MODULE 1: **TITLE, AUTHORS, etc**

Code assigned:	*2015.001aG*	(to be completed by ICTV officers)

Short title: Modification to Code of Virus Nomenclature, Section II, paragraph 3.13
(e.g. 6 new species in the genus *Zetavirus*)

Modules attached (modules 1 and 10 are required)	1 ☒	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
	6 ☐	7 ☐	8 ☐	9 ☒	10 ☐

Author(s):

Stuart Siddell (stuart.siddell@bristol.ac.uk)

Corresponding author with e-mail address:

As above

List the ICTV study group(s) that have seen this proposal:

A list of study groups and contacts is provided at http://www.ictvonline.org/subcommittees.asp . If in doubt, contact the appropriate subcommittee chair (fungal, invertebrate, plant, prokaryote or vertebrate viruses)	n/a

ICTV Study Group comments (if any) and response of the proposer:

Date first submitted to ICTV: May 2015
Date of this revision (if different to above):

ICTV-EC comments and response of the proposer:

MODULE 9: **NON-STANDARD**
Template for any proposal not covered by modules 2-8.

Code	*2015.001aG*	(assigned by ICTV officers)

Title of proposal: Modify the ICVCN, Section II, paragraph 3.13, to disallow diacritics and other non-standard characters in taxon names

Text of proposal:

The International Code of Virus Classification and Nomenclature (ICVCN), Section II, Paragraph 3.13 stipulates that:

Subscripts, superscripts, oblique bars and non-Latin letters may not be used in taxon names. Hyphens should not be used when attaching numbers or letters to the end of a series of species names and should never be used in names of genera, subfamilies, families or orders.

Whilst the vast majority of taxon names adhere to these rules, there are a few virus species names that also include, for example, apostrophes, brackets and diacritical marks.

According to the Taxonomic Code (paragraph 2.3) "the primary purpose of naming a taxon is to supply a means of referring to the taxon, rather than to indicate the characters or history of the taxon" and Paragraph 2.1(ii) further advises taxonomists "to avoid or reject the use of names which might cause error or confusion".

To conform to these principles, names need to be written using a defined set of universally recognized characters. This is why non-Latin characters aren't acceptable. It is for the same reason that the Latin alphabet used in taxonomy should not be expanded to include ligatures, diacritical and punctuation marks that are not universally recognized.

I propose, therefore to modify the Code of Virus Nomenclature, Section II, Paragraph 3.13 to stipulate that:

Ligatures, diacritical marks, punctuation marks (excluding hyphens), subscripts, superscripts, oblique bars and non-Latin letters (i.e. those not included in the ISO basic Latin alphabet) may not be used in taxon names. Numbers and hyphens are allowed but hyphens should not be used when attaching numbers or letters to the end of a series of species names and should never be used in names of genera, subfamilies, families or orders.

I believe this proposal will simplify the naming of taxa. I do not propose that the new rule is applied to existing taxa but suggest that individual Study Groups are asked to consider renaming problematic existing taxa according to the new rule.