Internationalization of the Legal URN Scheme

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1. **Summary of reasons and benefits** (Furore, April 05)

- **several countries** aim to adopt a URN scheme for legal documents
  - with a **structure similar** to the Italian one
  - with the necessary **adjustments**

- an international **common scheme** allows:
  - **cross-countries references**
  - creation of cross-countries **services** (i.e. CaseLex)
  - building of international **infra-structure** for resolution
  - **interchange** of experiences and tools
Proposal for the International Scheme

Structure proposed in Furore

```
urn : <meta-space> : <country-code> : <national-name>
```

where:

- `<meta-space>` is a common **meta namespace** for legal documents (the proposed name is `lex`)
- `<country-code>` is the ISO 3166 2-letters code: it, fr, dk, etc.
- `<national-name>` is the **uniform name** of a legal act in a certain country with a similar structure:
  authority : act : details : annex @ version ...

i.e.  
urn:lex:es:estado:ley:2002-07-12;123
urn:lex:it:stato:legge:2003-09-21;456
urn:lex:fr:etat:lois:2004-12-06;321

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The proposal

- to substitute the `<country>` element with a more general `<locality>`

```plaintext
urn : lex : <locality> : <national-name>
```

- locality is composed by the country and a related specification, according to local organisation (federation unit, region, ...)

```plaintext
<locality> ::= <country-code> *[:<specification>]
```

- i.e. `<br-locality>` ::= br ; `<federation-unit> ; `<municipality>
```plaintext
urn:lex:br;sp;sp:camara.municipal:projeto.lei:2004-11-23;4903
```

```plaintext
<it-locality> ::= it ; `<region> ; `<province>
```plaintext
urn:lex:it;toscana;firenze:comune.firenze:ordinanza:2004-11-23;4903
```

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Analysis of Brazil proposal

1. Motivation

• **scenario** of federal state of Brazil:
  - legislative production from: federal, state and city houses
  - 27 states, 5,000 cities: explosion of authorities
  - need of distributing the **resolution** process

• this situation is **similar** to many countries:
  - legislative production at 2 levels: federal/state or state/region
  - a large number of bodies issues **local** measures

2. Positive considerations

- a specification of country is useful for distinguishing **federal** from **state** act
- useful to help the **decentralization** of resolution process
3. Critical aspects

- use of abbreviation: the scheme uses full denominations
  i.e. \texttt{urn:lex:br;sp:stato:lei:...} \rightarrow \texttt{urn:lex:br:sao.paulo:stato:lei:...}

- the splitting of enacting authority in 2 elements (<locality> and <authority>): the field is not self-explaining:
  i.e. \texttt{urn:lex:it;toscana:regione:...} \rightarrow \texttt{urn:lex:it;toscana:regione.toscana:...}

4. Open issues

- \textit{inter} state/region/province/... institutions:
  which areas have to be inserted? \texttt{everyone} or the \texttt{common}?

- \textit{migration} of a body from an area to an other one:
  how to resolve old URNs?
Official registration of “lex” namespace

1. URN scheme for legal documents is stable and robust
   - widely used in Italy in several institutions
   - has been tested a lot also to identify the official collection
   - is regularly maintained (last version is 1.3 of May 06)
   - other countries aim to adopt it

2. Why asking for the official registration?
   - having a standard mechanism to link norms in a persistent way for Internet community
   - addressing the standard evolution according to IANA general principles
   - sharing a common infrastructure for routing the resolution via DNS
Official registration of “lex” namespace

3. Official IANA registration requires the submission of a RFC to IETF

- technical considerations on uniqueness, persistence, resolution, …

- elements demonstrating that the organization promoting the URN is

  > stable
  > able to maintain
    > the namespace
    > the registration service for a long time
Notes on registration requirements

1. International legal URN based on the Italian schema satisfies all the technical requirements needed for the official registration
   - IETF compliant
   - well-defined with respect to the requested aspects (syntactic structure, uniqueness, persistence, assignment rules and resolution mechanisms)

2. Responsibility of registration and maintenance
   - in Italy standard was proposed within the Normeinrete project
   - it has been issued by CNIPA as national technical norm
   - a WG, coordinated by ITTIG, continues to maintain it
   - currently CNIPA collaborates and funds the working group
   - the Italian branch can be soon operative (“nir” => “lex:it”)

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Final proposal

1. CNIPA seems to be the most suitable candidate to propose the official registration
   - institutional role in standardization activities for PAs
   - international collaboration for technical matters

2. To charge CNIPA with IANA registration of “lex” namespace
   - basic structure:
     urn : lex : <country-code> ; <specification> : <national-name>
   - <national-name> is defined for every country by a proper institution, on the base of a common structure
     <authority> : <measure> : <details> : <annex> @ <version>
   and to receive adhesions from other countries
   - to make the application more relevant for IANA

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3. If accepted, to create the basic infrastructure
   - root point of namespace ("lex.urn.arpa")
   - primary DNS server for "lex" routing (i.e. c/o CNIPA)
   - routing to activated national DNS servers ("lex:it", "lex:br", ...)

   to activate national services
   - routing to various national resolvers ("it:stato", "it:regione", ...)

• The benefit
  - direct access by urn: unnecessary conversion in http scheme