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ICANN81 | AGM – Joint Meeting: GAC and CPH  
Monday, November 11, 2024 – 15:00 to 16:00 TRT

DAN GLUCK:

Hello and welcome to the GAC meeting with the Contracted Parties House on Monday 11th November at 12:00 UTC. My name is Dan Gluck from the ICANN Policy Development GAC Support Team. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted in the chat pod. Interpretation for this session will include all six UN languages and Portuguese. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. Please state your name and the language you will speak if other than English. And remember to speak at a reasonable pace. As a kind reminder, tables with microphones are reserved for GAC members, observers and invited guests.

I will now hand the floor over to Nico Caballero.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much, Daniel. Welcome, everyone. This session will be running for 60 minutes, so we got to make sure that we have enough time for discussions, the Q&A session and so on and so forth. So it is my pleasure to introduce Beth Bacon, Sam Demetriou, Ashley Heineman,

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Owen. I don't need to introduce Nigel Hickson, a vice-chair, and Thiago Dal-Toe from Colombia, my vice-chairs. So welcome.

We're going to be talking about many different issues this afternoon, among them SOIs and ICANN's ethics policy, the next round of gTLDs, and registration data accuracy, among other things.

So without further ado, let me handle the floor to Ashley Heineman. Ashley, please go ahead.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN:

Thank you. I was going to give this to Sam to start off, but I will go ahead and get things moving along. So hi, I'm Ashley Heineman. I am the current (but not for very much longer) chair of the Registrar Stakeholder Group. I have Owens Smigelski here because he is going to be taking over the chairmanship at the end of this meeting. So I wanted to make sure you saw his face.

So yeah, we wanted to talk to you all today about registration data accuracy because we know this is an issue of interest to you all and it's an interest across the community here, and we thought it would be a useful opportunity to talk to you all about what we as registrars are already required to do for data accuracy because sometimes that part gets kind of left out of the conversations. So we have a slide deck here that has a lot of information. I am not going to go through all of it in excruciating detail, so you're welcome. But I did want to make sure that it was available to you as a resource as we continue these conversations, so don't be surprised if I start skipping through these slides fairly quickly.

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But let's get started, first, in terms of what is data registration, data accuracy, in the context of registrars and per our contracts with ICANN. Data accuracy is, first, syntactical accuracy. So, for example ... Slow down? Dang it. I knew it was coming. I gotta slow down. All right. For example, for syntactical accuracy, email addresses need to have an @ symbol in there. So we have to make sure that we do these checks at time of registration and also to annually remind our registrants that this needs to be correct.

But we also need operational accuracy. And so what we are required to do is get affirmative response from our customers to an email so we know that that is working and that is a way to get in touch with them.

So we're going to look at here, in very quick order, the different references in our contracts to what we're required to do on data accuracy and, first and foremost, our registrar accreditation agreement.

So, in the context of syntactical and operational, we are required to have our domain owners, or they're obligated, to provide accurate and reliable contact details to the registrar and update their contact info within seven days of any change. If the domain owner purposely provides inaccurate or unreliable information or does not update their data within seven days of any change or does not respond to verification requests within 15 days, that domain must be suspended or canceled.

This is again going into a little bit more detail, but the information is essentially the same. And this talks about how, at least annually, a registrar must present to the registrant the current WHOIS information

and remind them that provision of false WHOIS information can be grounds for cancellation of their domain name, and they must make corrections if there are any.

So that's just it at a very high level. I encourage you all to go through this information. If you have any other questions, happy to answer them.

But we wanted to also take some time to explain to you that data accuracy is important to us, too, as registrars. We know it's important to you. We've heard from you all. Understood. But it's also important to us, and we wanted to make sure that you all were aware of that, because sometimes the perception seems to be that we don't care about accuracy. And we do for meeting our contractual obligations, policy, legal, for sending notices to our domain owners for renewals, for example, for contacting the domain owner when problems arise, like if their domain has been compromised for DNS abuse. And in that same vein, we want our customers to be happy. We also want to protect them from identity theft and financial fraud.

So I just want to go over briefly what we are doing today. So we talked about what we're required to do in our contracts and, in keeping with that, just to reiterate, we must ensure that all required fields are populated and that data matches required publicly available formatting standards (that's a syntactical) and, for verification, that the registrar must contact the domain owner by email or telephone and receive an affirmative response. This process allows us as registrars to ensure that all required data has been collected and to confirm that the provided data is accurate, reliable and up to date.

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And if you look at this little box on the side here, we did kind of a ranking. A grading is probably the better way to characterize it. We have found that this is global in scope, it's cost-effective and it's reliable.

So what else could we do? And there's nothing that prohibits us from doing more. In fact, some of us do. We do more than what is required in our contracts for various different reasons. So some of the things that are available to us, for example, is address validation using third-party services. For those of you in the United States, there's FedEx. You might know that when you're going in to do a FedEx shipment, it will auto populate. It pulls from a database. And that's what they do. But this is really limited to countries in which the companies own and operate this information. And the consumer typically will pay for this service. For the example of FedEx, this type of cost is covered in their shipping costs. So it doesn't come out of thin air. There are costs associated with this. So because a functional delivery address is the most important component of an order for such companies after payment, they can invest in significant resources into developing these systems. And so the validation tends to be reliable where it is available. So it is reliable if it's available, but it's not global in scope. And it's not necessarily cost effective. At least we don't have a model by which to say whether or not it's cost effective. So when you're thinking about things in terms of making it a requirement for g's, for registrar, to provide this sort of thing at a global scale, it's almost impossible unless you recognize that there is going to be a significant margin of error.

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**NICO CABALLERO:** I have a quick question on the topic. Sorry to interrupt you, Ashley, but do you have information about the percentages of the third-party services used at this point that you can share with us? Like, what percentage of the whole?

**ASHLEY HEINEMAN:** I don't have a percentage. There are some cases in which registrars will use them in country code, in serving country codes, where it's available. So again, I don't have percentages. But you know, if we ever explore doing more of a deep dive into case studies, we could look at that.

So other options: online mapping services, Google Maps. I see Google in the audience, but I won't point her out. That is certainly something that could be used. It is used for certain purposes, but it also is not globally comprehensive, nor is it authoritative. So addresses may appear within its database despite not being a valid postal mail address. And correcting those invalid addresses can be extremely difficult to achieve, resulting in an unreliable service overall. So in this scorecard, we've rated it as not global in scope. Still don't really know if it's cost effective, and it's certainly not reliable.

Postal service verification. So again, this is something offered in some countries, but it is not offered by all postal services worldwide. There is no centralized API for any registrar intending to use a postal service system globally, and it would need to dedicate significant software development to integrate with each different postal service's API. So even if a postal address verification system confirms that the address is valid, this type of check cannot confirm whether the person claiming

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the postal address is actually contactable at the address. So this poses a lot of significant financial costs as well. So in terms of our scorecard, it's not global in scope, it's not cost effective and it's not reliable.

So ID verification. We've heard a lot about ID verification over the years, and, again, at a global scale, there is a significant diversity of types of worldwide identification documents. And registrars typically would have to rely on the service of third party vendors to verify those documents. This brings in significant new costs and would impact pricing of domain names significantly for the end user.

In 2021, ICANN estimated that identity verification on a global scale would cost 10 to \$20 per review. That's per review of each domain.

And then there's also liability of the approver of the approver. If the validation is completed incorrectly, then either a genuine registrant was denied their domain name or a false document was used to complete the verification. Either way, that's a problem.

So accessibility, equity and legal concerns. Not everyone across the globe has identification documents, so requiring the display of these documents disproportionately adversely affects marginalized communities who lack a government-issued identification. We recognize that there's IDs in lots of countries, but it's not a requirement in all countries to have them.

Registrars should not evaluate the legitimacy of identification documents. There's no real scalable way for us to know the requirements of each type of identity document worldwide.

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Further, reviewing identity documentation is a data processing activity which goes well beyond the minimum required to offer the service. This would easily be in conflict with a number of different data protection rules.

And validating identity documents from only some, but not all, jurisdictions could also result in bad actors purposefully using documentation from non-validated locations. This means that honest registrants are faced with excessive and unnecessary data processing while dishonest abusers of the system go uncaught, having found a workaround to even the most stringent identity validation processes.

I wanted to quickly address that one of the assumptions that we often hear is that identity documentation will have some impact on DNS abuse. And what we have seen is that even in those areas where verification processes are in place, there is no clear evidence that verification systems are effective at preventing abuse. TLDs, with these requirements today, even those that are fully verified, often appear on “top 10 most abused TLD” lists. There is, however, emerging evidence that these identity document verification systems can be circumvented through the purchase of false verifications or documentation.

So in the absence of evidence demonstrating either a problem with the accuracy of existing registration data or benefit such as disrupting or mitigating DNS abuse gained through additional validation and verification processes, these drawbacks have led registrars to not adopt these identity verification services.

And that is the end of my presentation. I think the question that we would like to pose to you is, what problems or issues are GAC members and their respective governments seeing which improving the accuracy of domain name registration data could help to resolve or remediate? And do you have any questions about the presentation?

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that, Ashley. A very detailed presentation indeed. We can go back at any time to any of the slides in case any GAC representative might need to go back at this point. So the floor is open for questions, comments or anything you would like to say at this point. Or if you prefer to directly answer the question on the screen, the floor is open. And I have ... Is it CPU? I'm sorry, CTU, go ahead please.

NIGEL CASSIMIRE:

Yes, Nigel Cassimire from Caribbean Telecommunications Union. I am very happy to see that the registrars need and are committed to accuracy of the registration data as well. But we keep seeing these high statistics, about 40% inaccuracies and stuff like that. Are there any other or current estimates as to the accuracy? And given the registrar's commitment, why would it be so high?

OWEN SMIGELSKI:

Hi, this is Owen Smigelski. I guess I'm not familiar with the study about 40%. Know, since the GDPR and the temporary specification, a lot of that data has been masked. So I'm not sure how there could be a current analysis. I formerly spent seven years as ICANN Contractual

Compliance, and with that I was on the Steering Committee for the WHOIS ARS. Oh goodness. I don't know what the ARS stood for, but that was measuring accuracy of registration data. And the numbers were not that close to 40%. I think the last round of the ARS that came out in probably 2017 had at least one field contactable through email, telephone, postal. And this was operability. Actually it did work for something like well over 90% of domain names.

So I'm not sure where that 40% is coming from, but it certainly would—

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: It would have to depend on how you're defining accuracy.

OWEN SMILGELSKI: Exactly.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: And if it was that high, we would have a major compliance issue with ICANN.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you so much, CTU, for the question. Thank you, Owen, for the answer.

Any other question or comment? I don't see any hand up. I see the European Commission as a matter of fact. European Commission, please go ahead.

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GEMMA CAROLILLO:

Thank you very much Nico. First of all, I would like to echo what has just been said by Nigel. We are very happy to hear that this topic is of importance for the registrar communities. We have heard that from the Board. It seems now everyone is agreeing that accuracy is a topic of importance. And so I think also why is that important—like, the question you're posting. I mean, I think the Board has recently written about the importance of accuracy of registration data for the security stability of the DNS. We got it in the Security and Stability Review report from SSR2 in 2021. In the European Union, we have it in law that this is important and why. So I would not repeat that.

Regarding your very interesting presentation, I would have just two questions. One, you have explained very clearly about the validation and verification systems. Does this occur at the time of the registration, at the time of renewal, or is there a fixed time when this process occurs?

And second, since you rightly pointed out (rightly in my opinion) the issue of global scale validation verification, have you considered the discussion in the group about a risk-based approach where validation and verification are especially tailored to registration that presents high risk? Thank you very much.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN:

At least in my tenure, I'm not aware of us having specific discussions, but we are aware of the coordination group's recommendations that mention this. I think part of the conversation would have to be, what does that mean and what standard are we basing it to? So it's certainly

something that registrars could explore. But as of now, I'm not aware of us having detailed conversations on that at a group level.

GEMMA CAROLILLO:

Sorry. First of all, just to say about the risk-based approach, I'm sure the EU ccTLDs, which have longstanding experience, can share a lot of these practices. But my first question is if you could please explain about the timing of the verification. Thank you.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN:

To make sure I understand ... Oh, you were saying at registration or at renewal. Right now it's at registration. And we are required to annually remind people that they need to have their accurate data and to update their data as necessary.

NICO CABALLERO:

I have Japan next and then the Japan, please go ahead.

[TOMO]:

Hi. I have a [inaudible] question. You said that, in January, the registrars take care of data accuracy, but is it true for all registrars? I mean, there is maybe some bad registrars that don't care about the accuracy. So my question is about is it all due to all registrars or not?

OWEN SMIGELSKI:

Hi. Every ICANN-accredited registrar is required to comply with the terms of the RAA. And the RAA has significant details in there regarding

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the accuracy of data verification, validation and also what they have to do if they have any information suggesting that a domain name is inaccurate. That's whether they discover it, somebody reports it to them, or it comes to ICANN. So that data does have to be corrected. It's not that they can just ignore that. If there's a concern with that, please do report it to my former colleagues at ICANN Contractual Compliance because they can and do force registrars to correct information like that. And if you have information suggesting that a registrant's contact information is incorrect, submit that to the registrar and, if not, definitely contact Contractual Compliance. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you for that, Owen. I have the UPU next.

TRACY HACKSHAW:

Thank you very much. Can you go to slide ... Is it 15 where you refer to the UPU's study that was done or something? Right. So since this is, I think, 2018 you're referring to, I believe there's a lot of work being done in this area on the digital side by the UPU in terms of developing something to the effect of a universal digital ID in the addressing side. So even though the point you're making about the APIs and so on and so forth are challenging, I think that effort is being addressed currently at the UPU with postal operators and governments. So it may be useful to tap into that work that's being done. And there's a possibility you may have a less challenging way to deal with addresses because of the digital ID project that's currently underway. Thank you.

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NICO CABALLERO: Thank you, UPU. I have the European Commission next and then Denmark.

GEMMA CAROLILLO: Thank you. Just to follow up on a few points (and maybe this is a chicken-and-egg problem), you mentioned that, in any given point, ICANN can request to correct any inaccuracies, and there would be a problem if a lot of data were inaccurate. But I think we need to distinguish also between the two time periods before the entry into [the] GDPR and after, because in the past ... And all these metric reports that were mentioned earlier. So as was mentioned, one of them was dated in 2017, so it was before when data were publicly available. So ICANN in a sense would rely on those data to intervene while now a lot of this data have been redacted. So also ICANN Compliance can intervene in case that there is a complaint. But for a complaint to exist, again, if data are not available, sometimes you cannot simply know if there is a problem, which is a problem in itself. So any thoughts about that? Like, can ICANN and the community spot inaccuracy as easily as before, given that a lot of data have been redacted? And what are your thoughts on that? Thank you.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Owen can jump in and correct me if I'm wrong, but we know pretty quickly if an email is not working. That's how we get notices to them. That's how we make sure we get paid. So we spot that. And I don't know how much we've relied on external forces to spot data inaccuracies for us, but I'll let Owen jump in.

OWEN SMIGELSKI:

Thanks. Within the past month or two, Namecheap received two registration data inaccuracy tickets. Both of them were for undeliverable emails that had to be corrected. And so they do still come in.

Also, not every registration is redacted. We actually also received a registration data inaccuracy complaint about a registrant who had their data present in the RDDS. They had requested that info to be out there. So it is possible to happen there. And yes, there are challenges with being able to determine. One example is, if you request data via the RDRS, I've heard people complain that, well, the data that comes out is inaccurate, but that's the only way we hear about it: when people complain about it. If they receive inaccurate data, let the registrar know because then we're supposed to take that action and correct it and, if not correct it, suspend the domain name. Thanks.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, Owen. I have Denmark next.

FINN PETERSEN:

Thank you, Chair. Just to try to give a perspective on the question put forward on what government thinks is good with the accuracy and what have could be achieved, at least we can see that our ccTLD introduced digital signature quite a while ago. And as a Danish citizen or Danish company, you can only get a dot-dk domain name if you use the digital signature. The number of false web shops on dot-dk went down

dramatically, which was a big benefit to Danish users, which, when they saw this and it was on a dot-dk domain name, they thought was a valid web shop. I think I can provide the data for that time. I think our ccTLD actually did some study there.

So that was a huge benefit for the society, and I think we are here as government to try to take care of the society. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, Denmark. Any reaction? Any ... So thank you so much. For the sake of time, we need to move—is that an old hand, European Commission? Melina?

All right, so let's move on. We have the next-round-of-new-gTLD topic, and for that, I will give the floor to Sam Demetrious.

SAM DEMETRIOS:

Thanks so much, Nico. So we're sitting here today. We're about a year and a half away from the next round of applications for the new gTLD program opening, and we thought this might be a good time to ask the GAC about if to an extent you guys have given some thoughts to how you're planning to engage with applicants in the next round.

And the reason we thought this was a timely discussion to begin having, understanding that we probably won't be able to reach the full conclusion of this today, has to do with a couple of different developments that have taken place in recent months. So one is some statements that the GAC has made, going back to the Kigali meeting, about how the restrictions on registry contractual commitments in the

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next round that might pertain to content ... So the restriction against that ... ICANN has said that they will not be able to enforce those ... [It's about how] not being able to have those may impact the way the GAC pursues remedies with certain gTLD applications in the future.

And the second reason we thought it might be interesting to start thinking about this is because unlike this time (say, a year and a half before the last new gTLD program opened), there have been more potential applicants who have made public declarations about their intentions. It was, I would say, a much more secretive kind of hush-hush process last time around versus this time, where we do know of some companies and some different types of organizations who have been a bit more open about their intentions to apply in the next round.

So given that the landscape is a little bit different now, and given that we have the experience of 2012 under our collective belts, we wanted to pose this question to the GAC and really just, I would say, more open a conversation about this. Like I said, we don't have to have all the answers today, but we thought it might be a good thing to discuss between our two groups.

So I'm happy to hear any input that GAC members have on this.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you for that, Sam. So the question is on the screen. How is the GAC planning to engage with the new gTLD applicants in the next round? Obviously, we're not talking about ccTLDs, just to make sure this is obvious. And if there are any plans, not necessarily from the GAC, you can talk about your countries, of course, if you have made any review of

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the applications, or if you have so far interacted with potential applicants at this point.

So again, the floor is open. And I don't see any hand up. I don't see any hand online either, which means that I will go back to you, Sam. Sorry, there's the UK. UK, go ahead, please.

NIGEL HICKSON:

Thank you, Nico. We wouldn't like not to have any discussion on this point, I'm sure, because I think they're really excellent questions that you posed. You probably have taken us on the hop a bit, as they say, in that we haven't had detailed discussions. We've had detailed discussions, of course, on a whole range of new gTLD issues, including applicant support and contention and fees and et cetera, et cetera. And we're taking part alongside you in the IRT process, which we greatly enjoy.

But our interaction with potential applicants and how we're going to deal with the RVCs and PICs is, I think, an issue that we still have to address in some detail. It's interesting: you say you've seen public announcements by potential registrars for new names or perhaps existing registrars, but who would like new names? I haven't seen that myself, but perhaps I don't get out enough, as they say.

But on the RVC point, I think clearly you've raised an important issue there. Of course we've discussed this. We respect, of course, the Board decision on this in relation to their commitments to the bylaws. But I think it would be difficult to conclude at the moment how we're going to address these points.

Of course, although we can't enter into a voluntary commitment, there is no, if you like, sacrosanct prohibition on saying to an applicant for a domain name, Yeah, we like it, but we don't like black," or, "We don't like white," or, "We don't like yellow tables," or whatever. Now, we might know that can't be enforced, but it doesn't stop the discussion.

I would just leave it there because others would have many ideas and would be more knowledgeable than I on these points. But thank you for the question and thank you for the continued dialogue we have on these points.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you for that input, UK. I have Switzerland and then the European Commission and then I have this gentleman. Chris, right? Chris, sorry, I forgot your name. Switzerland, please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO:

Hello, everyone. So first of all, thank you for the question, and thank you, Nigel, for breaking the ice. I think it's important that we have a conversation on this.

I'm also not really aware of many names or many strengths being floated publicly, but maybe we are too much in our bunker, but we look forward to such information being shared if it's publicly available. I guess that many of us are in a similar situation in the sense of waiting for the AGB to be finalized. Once we have the AGB, we also have the plan in the GAC internally to have kind of a dummies guide for GAC members

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of what the 300- or 400-page document really says to get prepared in 2026 to digest the hundreds or maybe even thousands of applications.

I guess one advantage we have over the 2012 round is that policy is, this time, much clearer and also much more based on consensus in the wider community. Last time, it was a bit different, more of a bumpy road. And the AGB didn't perhaps reflect 100% what was in the 2007 GNSO policies. And today the situation is different. So I guess that means that we all know more or less what the rules of the game are for the next time.

And of course there are many instances where governments are affected, be it geoTLDs, in the strict sense of the policy or be it geoTLDs in a wider sense, where I would recommend everyone interested getting in touch with the respective government so that we avoid experiences like the last time.

And of course we have the instruments like early warnings, the GAC consensus advice, but we also have corridor talks. And people can look up the GAC list and see who's the representative of the corresponding country where perhaps that mountain or that river or that whatever landscape is placed so that we avoid misunderstandings. There are the objections in the AGB that can be used.

And on the RVCs, honestly (and this is my personal opinion), I'm looking forward to seeing the text in the AGB because I understand and we had long conversations especially with Becky Burr and with other Board members on the prohibition of content-related PICs and our RVCs. But how that plays out specifically when it becomes a content-related

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condition and when it is an eligibility condition, and where the line is, I think, still, at least for me, something that is not absolutely clear and something we will have to see how it works out. But of course I stand to be corrected. Maybe you know more about how that will be implemented.

So that's my first reaction to that question. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much. Switzerland. I have the European Commission.

MARTINA BARBERO:

Thank you very much, Chair. And thank you very much for this interesting conversation. I think it's very nice to have a bit of exchange on the next round. It's difficult to take the floor after Jorge and Nigel who were here during the previous round and say something to add on top to what I already said, but I will try nonetheless. On your question regarding knowing about applications, also, we probably are in the wrong room. We haven't been approached by many people telling us they're planning to apply for things. But we're doing our job to spread the information about the opportunity of the new round, with the European ecosystem trying to raise awareness.

And on PIC services, just very quickly, as I said, I was not here in the previous round, unfortunately, but I understand that some of the most difficult discussions that happened last time, for instance in terms of content related to children or content related to the adult film industry, were a bit more related to content than to anything else. So I think the

GAC communique from Kigali relates to the fact that without any content-related PICs and RVCs, we might have a bit less flexibility in addressing some of the government concerns. But as Jorge said, the devil will be in the details, right? So how this will play out on the ground is difficult to anticipate.

I just had the feeling at the time when the decision was taken that, yeah, there was an instrument a bit less useful in that respect this time than compared to last time. But we look forward to seeing how we can address concerns at that point in time. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, European Commission. Would you like to react to that or we can move on to ... I was going to give the floor to the gentleman, Chris Despain, but he apparently left the room. So you can go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:

Sorry, he did have to run. He just wanted to raise the GAC early warnings which we heard from Switzerland. So he's good.

NICO CABALLERO:

Okay, thank you so much. Any other comment, any other reaction, at this point? The floor is still open. We still have like two or three minutes for another one or two or three comments, hopefully. Beth, go ahead please.

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BETH BACON:

So I just added a, maybe a personal note as well. During the 2012 round, I was lucky enough to be part of the US team that was reviewing applications as part of NTIA, and now I'm on the registry side. So I think, just to open the floor to if anyone has questions, comments, concerns ... Ashley also lived that dream as well. So we're happy to offer insights, help with questions, and if there are things you want to know about how registries might operate, how registries might be viewing these things, how applicants might be viewing these things, and different ways that that can impact policy for governments, we're really happy to be a resource as the Registry Stakeholder Group because we've done it already and it can be operationally just a lot once those applications start rolling in.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that, Beth. Well noted. From a GAC perspective, not many, I would say, to my knowledge at least, GAC members actually review applications for gTLDs. They're very happy dealing with their own ccTLDs and you know, and helping you know the local authorities deal with their ccTLD's issues as far as I know. And I'm not speaking on behalf of the full GAC at this point because there might be exceptions. So in fact the question is kind of difficult to answer, Sam, Beth, Ashley. So I'm not aware, at least from, let's say, an official point of view, that any GAC member, to my knowledge, has any plan about reviewing gTLDs. We're talking about gTLDs, right? So if that is not the case, I stand to be corrected. And the floor is still open as a matter of fact. So I'll stop there and see if there are any other reactions. And I have the UPU. Please go ahead.

TRACY HACKSHAW:

Hi, Nico. I was around during the last round as vice-chair of the GAC, and I could tell you that there were quite a few GAC members who intervened in this process, especially the early warning process, based on public interest issues. So there were gTLDs coming in on regulated industries (for example, health, financial and so on) that certain GAC members had issues with. And there were also religious TLDs that came in that GAC members had issues with.

So it's probably too early to tell, but it's very possible that when the applications come in, you will see several GAC members. I remember in particular Australia had quite a few early warnings that they raised, and there were several also geographic TLDs. You might remember the famous Amazon situation and we had dot-Patagonia, we had dot-Spa, and so on. So there are quite a few of them, and it's entirely possible you may see more of those coming in in this round. So that's very likely to raise the interest of GAC members. At this point, of course, we don't know, but I would imagine that would happen as the applications come in. Thanks.

SAM DEMETRIOU:

All right, thank you all so much for that input. I obviously completely understand two things: one, that it is still quite early, but, second, that a lot of the response, exactly like Tracy said, will depend on what applications are actually submitted. But again, we wanted to just use this time together to kind of open the door for this conversation, maybe with the ability to revisit later because like Beth said, we would like for

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the GAC to view the Registry Stakeholder Group as a resource when the time comes for this.

So one of the things about the membership opportunities and the Registry Stakeholders Group is that once the application period is over, applicants will have the ability to join our group as observers. So we may have contacts with some of the applicants that you might wish to get in touch with.

And to go back to, I think, something that Nigel had mentioned, if the interest is having dialogue with the applicants, we're very happy to try to facilitate that inside from just kind of the hallway conversations and other things that folks mentioned.

So it's just something to keep in mind as we get a bit closer. I think this is going to be obviously a pretty dominant topic for the next couple of years. So we really appreciate the input and got a lot of value out of this dialogue. So thanks very much.

SAM DEMETRIOU:

Thank you so much for that, Sam. So in the interest of time, I'll give the floor to Ashley to talk about ICANN's ethics policy. Over to you, Ashley.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN:

Thanks. And happy for Sam to jump in as well. But I think hopefully we're all aware now that a draft ICANN ethics policy has been published and is open for public comment. This is intended to address some of the concerns that the Contracted Party House and also the GAC have

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raised with regard to transparency in terms of who people are representing and the statement-of-interest process.

And what our reflection on the draft ethics policy is is that it really does address a lot of our concerns in terms of: if you're not able to divulge who you represent, then you are not permitted to participate in a PDP process. So I think that in large part addresses our concerns. We're still reviewing it at least as the registrars and as companies and are planning to comment on the draft. But I will stop there and see what Sam has to say.

SAM DEMETRIOU:

Thanks, Ashley. I think you covered it very well. I'll just maybe tack on that I was sitting in yesterday, listening to the interaction between the GAC and the GNSO, and the council at that time mentioned that they had not developed a council-wide position but that individual constituencies or stakeholder groups may have views on the ethics policy. So just to kind of reiterate what Ashley said, speaking on behalf of the registries and on behalf of the full Contracted Parties House, we view this ethics policy as a really positive development.

And like Ashley said, we do think it solves some of the issues around transparency that were kind of lurking behind the scenes. We also know we've talked about this with the GAC for a few meetings now, so I think it's great that our groups are aligned ... Sorry I was going a little bit too fast. I think it's great that our two groups are aligned on this, and I think we can take this as a little win between the two of us.

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NICO CABALLERO: Absolutely. I'm very glad to see that we're on the same page on this issue at least.

So the floor is open. Questions, comments, anything you would like to add at this point? And I see Switzerland. Please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO: Thank you. Nico. I will be speaking in French from time to time. It is good to use the interpretation services provided so that our countries, French-speaking countries, can also speak in their own language from time to time, of course.

On these topics. I will not be repeating what we have said yesterday, but our first impression on this document from Switzerland (and I think it is quite shared with other colleagues from the GAC) is that we do think that it is a step in the right direction. Of course it's important that the Board takes a decision and takes it quickly. The Board answered our concerns that have been expressed from the GAC and from the community.

So I do share the point of view that has been expressed by Ashley and Sam, and we are here to listen to the opinions of the communities, of stakeholders, and the partners of ICANN. If there are some points on which we need to keep improving or working on regarding the ethics, we are happy to do so because sometimes the devil is in the details, and if we just take a first look, we could overlook them.

So for now it seems that the text is good and answers our concerns regarding transparency, which as members of the GAC, we keep

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repeating is the basis of credibility and legitimacy of our system and our multistakeholder system. Thank you very much.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you, Switzerland. Any reaction, anything you would like to add in that regard?

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: I'll respond. Thank you, Switzerland. And I wholeheartedly agree. And I think this really is a cornerstone of a properly functioning multistakeholder process, knowing who you're negotiating with and on what basis they're negotiating. So we think this is a really positive step forward and are looking forward to see how things progress in terms of any comments that are provided or further discussion. So we appreciate that we're on the same side on this and I'm happy to have continued dialogue with you all and to share any further perspectives we have as contracted parties, should we submit comments. So thank you all.

NICO CABALLERO: So thank you, Ashley, for that. Thank you, Switzerland, for the comment.

Any others? Anything else you would like to add at this point? Any comment, any question? I don't see any hand up online and I don't see any hand in the room so far, which means that we're seven minutes ahead of time. Sorry, I have. Iran. Go ahead, please.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Good afternoon. As this is first time, Nico, I'm taking floor in this event, I should thank you and your colleagues for moderating this event and nice discussions. May I have a comment or other question regarding the last topic, as far as that there is no comment on this topic? Okay. Back to your important question about how and maybe somehow why GAC members are not so involved in the reviewing process of new gTLDs' applications, I'm interested in knowing if, in the history of GAC and gTLDs applications inside ICANN, there has been any case where GAC members have done any advice or review to ICANN and it was impactful for ICANN to take into consideration their advice for an application.

NICO CABALLERO:

That's a very good question, Iran. Thank you for the question. Not to my knowledge, but I stand to be corrected here. So if anybody has updated information in that regard, I would be very happy to learn. But not to my knowledge. As far as I know, national government, or whatever agencies are in charge of the ccTLDs (because in some cases it's a university; in some other case, it's the ICT ministry; it's different depending on the country) ... But as far as I know, that has not been the case. And again, I stand to be corrected, depending on the country. There are some countries that have huge, huge digital industries. Not the case of my country. Just not the case of Paraguay, right? So, sorry for not being able to answer your question, Iran, but again, not to my knowledge.

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We still have 5 minutes for comments or questions. Any other input?  
And I have Switzerland. Go ahead, please.

JORGE CANCIO: Thank you. Nico. I'll be brief. Just to try to answer our colleague from Iran, maybe this is worth some coffee time to discuss experiences. And Tracy, Manal, myself and others who—Nigel, I guess) were here in the last years would be happy to share experiences, good and bad and in between, of what happened with applications in the last round. Thank you.

IRAN: I will definitely bother you, for sure.

NICO CABALLERO: Is that an old hand, Iran?

IRAN: It was only a joke with Jorge.

NICO CABALLERO: All right, all right. So thank you so much. I mean, there's no need to artificially extend the meeting. So if there are no further questions or comments, let's wrap up here. Any final words? Ashley, Sam, Owen, the floor is yours.

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ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Just a note of thank you. And we love these opportunities and I hope you find them useful. But at the end of the day, I think having opportunities to ask each other questions and understand each other is really, really helpful. So thank you for letting us come here today.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you so much. Ashley, Sam, Beth?

SAM DEMETRIOU: Yeah, absolutely. I think we've gotten a lot of value out of the ability to have an open dialogue with the GAC in the past. And so hopefully it's something that we can continue.

I will just note for everyone's awareness that Ashley and I will be terming out as chairs of the registries and registrars. Beth will be replacing me on the registry side, and Owen will be replacing Ashley on the registrar side. But you can obviously still feel free to reach out to us whenever you need. Thank you so much.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you. Sam. Beth?

BETH BACON: Nothing really for me other than we look forward to working with you as Owen and I roll into the chair position. So hopefully we can keep this going.

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NICO CABALLERO: Thank you. Beth. Owen, anything to add?

OWEN SMILGELSKI: I'll be doing a lot of talking over the next two years as Chair, so no need to talk now.

NICO CABALLERO: Well, thank you so much. A big round of applause to our friends from the CPH. The session is adjourned. We'll reconvene here at 4:30. Enjoy your coffee.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**