

Pre-ENOG 17 interview with Andrey Vorobyev, Director of the Coordination Center for TLD .RU/.РФ

1. What are you expecting from ENOG 17?

The Coordination Center has been a partner of the Eurasian Network Operators Group (ENOG) forum for many years now. It is a unique event in our region that brings together technical experts from various companies in the telecoms industry including vendors, service operators, internet service providers and others. The idea to organize the ENOG forum came about in 2010 as a logical extension of the regional RIPE NCC conferences in Russia and other countries in our region. The first ENOG conference was held by the RIPE NCC in 2011 and was supported by the Coordination Center, the Technical Center of Internet (TCI), and MSK-IX.

The main purpose of the Coordination Center's involvement is to create and support cooperation mechanisms between operators in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This year, almost all events are being held online. This format has its specifics. On the one hand, remote participation limits the opportunities for personal contacts on the sidelines and at social events, but on the other hand, it enables a significant expansion of the total audience. This much is evident from the experience of the Coordination Center representatives' participation at many international venues during the pandemic.

At ENOG 17, we expect some updates from our colleagues on issues related to the Coordination Center's direct activities. First of all, I am referring to various aspects of the domain name system development. In particular, we are interested in discussing ICANN's new project to evaluate how 'healthy' the DNS system is. Mikhail Anisimov will talk about it. It will be interesting to hear what other issues there are on the agenda of the regional internet community – traffic exchange and routing security, depletion of the IPv4 address space, the progress of DNSSEC implementation and the most recent threats to information and cybersecurity.

Furthermore, the Coordination Center will report at ENOG 17 on the achievements and prospects of universal acceptance of internationalized domain names and email addresses, and the current formats of international and regional cooperation on this track. We would like to involve all the participants and stakeholders in the discussion of this topic.

2. Do you see the nature of your business changing now vs. before Covid-19?

The pandemic per se has not affected our essential activities in any way. Moreover, it turned out that teleworking is quite effective here. We have effectively moved part of the processes online – previously, those processes were carried out via

direct communication in our office or in the offices of accredited registrars. For example, scheduled registrar checks are now done remotely.

There is also another plus: more opportunities to participate in international and regional events. No need to pack your bags, take long flights or have to fight jet lag. All you need to do is turn on your laptop.

The impact of the pandemic on the industry is certainly being widely discussed at various international venues. In October, ICANN69 included an interesting discussion about the COVID-19 impact on the domain industry during an online meeting of the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO). The participants agreed that the pandemic has generally stimulated a growth in new registrations, primarily by small and medium-sized enterprises that were forced to change their business model and transition their activities to the internet. The discussion also touched upon the pros and cons of various incentives and support for registrants tested during the lockdown orders period.

3. How does the RIPE community fit in to what you do as a business?

The Coordination Center representatives regularly take part in RIPE meetings. We are interested in the experience of European region operators and RIPE participation in the Cooperation Working Group Agenda.

DNS Working Group Agenda is also of interest to Russian ccTLDs. In particular, the Developments in Encrypted DNS topic was raised during the most recent conference, RIPE81 – a discussion we found interesting and relevant.

The conferences and forums hosted by the RIPE NCC are generally a good way of communicating and developing common approaches among internet tech professionals.

4. Why is supporting the RIPE community important to you?

The purpose of our support for RIPE events is to inform the technical community about the Coordination Center's projects. We also have a long-standing and fruitful relationship with the RIPE and RIPE community for setting up and holding the Coordination Center's own events. RIPE representatives are always remarkable speakers and offer relevant presentations at plenary sessions and at technical meetings during the Russian Internet Governance Forum (RIGF) and the International conference for ccTLD registries and registrars of CIS, Central and Eastern Europe (TLDCON).

This year, RIPE representatives helped us in holding Russia's first Summer Internet Governance School. They spoke with the participants of the Basic principles of the internet (Open standards, End-to-end connectivity, and Network Neutrality) as the main driver of internet development.

For our part, we would like to present to the RIPE technical community our new project, Поддерживаю.РФ (<https://поддерживаю.рф/>), aimed at building an ecosystem for supporting Cyrillic domain names and email addresses. This project targets a wide range of technical specialists, primarily software and service developers, as well as system administrators. The project website offers the UA-Ready software catalog, documentation and practical recommendations for updating and customizing software products, services and systems to embrace universal acceptance and ensure equal service of all domain names and email addresses that have become available over the past decade. The domain name landscape has changed a lot and requires a revision of the old approaches, but some experts still tend to forget this. We hope that our project will be helpful and a really useful resource for the RIPE technical community.

5. Is there any session during ENOG 17 you are looking forward to attend?

I have already said that DNS-related issues are of greatest interest to us. Alexander Ilyin, a specialist from our technological partner, MSK-IX, will present a topic we are directly interested in from the point of view of our TLD .RU and .РФ operation – the TLD Domain Monitoring System.

We are definitely looking forward to the November 12 event where the Coordination Center will present a report, Universal Acceptance: Updates and Perspectives, and the Поддерживаю.РФ project. It is important to note that universal acceptance is one of the most relevant issues for the Coordination Center this year, primarily because we are marking the 10th anniversary of the .РФ Cyrillic domain. And so, in 2020, we talked a lot and discussed the .РФ domain, and more than that, we joined Russia's best developers to solve practical cases on the technical implementation of full support for the .РФ domain – at Digital Breakthrough, the largest professional hackathon competition, as well as at the youth summer school CTF.