



**ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 3
7-bit and 8-bit codes and their extension
SECRETARIAT : ELOT**

TITLE :	Netherlands Position Paper
SOURCE :	Mr J.W van Wingen
PROJECT:	---
STATUS :	---
ACTION ID :	FYI
DUE DATE :	---
DISTRIBUTION :	P, O and L Members of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2 WG Conveners, Secretariats WG 3 Members ISO/IEC JTC 1 Secretariat ISO/IEC ITTF
MEDIUM :	P
NO OF PAGES :	3

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Date: Παρασκευή, 13 Μαρτίου 1998 1:22 μμ

Dear Mr. Van Wingen,

Prof. Shibano and I would suggest that this paper be submitted to WG 3 first since they will have 8859 Part 2 discussion.

I copy this message to Mr. Melagrakis.

Best regards,

Toshiko Kimura

Here is a contribution to the discussion on a very controversial issue. We want a clear statement from SC2.

Best regards form J. W. van Wingen

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POSITION STATEMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS NATIONAL BODY ON THE SEPARATION OF CHARACTERS

J. W. van Wingen 1998-03-10 version 1.2

Dear Colleagues

At the SC2/WG2 meeting, July 1997, in Crete the position was taken that:

LATIN SMALL CHARACTER S WITH CEDILLA
LATIN SMALL CHARACTER T WITH CEDILLA
Would be different from:
LATIN SMALL CHARACTER S WITH COMMA BELOW
LATIN SMALL CHARACTER T WITH COMMA BELOW

The Netherlands delegate did not get the chance to submit a paper explaining why we were so much against. Thus our agreements were not sufficiently listened to.

Since that meeting we have investigated what the consequences would be for our systems and those elsewhere. And these are so serious that the Netherlands is requesting SC2 to withdraw any resolution that supports the separation of the characters in question. Furthermore, it was discovered that the facts presented about these were not based on reality.

1. Romanian

We studied many papers in Romanian, in particular with the valuable help of the library of the Institute for Eastern European Law of Leiden University, which has more than 300 books in Romanian. It became clear that many documents use cedillas in some font, and comma below in some other, often on the same page (most recent of 1996), without making any difference in meaning.

2. Turkish

A first look into a Turkish newspaper (bought last Monday) showed many letters S with a comma below, obviously meant as a cedilla, and real cedillas elsewhere on the front page, dependent on the font used. This means that also in Turkish no difference in meaning exists, and thus that there is no reason to assign a separate code for each. Still worse, suppose that this page has to be coded, which code should be chosen for a letter? This situation would create much confusion in Turkey.

The conclusion is that it is not possible to distinguish in a mixed text Romanian / Turkish what is what. Not even the use of a magnifying glass would be of any help.

3. Exchange of personal data

In the free traffic of persons over the world it is important that they can be identified with their correctly spelled name. If a Romanian wants a permit to stay in our country, his name has to be entered into our personal registration system (GBA). This is based on Teletex, subset of ISO/IEC 6937, or ITU T.51. Because GBA has been established by law, its conventions are hard to change, not to speak of implementations already working. But not only money is involved, should an extra letter be added. The new letter should be easily distinguishable from the others. This is not the case with cedilla vs. comma below. Thus the Romanian will be told that his name will be entered with a cedilla, and that he has to sign that he agrees to that. If he does not, he will not get a permit, and will not be allowed to stay.

Suppose that he does not accept his decision, and goes to complain to the National Ombudsman, or worse, to the European Court of Justice. Then it will be important in the case that follows that an ISO standard supports making a difference between cedilla and comma below. Should the Kingdom of the Netherlands for that reason lose its case, the damage will be enormous, and may lead to destabilisation of our administrative system.

More is affected. The Police also used GBA for registering criminals. Introducing different spellings could cause more confusion than we are prepared to accept. We would rightly claim that National Security is at stake.

Under these circumstances it will not surprise anyone that we are determined to oppose the separation of these characters with all means available. Should SC2 not come to its senses, we'll appeal to JTC1, and higher if needed. I appeal to you, dear colleagues, to reconsider the matter, in order that we arrive at decisions that are in the public interest.

Toshiko KIMURA
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