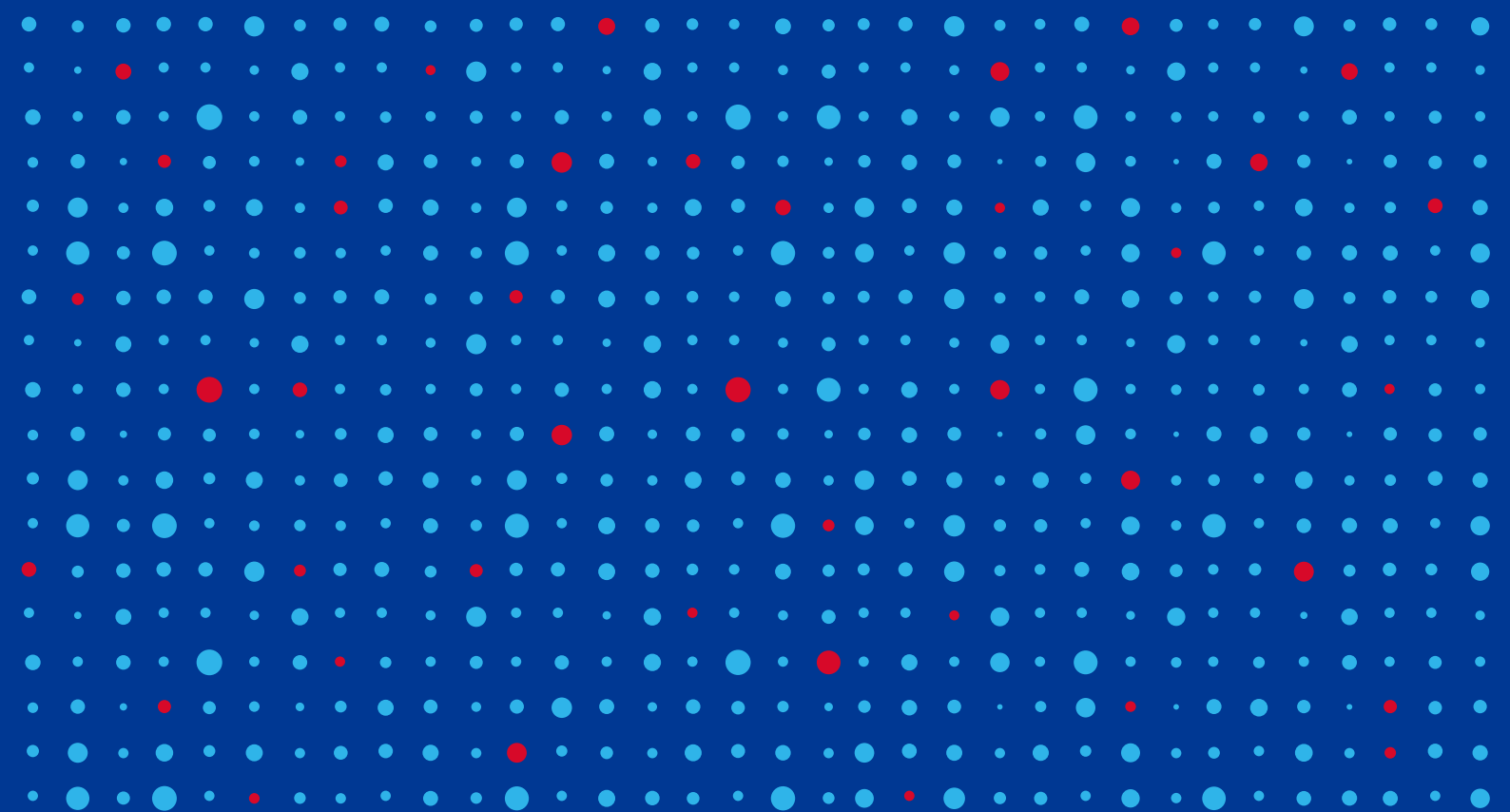




CZ.NIC ASSOCIATION CONCEPT: 2025–2030

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Vision: The main mission of the Association is to operate and develop trusted, secure and stable infrastructure and publicly beneficial Internet services, especially the .cz domain, for the benefit of the Internet community in the Czech Republic. The Association will actively promote the development of Internet services primarily through innovative open-source projects and will increase awareness and discussions on aspects of Internet technologies. The Association will strive to increase the level of cybersecurity and the resilience of users and institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad.

1 Introduction

This concept builds on the previous document that framed the Association's activities in the period 2020-2024. Although it was a rather complicated period with major unpredictable world events, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the concept was a good guide even in such turbulent times and did not need to be modified during its period of validity. The previous concept led to the further development of large Association projects such as MojelD, Turrís and the like. In the area of domain management, it has led to the launch of new paid services such as VIP Domain and Domain Auction, which bring a higher level of security to key players of the Czech Internet and better conditions for the acquisition of cancelled domains by real creators of Internet content, while helping to improve the economics of the Association. It was therefore undoubtedly a successful concept and this document is an evolutionary improvement on the original rather than an effort to bring about revolutionary changes.

2 The Association and its main activities

The main activity of the Association is the management of the national .cz domain. Securing this activity in the future is the highest priority. For this reason, the Association also runs a number of projects in line with the above vision, which bring it a good reputation in the community and with public administration. Internally, the Association strives for maximum security and protection of its information and has repeatedly certified its core business according to ISO 27001 (Information Security Management). The Association will continue with these certifications while adhering to its business continuity plans, and is also considering other appropriate certifications for security and maintaining the continuity of the organisation's main activity.

2.1 Structure of the Association

Since 2005, the membership has been divided into three chambers - the Chamber of Registrars, the ISP Chamber and the Chamber of Domain Name Holders. This division makes it possible to balance the main priorities of each member. As the chambers are not comparable in size, some of the powers originally conferred on the general meeting have

been transferred to the Collegium. The Collegium is a body consisting of six representatives from each individual chamber and one representative each from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Czech Telecommunication Office and the Czech Chamber of Commerce. The Collegium then elects a five-member Board of Directors and a three-member Supervisory Board. Since the creation of this structure, there have been no significant events that would suggest its dysfunctionality. Similarly, the distribution of the powers of the individual bodies has also passed the test of time and the Association is likewise not planning any changes in this area. For these reasons, the Association does not plan any parametric or structural changes in this area during the period of this concept. A change would be necessary, for example, if candidates for the various bodies of the Association were repeatedly not elected, if a quorum repeatedly could not be reached, or if one of the institutions that sends representatives to the Collegium ceased to exist.

The Association is open to new members. The membership of a legal entity requires fulfilling only a few formal conditions and the payment of the currently rather symbolic membership fee. This naturally allows for a truly broad range of members, which can be an enrichment for the functioning of CZ.NIC. Nevertheless, this considerable openness creates the possibility of a hostile takeover, which is why new members must wait a year before acquiring voting rights. This barrier appears to be sufficient to cover the aforementioned threat, as it allows sufficient time to implement any countermeasures.

The Association handles the problem of inactive members by first, after one year, removing the voting rights of members who do not attend general meetings; if this situation continues for three years, the membership of inactive members is revoked. However, the Association cannot rely solely on restrictive measures, but should continue to motivate its members to be active by organising seminars on various topics related to the Association's activities. To facilitate engagement, a hybrid form will be preferred if appropriate and technically feasible given the topic.

2.2 Relationship with the state

In the past, the Association defined its position in relation to the state by means of memoranda with major state institutions. The memorandum with the Ministry of Informatics in 2006 was followed by additional documents, many of which were signed during the validity period of the previous concept. We can at least mention the memorandum with the Ministry of Industry and Trade from 2012, which confirmed the validity of the previous document and deepened cooperation between the Ministry and the Association, which, on the basis of said memorandum, provides consultations concerning mainly Internet Governance and related issues. In 2015, a memorandum was concluded with the Czech Telecommunication Office confirming cooperation between the two organisations in the area of security and development of the electronic communications network. In the same year, the Association signed an agreement to serve as the National CERT, and in 2017 and 2019 declarations were signed with the National Centre Against Organised Crime. In 2019, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Czech Ministry of the Interior – Special Activities Unit of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service. Cooperation with the state in the area of the online safety of children, specifically the

operation of the STOPonline.cz line, is defined in the Joint Declaration of Cooperation with the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, the Criminal Police and Investigation Service from 2021, and in the same year a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Czech Trade Inspection Authority concerning cooperation in the area of consumer protection, especially against suspicious e-shops. In 2024, the Association signed a Joint Declaration of Cooperation and Support for the Expansion of the IPv6 Protocol in the Czech Republic to support the further development and expansion of IPv6 in the Czech digital infrastructure.

The Association also provides certain services to state administration that use the capacity of its technical infrastructure. These include, for example, the operation of the international eIDAS node or the operation of the gov.cz domain registry. The Association also sends experts to advisory bodies and working groups.

The Association will continue to actively communicate with public administration in areas where it has high expertise. It will continue to bid for public administration contracts related to the activities of the Association, such as registry operations, DNS, security, open source software, digital identity, etc. The Association may also consider performing some functions free of charge if the given service will benefit the Internet community.

2.3 Finance

While payments for domain registrations remain the largest source of the Association's income, even considering that the number of registered domains has begun to stagnate, the number of services related to the operation of the national domain has expanded during the period of the previous concept. These are mainly the aforementioned auctions of cancelled domains and the VIP domain. Other major sources are projects that use technical infrastructure, whether for public administration or commercial entities, as well as revenue from open-source projects. In the past, the Association created a financial reserve, a highly liquid part of which is approximately twice the annual operating costs of the Association. This reserve serves as an important stabilising and insuring element. It appears to be optimal for maintaining the Association's operations, even in the event of very turbulent changes, and there is no need to change it; the Association will only try to maintain its level to keep pace with inflation. The Association will use this reserve fund primarily in the case of extraordinary events or large-scale situations. Furthermore, the Association may consider a one-off safe investment such as the purchase of a building in Milešovská Street in Prague in the past. The Collegium would be consulted on such a potential investment.

Today, the number of registered domains is already stagnating in almost all developed countries, and in many of them numbers are even declining. The ratio of the number of domains per capita in the Czech Republic is already very similar to the ratios in comparatively populated countries of Western Europe. The Association will continue to plan its budgets as typically approximately balanced, which, despite the search for additional sources of revenue and the ongoing pursuit of internal efficiencies, may mean increasing the price of domain registration in the future, particularly in light of inflationary cost increases. The Association's price list will continue to reflect the Association's priorities, including in the areas of supporting

legitimate domain name holders and law enforcement. The Association plans to maintain its current structure in its main outlines. Any changes will be announced well in advance so that individual actors can prepare for them in good time. The Association will continue to search for new opportunities to increase revenue in areas other than domain registration; however, it will not search for common business opportunities, but will try to implement projects primarily focused on support for advanced technologies which are otherwise related to the Association's activities.

2.4 Domain administration

The administration of the .CZ top level domain is the principal activity and mission of the Association and therefore this activity will have the highest priority among the Association's individual activities.

Domain administration is performed using the Association's own FRED registration system (Free Registry for ENUM and Domains), which the Association developed in the past and whose capacity and implementation qualities are fully adequate for the needs of the Czech environment. The development of this system will continue so that it reflects the current administrative and technological needs of the local community, Registrars and the Association. Great emphasis will be placed on the stability, availability and security of the solution on each level, both hardware and software, from network implementation to administrative activities.

The quality of the FRED registration system is evident, among other things, in the fact that it has been introduced by a number of top-level domain registries (TLD). Thanks to the implementation of FRED in completely different environments outside the Czech Republic, the Association gained a number of interesting incentives for the further development and improvement of this software, and some partners were even able to contribute to the development of FRED system and the programming of new modules. For these reasons, the implementation of FRED in foreign registries is beneficial and the Association will continue to pursue it actively. Past efforts have shown that it is too challenging for some domain administrators, especially those in developing countries, to operate their national domain on their own infrastructure, so the Association will consider introducing the operation of the domain registry as a paid service. This service could also be offered to other similar entities such as generic top-level domains (gTLD). In 2025, ICANN is expected to allow the launch of new gTLD, and in this context, the Association may offer its services to potential applicants from the Czech Republic. The Association will continue to offer the use of its DNS infrastructure to other TLD registries and, of course, also to customers of the VIP domain service, while these services must be advantageous for the Association and in no way compromise the stability and robustness of the .cz domain registration system.

Of course, the transparency of the entire domain registration process is also important, and therefore the Association will provide detailed statistical outputs from the registration system to the greatest possible extent to prevent abuse. Emphasis will continue to be placed on the user-friendliness and clarity of these outputs. With regard to the introduction of the new service of auction of cancelled domains, the attractiveness of certain data in the registry has

decreased. The Association will therefore consider further liberalisation of the provision of data, such as zone disclosure.

The Association will continue to actively monitor international developments and consider the introduction of changes in DNS technology or top level administration if deemed beneficial for the local environment. In the past, the Association introduced a service for clients with greater security requirements. The benefits of this service will be evaluated and its terms and conditions will be adjusted as appropriate to the needs of customers. If there is a suitable incentive, the Association will consider additional paid services related to domain registration. The implementation of essential changes concerning domain administration, the Rules of Registration, the registration system, etc., will always be discussed well in advance with the respective group depending on the type of the change and each change will be properly explained, with the possible impacts analysed ahead of time.

Domain administration will not lead to discrimination against any group or individual; on the contrary, the Association will promote natural competition and a fair market environment.

One of the Association's main priorities in domain administration remains the interests of authorised domain name holders, which the introduction of auctions has helped. The Association will look for other ways to increase the convenience of use and strengthen the protection tools for such holders, including their legal guarantees. The Association will also continue to strengthen mechanisms ensuring the security of personal and technological data in its databases and will actively prevent attempts to use these data without authorisation. The Association will maintain the current high standard of holder protection, such as validity expiration notifications, protection periods, and the like.

The Association will also continue its collaboration and exchange of information with the general courts, the Arbitration Court attached to the Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic and the Agricultural Chamber of the Czech Republic, the Police of the Czech Republic, the Office for Personal Data Protection, the Czech Trade Inspection Authority and other relevant state authorities and their bodies. The Association will contribute to the creation of an environment free of traces of unfair competition. The Association will not support activities that lead only to the production of empty and worthless content that results in the confusion of users (with the aim of achieving a "click-through" on the page), and, indirectly, in the depreciation of the value of the .cz domain.

In order to significantly accelerate the resolution of domain disputes, the Association in the past implemented an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system, which has proven to be more effective than the standard procedure through the general courts. The ADR system is currently being challenged in court and if found invalid by the court of the highest instance, the Association will try to find a suitable modification that would allow, consistent with the court's ruling, the further expedited resolution of domain disputes; alternatively, the Association could abandon the idea of alternative dispute resolution entirely.

Currently, national and European legislation in the area of cybersecurity and personal data protection is gradually being tightened, and there is increased pressure on the validity of

registration data. The Association will monitor the development of current legislation and its interpretation, and in the event of further developments in this area, it will respond appropriately – it may make certain changes to services of the type WHOIS or RDAP and to the mechanism for transferring these data between the Association and individual Registrars. The Association will continue to develop activities aimed at eliminating unauthorised and fraudulent registrations and improving the quality and timeliness of personal data in the registry (e.g. by using MojelD). At the same time, the Association will motivate users and registrars to verify domain registry identities.

2.5 IDN

Currently, the .cz domain does not support the registration of domains composed of characters other than ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange). IDN are supported by most of our neighbours (except Slovakia) and the Czech character set is also supported for the .eu domain. In the past, the Association committed to having the IDN issue decided by the local community. Public opinion polls have repeatedly shown that neither the general public nor experts support the introduction. The previous concept called for a review of this practice. And this initial commitment was withdrawn at a seminar with members in 2022, because periodic opinion polls were not proving to be very effective. Members quite intensively discussed the various options for the introduction of IDN in the .cz domain, including, for example, various types of binding diacritical and non-diacritical variants of the domain name, as well as the method of implementing the “sunrise period”. The conclusion of this seminar was the decision not to implement IDN; in the case of implementation the most preferred option seemed to be a tight binding of the IDN and ASCII variant, but unfortunately this is technologically infeasible (the combination of DNAME + CNAME). The Association will again consult with its members on this subject during the period of this concept.

2.6 Cooperation with Registrars

Accredited domain Registrars are a unique group from the perspective of the Association’s main activity, and the Association will continue to pay significant attention to them. The Association will cooperate closely with Registrars and support their activities, particularly through consultations, training, regular seminars, and the like. The Association will also provide active support to Registrars’ activities leading to the promotion of the Czech national domain, including related services or technologies in accordance with the current goals set out in this concept. The Association will continue the co-marketing program in which the Association financially participates in the marketing campaigns of Registrars; however, in view of declining interest, it will attempt to revise this program or, possibly, to launch another suitable mechanism to support active Registrars. This naturally does not conflict with the fact that the Association itself will attempt to find a suitable form of support for the .cz and CZ.NIC brands. If appropriate, the Association will try to offer new paid services that could expand Registrars’ sales portfolios. However, these services must be in agreement with the concept of domain management and must not disrupt the neutrality of the Association.

Primarily with a view towards strengthening the certainty of domain holders, the Association will continue to define the minimum level of standards for Registrar activities and the provision of services to end holders; this is currently implemented through the certification of Registrars. The certification system underwent a significant revision at the end of the previous concept and it will now be necessary to evaluate the changes and propose any corrections.

The Association will also actively monitor compliance with standards and other relevant regulations and rules. Registrars must behave predictably, in full compliance with the law, the agreement and the terms and conditions.

The Association will look for ways to help Registrars increase the robustness and security of their systems. Analyses of these proposals, including their economic impacts, will be submitted to the Chamber of Registrars for discussion.

3 Other activities of the Association

3.1 Projects

The Association will continue to look for new technological challenges and respond to them with new innovative projects while taking into account the continuing quality of existing projects and their stable operation. For projects with a significant impact on the Association's budget, an initial project plan will always be prepared at the time of their inception, and after internal approval, the plan will be elaborated, the project objectives and framework will be formulated, which will set the project success criteria and the form of financing. The benefits of individual projects will be evaluated periodically at the level of the Board of Directors; the adjustment of goals and a report from this evaluation will be submitted annually to the Collegium. Costs and benefits will be tracked separately for projects. The success criterion for a project may not only be profit, but also, for example, its importance for the local Internet community.

It is not the Association's primary objective to enter existing markets and compete with similar commercial products offered by other subjects. New projects should therefore be highly innovative and focused on advanced technologies, related to the activities of the Association or directed to areas that are not of commercial interest. The Association's areas of interest include cybersecurity, Internet protocols, routing, electronic identity systems, open source support, user security, safe Internet behaviour, helping disadvantaged users, and eGovernment. The Association will also gather input from members and the local Internet community and will likewise seek opportunities to support innovative student projects.

The Association will look for ways to engage other partners from the private and public sphere in funding projects. The Association will continue to actively participate in national and European projects as long as the announced topic is related to Association priorities. The Association will seek to link the individual projects so that their synergies can be exploited.

The Association will attempt to internally develop projects that generate operating profit. It will only pursue a potential spin-off or sale if an exceptional business opportunity arises or if these projects become a risk to the Association due to their size.

3.2 Internet infrastructure development

The Association currently operates several projects supporting local Internet infrastructure, e.g. mirrors of root DNS servers, the NTP server, and mirrors of certain services associated with the priorities of the Association, especially open-source projects. Support for such projects increases the security, stability and robustness of the local infrastructure. This aspect is not necessarily apparent in the standard operation of local networks but can prove to be a considerable advantage in the case of large attacks on the Czech Republic.

In cooperation with other operators, the Association established the FENIX group on the platform of the national NIX.CZ peer node, the aim of which is to contribute to the greater security and robustness of the Czech internet.

The Association will continue to support projects and services contributing to the higher comfort of Internet use and increasing the efficiency, stability and security of the Internet in the Czech Republic. The Association will regularly evaluate the usefulness of these activities for the local Internet community.

3.3 MojID

The MojID service is an example of a project for the development of Internet infrastructure. The main objectives of the project are to increase the validity of the data in the database of registered domains and to provide verified identities that can be used by third party applications. To date, around one million users have created mojID accounts, which they can use to log in to thousands of services including those that are the most popular.

A significant positive impulse for this project was the connection to the NIA state identity system. This has significantly increased the usability of this service in public administration systems. In the Czech Republic, there is a competitive environment for private digital identities with one dominant player, which is bank identity (Bank iD). Bank iD has several strong competitive advantages: in particular, it has a very broad user base thanks to its interconnection with banks, and at the same time the Bank iD operator spends considerable resources on promoting this service. Despite this, MojID remains popular with users, whose numbers are steadily growing. Currently, the number of users connected to the NIA has exceeded 100,000.

A significant advantage of MojID is the possibility of using more secure authentication means and thus achieving the highest level of assurance (LoA high). Other advantages include the possibility of cross-border use within the European eIDAS system, the credibility of the CZ.NIC Association as a non-commercial provider, better affordability for a wide range of services (e.g. the non-profit sector), and basic support for legal entity identity.

The Association will continue to support and develop the MojelD service and related systems so that users can continue to use an alternative means of identity. It will look for opportunities to collaborate with commercial partners, including implementers of identity services in third-party systems. A strong emphasis will be placed on linking mojelD with the systems of public administration and services using higher levels of authentication. In terms of the user base, the Association will in particular support the activity of users of the service. MojelD will continue to expand its functionality based on the requirements of users and partner commercial services or public administration.

During the long period of operation of MojelD, the Association has gained considerable expertise in the field of identity systems, thanks to which it was able to offer operation of the Czech eIDAS to the state. The Association has been operating this node on a tender basis since 2018 and the current agreement expires in 2028.

There is currently a public discussion on the design of the next generation European identity system – the European Digital Wallet (EUDIW). The Association will actively participate in discussions about the form of identity systems in the Czech Republic and the European Union, and is currently a member of a consortium that is testing the concept of a wallet for European digital identity in a pilot project. The launch of EUDIW could be a watershed moment for MojelD. During this period, the Association will evaluate the future direction of the service in a seminar with members.

In the context of increasing the potential of MojelD, the Association will explore the possibility of introducing and operating its own certification authority (expanding it with other digitisation tools – time stamps, etc.).

3.4 CSIRT.CZ

The Association began operating the CSIRT.CZ security team (the Computer Security Incident Response Team) on the basis of a memorandum with the Czech Ministry of the Interior from December 2010. The cybersecurity agenda was later transferred to the National Security Authority (NSA). With the new administrator, we managed to build on the existing cooperation and on the basis of the memorandum concluded in 2012, the Association operated the CSIRT.CZ team until the end of 2015. That year, the newly approved Cyber Security Act had already taken effect, and on its basis, a contest for the new operator of the national security team was announced. The Association won this competition and at the end of that year concluded an agreement with the NSA for the operation of this team. Later, the National Cyber and Information Security Agency (NÚKIB) was established and assumed the relevant authority in this area from the NSA.

The Association will continue to strive to operate the CSIRT.CZ National Security Team in accordance with the new Cyber Security Act (implementing the EU NIS2 Directive), the related European cybersecurity rules and the public contract. For this team, the Association will maintain the highest level of trust in internationally recognised organisations, such as Trusted Introducer and FIRST (Forum for Incident Response and Security Teams).

The Association will further develop related services that will help to enhance the cybersecurity of the Czech Republic. The Association will analyse the possibility of expanding the activities of the security team to include monitoring of hybrid threats, fake news, misuse of technology by extremist and terrorist groups, content generated by artificial intelligence and deep fake videos, and advanced persistent threat activities in the Czech Republic. The Association will look for appropriate ways to respond to the determined threats.

The Association will continue its cooperation with the local Internet community represented by the CSIRT.CZ working group. The Association will try to intensify cooperation with other security teams in the Czech Republic and abroad. It will also strive for a higher level of cooperation with state institutions that deal with cybercrime, security and defence, especially the NÚKIB and the Military Intelligence, the Police of the Czech Republic, the Security Information Service and the Office for Foreign Relations and Information. The Association will actively participate in discussions on the new cybersecurity strategy, which will also address the position of CSIRT.CZ. The Association will actively assist in the creation and development of security teams in the Czech Republic. The Association will seek to find other services related to CSIRT.CZ's activities in order to reduce the loss resulting from the operation of this public service.

3.5 Promoting education, awareness and prevention

The Association has been a long-time active supporter of education and awareness in connection with issues such as the Czech domain, the use of domain names and DNS protocol, Internet technology, cybersecurity, user security and Internet use in general. This activity takes several forms depending on the target group and the topic being communicated.

3.5.1 Academy

The Association has long operated the CZ.NIC Academy training centre, focused primarily on a narrow group of specialists in the Czech Republic. The main training centre is in Prague. During the pandemic, it was also necessary to start organising remote courses via videoconferencing. The courses are focused mainly on the priority areas of the Association and on modern technologies associated with the Internet. For specific groups, particularly from public administration and education, the Association organises specialised tailor-made courses. The training centre in Prague is also used for a variety of related events such as Internal seminars, user group meetings, etc. The Association provides significant discounts on course prices to the representatives of members, Registrars, and students.

The Association will continue to support and develop these activities. The Association will continue to search for suitable topics that will be attractive not only to Association members or Registrars and highly qualified specialists from the private sector, but also to experts from the relevant state administration bodies or state security forces in connection with their activities in the field of Internet security and the activities of the CSIRT.CZ team. The courses will cover not only technological topics, but also topics from other related disciplines such as law. The Association will evaluate the success and enrolment of each course and will rotate topics as

appropriate. If financially feasible, the Association will also consider inviting foreign lecturers. The Association will try to expand the subject of courses for the public, and to achieve this goal, it will work on appropriate forms of e-learning and webinars. The Association will continue to provide discounts to selected groups, including its members and students. The Association will also consider introducing certified courses.

3.5.2 CZ.NIC Publications

Another way the Association supports education is by publishing professional books. The Association mainly looks for topics that are not sufficiently attractive to local commercial publishers but which are of interest to professionals and the general public. CZ.NIC Publications publishes books by domestic authors and translations of foreign books. To maximise the readership of these titles, the Association sets prices that only cover the costs of producing the books. The Association has published more than twenty such books to date. In electronic form, the books were freely available on their website in formats suitable for printing and viewing on conventional computers and e-readers. Towards the end of the previous concept, the Association began charging for downloading electronic versions.

The Association will continue this activity. The payment of electronic versions will be evaluated with regard to the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the project. The Association will consider the appropriate form for providing discounts to students.

3.5.3 Cooperation with schools and students

The Association actively seeks cooperation with schools in the Czech Republic, primarily in areas that are considered a priority by the Association. Association employees actively lecture and supervise or oppose bachelor's and master's degree theses. The Association is a long-term partner of the Secondary School Vocational Activity competition.

This activity will also continue in the coming period. As for universities and possibly selected secondary schools, the Association will prefer projects that lead to deeper and individual cooperation. In the case of secondary and primary schools, the Association will collaborate in formal and non-formal education, provide support for teaching and help with curriculum development, e.g. the inclusion of safe behaviour on the Internet and threat recognition.

The Association will look for ways to reach more of these subjects, including related youth institutions such as libraries and low-threshold centres. The Association will consider supporting appropriate student competitions, educational programs, student hackathons and significant individual student projects in the areas of teaching and learning applications, education or those related to other Association activities. The Association will use these forms of cooperation to find talented individuals for its own activities.

3.5.4 Safer Internet project

The Association has long been involved in the European Safer Internet program as a coordinator for the Czech Republic, where it works together with the organisations Linka bezpečí (Safety Line), Dětské krizové centrum (Youth Crisis Centre) and the Jeden svět na školách (One World at Schools) program. The purpose of this program is prevention, raising awareness and educating children about safe behaviour on the Internet. The program also operates hotlines and helplines and combats child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on the Internet.

The Association will continue its Safer Internet program and will also operate the Safer Internet Centre and the STOPonline.cz line for reporting illegal content. The main focus will be safe behaviour on the Internet, the use of the Internet, new technologies and current threats. In view of the new European regulation (Digital Services Act) implemented into Czech law by the Digital Economy Act, the Association will consider obtaining Trusted Flagger status for trusted reporting of inappropriate content to online platforms such as social media. The Association will assist in the process of education and the search for a balance between freedom of speech, discrimination and the spread of hatred.

3.5.5 Education for the general public

In the past period, the Association prepared a number of projects for the education of the general public, with the most prominent probably being the TV series How to Use the Internet, which now has 120 episodes. The Association also focused on the preparation of programs for youth. The Association will continue to educate the general public as its budget permits. It will create training materials that will be able to reach out in an appropriate form especially to higher risk groups from the perspective of safe Internet use, such as seniors and young people. The main topics will include safe behaviour on the Internet, cybercrime and cybersecurity, the dangers and opportunities that lie in the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, or other topics related to the priorities of the Association.

3.5.6 Support for new Internet technologies

In the past period, the Association was active in supporting new Internet technologies such as IPv6 and DNSSEC. Despite being innovative and beneficial, many new technologies need initial support for education and for promoting their use. In the past, this support took several forms, e.g. PR and marketing campaigns, educational activities in the form of lectures at relevant events, organising our own conferences and seminars, publishing professional articles, printing professional books as part of CZ.NIC Publications, and courses at the CZ.NIC Academy.

At CZ.NIC Labs, the Association employs a team of professionals dedicated to the research and development of new technologies and products. A whole range of high-tech products that achieved international recognition were developed in the Labs, e.g., the DNSSEC Validator, the BIRD internet routing daemon), the authoritative and recursive Knot DNS server, and the Turris project. For example, support tools for working with data boxes were developed for the local community. The Labs issue reports on professional topics and employees give presentations at national and international conferences, actively join working groups of organisations such as the IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force), DNS-OARC (Operations, Analysis, and Research Center) and CENTR (Council of European National Top Level Domain Registries). The Association will seek to increase awareness of these activities in the relevant groups of the local internet community.

The Association will closely monitor current technological developments, continue to promote new technologies and at the same time seek appropriate forms of support and education given the benefits of the technologies and other synergies with other association priorities such as domain management, security and MojID.

The Association will continue to develop the CZ.NIC Labs and build a stable team of experts over time; it will also search for more topics of interest to the local Internet community for this department.

The Association will continue to support open source, both in its software and hardware products and in its internal activities.

The Association will actively participate in the standardisation of new Internet protocols within the IETF and other standardisation organisations. It will also be involved in national and international projects involving research and implementation of new technologies.

3.5.7 Technology conferences

Technology conferences are another form of public education and communication, especially with the professional community. The Association organises its own Internet and Technology conference, which is the main domestic communication channel for the Association's projects. The Association also sponsors a number of domestic conferences related to its priorities. The Association co-founded the conference for Czech and Slovak administrators of the CSNOG network and is currently co-organising this conference with NIX.CZ and CESNET. The association supports security-related conferences such as CyberCon.

In the past, the Association helped host the large international conferences of major organisations with which the Association collaborates, including RIPE, ICANN, IETF, CENTR, DNS-OARC (DNS Operations, Analysis and Research Center) and GÉANT.

The Association will continue to organise and support local conferences offering original presentations. It will also continue to occasionally host major international events. The Association will try to find partners to co-finance this activity.

3.6 The Turrís project

One of the Association's most significant technological projects is the Turrís project. This project clearly illustrates the strong coherence between the individual priorities of the Association. The original mission of the project was security research, which managed to reveal several significant security weaknesses, and the detection of a botnet with tens of thousands of devices was another major success. Project participants were addressed through the media or personally at conferences organised by the Association. The project's user portal supports the use of MojéD. The routers also use the recursive DNS daemon Knot Resolver.

The project has two main purposes. Firstly, it can be seen as an important contribution to security and security research in the Czech Republic. In addition to its own secure distribution of Turrís OS, which protects its users, a block list is created from the project data for further use in other security projects of the Association and its partners. The second level is the commercial potential, where if enough routers are sold per year, the project can be profitable and cover part of the Association's costs.

After the initial research phase of the Turrís project, a decision was made during the previous concept to continue the project, open it to the general public, and commercialise it. Two other versions of the router have been developed: the compact Turrís Omnia and the modular Turrís MOX. Prior to the production launch of both versions, their commercial success was tested in a crowdfunding campaign. Both of these tests went extremely well and the size of the collected amount ranked both campaigns among the five most successful campaigns originating in the Czech Republic. The number of routers sold is already in the lower tens of thousands.

In view of the disruption of supply chains due to the pandemic situation, project development was slowed in the previous concept period. The current versions of the routers are already on the edge of their lifespan and the Association is working on new versions that will bring the routers back to the state-of-the-art level in their categories.

The Association will evaluate the commercial potential of new versions and decide whether to continue or terminate the project. If the project continues, the innovation cycle will have to be accelerated in the future. Achieving a minimum neutral economic outcome of the project will be a high priority. The Association will consider the possibility of a spin-off given the size of the project.

3.7 International cooperation

Given the sphere in which it operates, the Association is involved in the activities of a number of international organisations whose activities are related to security, open source, DNS, network administration, Internet Governance and new Internet technologies.

These are mainly the organisations ICANN, RIPE NCC (Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre), NANOG (North American Network Operators Group), CENTR, IETF, DNS-OARC, GÉANT, ENISA (European Union Agency for Network and Information Security), ISOC and FIRST (Forum for Incident Response and Security Teams). The Association will continue to support the activities of international institutions responsible for Internet governance and its technological and security development and will send its representatives to the relevant meetings of these organisations.

The Association will also continue to develop cooperation with international organisations with similar aims, such as regional Internet registries, domain registry associations and especially domain registries themselves. The Association will actively participate in discussions on Internet Governance in order to protect the current liberal concept using the multistakeholder principle. The Association will consider supporting or establishing a Czech ISOC chapter.

3.8 Charitable activities

In the past, the Association has issued ad hoc funds in connection with significant negative events in the Czech Republic and, exceptionally, abroad. These included aid to those affected by floods and tornadoes and support for war-torn Ukraine.

The Association does not plan long-term systematic charitable support, but will consider, as it has until now, one-off releases of funds as current assistance to mitigate the consequences of major catastrophic events.

3.9. Social responsibility

The Association is aware of its obligations in the field of environmental protection, responsibility and sustainability. It will therefore seek to take this issue into account in all its activities, in particular to minimise negative environmental impacts. The Association will consider reasonable forms of introducing green technologies. The Association will start work on an ESG report and consider introducing certification in this area.

4 Employees

The Association will continue to pay attention to the development of the specialised skills and knowledge of its employees and their further education. It will encourage their active participation in expert discussions, conference presentations and publishing activities in order to increase their contribution not only to the Association but also the broader Internet community. Another goal will be to establish cooperation with other research teams.

The Association will provide greater support for the upskilling of its employees and encourage selected key staff to undertake top courses and certifications. If such upskilling is too costly, the Association may require these employees to commit to working for the Association for a certain period of time.

The Association will try to build for its employees a friendly, stimulating and open environment that encourages creativity and innovation. The Association will maintain fair pay and gender equality. The Association will do its utmost to retain key employees and will periodically compare the salary level of individual positions with the current situation in order to maintain competitiveness on the labour market. The Association will follow modern trends in the field of work environments and will apply them appropriately. The CZ.NIC team of employees will be continuously expanded according to the needs and number of individual projects. If operational and project needs or the situation on the labour market so requires, e.g. for maintaining quality employees, the creation of new branches will be considered.

5 Conclusion

This concept is expected to be valid for the period 2025–2030. It is a relatively long period and it is possible that some passages will become obsolete or some significant unexpected event will occur. The Board of Directors of the Association will carefully monitor the relevance of this concept and if any passage needs to be modified, it will submit the appropriate amendment to the Collegium.