
ICANN82 | CF – GNSO: RySG GeoTLD Group Membership Working Session
Wednesday, March 12, 2025 – 9:00 to 10:00 PST

SUE SCHULER:

Hello, and welcome to the meeting of the GeoTLD Group Membership. My name is Sue, and I'm the participation manager for this session.

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I will now hand the floor over to Josu Walino.

JOSU WALINO:

Thank you, Sue. Good morning, everyone. My name is Josu Walino. I'm vice chair of the GeoTLD Group. And good morning, everyone, on behalf of the ExCom. Unfortunately, our chair Nacho Amadoz couldn't make it. He stayed sick at home, so will take over the meeting.

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The plan for our session today is to give you an update on an open discussion on different topics that we are working on in the GeoTLD Group and we have been working during this ICANN82 meeting. Here you have the proposed agenda.

First, we'll give you an update about the session we had with the GAC here in Seattle. The GAC session last Saturday where Ronald and I were representing the GeoTLD Group, what we are doing, and the chairman, of course. Yeah, the three of us representing the work we are doing. We will give you an update on that.

After that, we want to open a discussion about the work the group can do in the coming new round and what we are planning to do for that.

An update on something that is coming from long now. It's a couple or three years ago since we started working on this universal acceptance local initiative. An update about where we are now in this topic.

NIS2, another classic for our meetings. We'll give you another update on this.

And finally, good news with our...probably you will remember that we presented an ICANN grant project led by .cat. So it was accepted and a short update on this as well.

And as always, open discussion at the end or during the meeting for anyone. Please jump in at any moment. So I will start. And please,

Benjamin, Ronald, jump in at any moment as well giving your update.

First point, GAC. We had an invitation to present the GeoTLD Group to present what GeoTLDs are, what are our goals, where are we heading to the GAC members on Saturday. We had a one-hour session, and I had the feeling that it was a very, very productive session. We did a presentation and after the presentation, the discussion, the questions level were really high. We had a really good session on this with big participation from the GAC members.

I will say that our main message during the session was that we wanted to engage the GAC members in having them involved out reaching the next round focusing on geos in their territory. As they are governmental and people they have direct contacts with, cities with local administrations, municipalities. So we wanted them to be aware of the next round. To be aware that GeoTLDs are a reality and that this GeoTLD Group is here to help them or to help any region, any municipality that is going to apply for the next session. And I think that it was pretty clear at the end of the session.

Anything else about that?

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

Hi, this is Ronald Schwärzler. We also have the, or at least I had the feeling that it was, being a Saturday morning, the first session for the GAC with what we were informed more than 30% of the GAC members being newcomers that it was a really important thing not to tell them about what is a TLD or even worse what is a domain.

But the concept of registry operators, GeoTLDs being small entities, I think a person when they about a TLD they always have .com in mind. Not even being aware that, for example, Benjamin is a more or less one-person company running a registry. My staff is, however you count it with the people together with the mother companies, up to five.

Which means even a smaller city or a smaller region can handle such TLDs if embedded well. And here's the GeoTLD Group. Whenever you get questions, come to us. We will try to help you. Because the GAC could be a logical place where some city, some region could seek information on that. They are not knowledgeable about the principles of the geos, that you need a letter of support or you don't need a letter of support. I think they will not get too much into that content anyhow.

And then we said direct your questions, your requests, your whatever it is to the group and we will make sure that we will answer these requests or—this is the next point that Ben will introduce—redirect these request, the questions to the consultants, to the enterprises interested in helping others. There might be some GeoTLD like, for example, Josu's. He's happy with his GeoTLD. He's more or less...

JOSU WALINO:

Super happy.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

Super happy. More or less not interested in the next round. There are companies like AFNIC, like [inaudible] who are consultants who want to have next round clients. We will as an ExCom define measures that there is...anyone is getting this information if you tell us that you want to have this information. If it is please leave me alone, I'm happy with my TLD, you won't get some annoying messages on a client threaten you with some money. But if you want to like [inaudible], [inaudible], me, others might be interested, that's the next point on our agenda.

JOSU WALINO:

Yeah, and related to that something that I think that created a bit of interest was we presented a different as we have within the GeoTLDs. As Ronald said we are a not-for-profit. They are small company. Benjamin is another model. You have a [inaudible] model with a closed GeoTLD. Public parties. So we're presenting the different kinds of GeoTLDs we have. This was interesting I think for the public.

And looking in future events and future work with the GAC, what we are proposing and we're talking to them is next ICANN meeting, Prague, [if you don't mind] having a specific presentation for in Prague. We will do some specific presentation to the GAC presenting real cases and real models and opening the discussion to the group.

So that's the plan. The plan is to continue working with them toward the new round. And as Ronald said helping them and from

the GeoTLD Group perspective giving them a contact point whenever they need to go further with this information.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

For the Prague meeting we have already announced that there will be some showcases. So if you're interested, it's not an ExCom show. I'd like to invite, for example, .stockholm showing or explaining their closed GeoTLD model directly to the GAC. I cannot explain to them .stockholm.

A private entity or a governmental entity like .swiss I would not present it because it should be you or whomever. Dirk, if you want to make a presentation on a privately owned profit oriented model, it's up to you. We will contact either the ExCom will contact you during the next weeks to make sure that we have at least three presentations to the GAC during the next meeting in Prague.

JOSU WALINO:

You said everything, but just a read out on what different GAC members said to me after the meeting. I had a discussion with the European Commission that said that it was very interesting because it's very concrete and it's a way to understand. It's a beginning to see how is a geo registry [inaudible].

And they are probably waiting for more to know how we are working every day on our registry, and that's what Nico Caballero said to me. He was not at the meeting but he had some returns from different GAC members.

They'd like to know, for example, how we are working on abuses. How we mitigate them. And that's a very concrete topic that they want to have from our side.

So I had some very, very good returns from this meeting.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

I just want to add I also listened around a bit and I got similar feedback that was very interesting. Also, the topic of GeoTLDs came up in other discussions later on during the day. Some of the GAC members I talked to said that probably would not have happened if there wouldn't have been that capacity building.

Also, the interest to really know more on the different case studies on different types. But it was a full room and you said yourself we were surprised on the number of questions that came. So that did the job of a capacity building session.

DIRK KRISCHENOWSKI:

Dirk Krischenowski from .berlin. The format of the whole session was great and the involvement of the GAC members, I don't know how many were there but 10 or 15 or something like this, so we got so many questions that the time was not enough to answer all the questions. Maybe next time on that we should have at least half of the time for questions for GAC members, especially if there are even more GAC members.

And what I think what we missed is to explain to the GAC members that city names and some other names may be not protected at all.

This is a very clear message that we need to drop to governments. And maybe there comes some protection in the latest version of the guidebook in December then, but it is fixed at the moment.

And it's not only city names but also some regions, federal, states, and somehow. So bad actors would find a way around this and at the end of the day the cities are very unlucky that whatever their home turf TLD is managed by a company in British Virgin Islands or whatsoever.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

I think it was at about 30. You could not be sure who was a GAC member, but I think it was about 30 which is 20% of the actual GAC so it was not a very crowded but a very active session.

We mentioned the city problem. I know because I gave the example of MUNICH sports shoes and Munich the city. But it was too short a time to dig in deeper. And for the first session in front of the GAC we didn't want to raise problems. We wanted to make them aware. We even somehow tried to circumvent mentioning .patagonia and .emerson. They came from them.

Yeah, but next sessions in Prague, for sure. Being very much shorter in presentation and allowing more time for questions, I think perfect idea, perfect planning scope.

JOSU WALINO:

Yeah, I agree on that. The first day I was to give them an overall impression, so now we can go deeper in everything. Same with DNS

abuse. The question arose there in the meeting. Someone asked about DNS abuse and which message were we taking on that, and we couldn't go deep into that. We explained that GeoTLDs are doing a good deal in fighting DNS abuse. So we have there different topics that we can go deeper into with them. So happy with that. Yeah, Lucas?

LUCAS PRÊTRE:

Lucas Prêtre, .swiss. I would like to thank you for the initiative to come to the GAC and present the GeoTLD Group and the GeoTLD domains, TLDs. I think it was good information for all that, two things, GeoTLD exists and that the GeoTLD Group exists too and is here to answer the maybe questions for the following round of new gTLDs. And to raise awareness of these TLDs especially. Thank you.

JOSU WALINO:

Thank you, Lucas. If there are no further questions, next point is related to that. Wim?

WIM DEGEZELLE:

Thank you. Let me just share the screen again. It is in a way related to the idea of the outreach and positioning the group as a go-to for information on the GeoTLDs and also in relation to the next round. Not only the initiatives with the GAC and probably follow-up in Prague like it was mentioned to the members. There's also the initiative with the city expo later this year where the group wants to do some outreach with regard to the next round.

And that brings us to a point where we have to be prepared to deal with questions coming from governments, from parties that are interested in GeoTLDs, interested in the next rounds and how to deal with them.

I think it already came up, questions from some governments, also from ICANN staff members saying if somebody is asking for information about GeoTLDs, can we point them to you? And there, of course, the group itself is in a particular situation of where I think the group is in general support of the next round. Really likes the idea, really looks forward, and hopes that there will be a lot of new GeoTLDs. Whether they fit under the strict ICANN definition or whether they fit under the broader definition the group uses.

But on the other hand, the group is not the organization that should help applicants with filling in their application and preparing their applications. On the one hand, because we don't have the capacity to do that. On the other hand, because we have several members that also provide that type of service and that would be a conflict.

But those questions may still come and what we are actually looking for and were thinking about is how to deal with them. Also, the ExCom was saying some of the questions can refer to us. What do we do? Do we pick and choose, or how do we advise the person asking the question where to go to with their detailed information?

And the idea that came up was to use or to have a kind of general principle put out online that says while the group is supportive of the next round, for general information at least at this moment refer to the ICANN website and the ICANN information. And then,

say, for really specific consultancy list the members that are providing those services on the website.

So this is...I think the page is online but it's nowhere linked on the website. We thought at least a simple webpage is enough. So the New gTLD Program. As I said, the dates and the general information with a link to the ICANN information. We can still see if later on more details are needed or if the group itself can provide more general information.

But then if you scroll down is what I just explained that more or less general principle. It says: "The GeoTLD Group looks forward to the upcoming round and hopes to see the DNS enriched with many top-level domains based on geographic names, geographic identifiers, or geographic origins, all aimed at serving their respective communities. The GeoTLD Group as a membership organization is ready to provide general information on GeoTLDs and the upcoming application round. Among the GeoTLD Group members are companies that, in addition to operating a GeoTLD registry, also offer commercial services to those seeking assistance with applying for a new gTLD and can be contacted directly."

Let me stop there. In terms of wording, do you think this is okay as a statement or there needs to be some wordsmithing be done?

MARIANNE GEORGELIN:

Thank you very much. I'm just wondering what "geographic origins" means. It sounds a little bit like geographical indication, no?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Geographical indicator, .champagne.

MARIANNE GEORGELIN: Yes, it sounds like that. And that's the purpose?

WIM DEGEZELLE: I think it should be .champagne or some of these because Champagne is a region.

MARIANNE GEORGELIN: Yeah, it's very interesting. It's a little bit ambiguous in terms of the legal term because there is the protection on those terms. And maybe you are aware that at the European Commission level a lot of discussions are going on on this aspect. So, okay, but that's the purpose? You've, we've done that on purpose?

WIM DEGEZELLE: It goes back to the text. And I think geographic indicators is in the statutes as well. I cannot check as I am on the screen. Because this exact wording is based on the statutes and what can be or who can be a member of the group or not.

MARIANNE GEORGELIN: Okay, thanks.

WIM DEGEZELLE:

Then the second question, if there are no other comments, is what do we do? Do we stop there and say this the statement. If you need more information, look for it yourself. Or actually then list, send an email to the mailing list and say if you provide services, if your company wants to be listed there, send us the information. Because those are our two options. We just say the group is not providing information, is not providing consultancy. Or we actually give the opportunity at all members to provide their contact details there.

JOSU WALINO:

One thing to add, I think that this is important, especially for the ExCom, because following with the GAC session. If someone from the GAC comes to us as ExCom asking we're interested in this. Who should we contact? We can't say contact Dave, contact Ronald, contact.... We have different members offering these services. So for us the best way is saying here you have this webpage where you can find different GeoTLD Group members that are offering these services, so go to it and check. That's the area.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

I would like to add a little bit of difficulty here because we are working on an LGR on the First Nations and Inuit people. For instance, you have Inuktitut which is spoken in the region of Northern Quebec and it has a geography, but it's not the geography of the province.

And you have Hudson Bay Cree who are belonging to a territory that's not Ontario. It's not even only in Ontario. It's in Ontario and Quebec.

Mi'gmaq is in New Brunswick and Quebec and in United States of America. And for those people, borders are not the same.

So this means that we will have to talk about geography taking maybe into account those considerations also.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

Amazing, isn't it? We already have this. We have already included, for example, Josu, the Basque Country. Three governments, two in Spain, one in France, I learned from Josu. And we have our definition, it's cultural, heritage, and whatever makes you feel that you're not an open...another TLD and is somehow bound to graphical spread or cultural heritage within a territory is what we accept as geo, we the group. ICANN may be different because you have to have exact governmental. We had the member [inaudible] in German, the same. So again...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

That's a good answer. You say we accept as a group.

JOSU WALINO:

Yeah, and again going back to the GAC session, we presented them two different definitions of geographical indication. We presented them the official definition given by ICANN and the one that we give as a group. We are not saying what it is, what it is not. Our example,

.eus, even in the Basque Country what represents .eus someone will say we are representing the [inaudible] community, others will say all the Basque Country, and others will say, no, it's not geographical, it's only culture or language. So it's open to that.

WIM DEGEZELLE:

So if I just can conclude, I suggest that we go after send an email as members that want to be there listed. And if something pops up later on, we can still discuss. I'm just thinking if a member has a branch office site for [inaudible] services, do we have to allow that or do we only want to have the member there? But those are probably things that we will have to decide when we see because I have no idea who is providing services under what name or what entity.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

So just to be very brief on this question, I have absolutely no problem having [inaudible] or my company DomainWorx being there being a member for .vienna or .koeln/.cologne or .berlin/.hamburg already. So why list .vienna if it would go anyhow to the DomainWorx? They should know already. It's my personal opinion, and I think it's in accordance.

And, Marianne, if you have better idea on how to say these graphical identifiers, regional, origin, or whatever it is, you're welcome to support us. But it is in the official webpage. This formulation is already in there, so probably it's a problem since six, seven, eight years.

MARIANNE GEORGELIN: If I may on this aspect, it's very interesting actually because it opens something new. And I made the analogy because there are these discussions right now at the commission on geographical indications like .champagne as you're saying which are more associated with trademarks usually. So that's why I was like, okay, but then is it geographical or is it more like...is it brand or geo? So, well, that's an opening I would say. Why not? It's interesting.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER: I think it's, and I checked, it is the copy of the text in the statutes. But probably if you read the whole article it is geographic names, identifiers, or geographic origin with the purpose of serving their community. So that's the...

MARIANNE GEORGELIN: That's even more ambiguous, if I may, because it could be all. No, but I think we'll have the opportunity to discuss that. But at least in countries like France or Italy or Spain and others, of course. I'm sorry if I'm not saying all of them. But there's a huge interest for the protection of those geographical indications, so why not?

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER: Yeah, to Marianne, anyhow some of the geographic indications are subunits of federal or state or something like this. They are already there as pure geographic name and protected by this, but not all, for sure.

JOSU WALINO:

Okay, [inaudible] we'll send an email to the group. And then we will have obviously time for a discussion for proposing changes, but that's the plan.

Okay, let's continue. As always, we are going slower than expected. A very, very quick update on the universal acceptance local initiative. You know that we the ExCom have been working with ICANN or with the team leading the universal acceptance initiative toward establishing a European local initiative.

The idea is that the GeoTLD Group will run a framework where at some point any member can ask for support—for economical support, technical support—for organizing an event, an activity focusing on developing universal acceptance in Europe. That's the overall idea.

We have been working on it for a couple of years. It has been a continuous discussion with ICANN. But we are now in a point where we are ready to sign the contract and we are reaching there. So the idea is now this year already we have, for the first six months, we have some different ideas proposed by different members. But the idea is if any member, any group member wants to organize any event, any activity, whatever, please come to us. We will send you the information on that. And let's try to go further with this.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

The good message is if you want to do something like universal acceptance awareness or technical training, you don't have to

contact ICANN. Make it easy. Contact us. Andy, I'm not saying that ICANN is complicated, but for sure we are not. So this is the reason why we went for this, to make it easier to contact us. We will get help like some specialists from ICANN if needed. We will [inaudible] for that. But the financial support comes from the group giving away the money that we got from ICANN before.

JOSU WALINO:

Yeah, as you know, the universal acceptance initiative, they have a specific window. They open a window every year where you can present your proposals, your events, your activities. So the idea behind this is that you don't have to wait until that window. The window is open during the year with us for the GeoTLD members so we can be more active in this kind of initiatives. Any questions or comments on that? No?

Okay, NIS2, Ronald, do you want?

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

Yeah, NIS2 RAA amendment. We presented in our meeting, I think it was London, let's say a template done by Thomas Rickert. He was presenting or he had already presented to the registrars and to the Registries Stakeholder Group. The idea was having a template that covers any possible variations that a TLD could cope with NIS2. And he promised or somehow the idea was that this template would fit for all different kinds of operating a TLD under NIS2 obligations.

The glamor of this template or the enthusiasm about this template has somehow faded under the light that up to now only four, I

think, European countries have made the transposition of the EU into national law. But one of these four countries is Belgium, for example, and we have Belgium members: .vlaanderen and .brussels. And at least theoretically they are under pressure to confirm or to be compatible with NIS2 obligations, having verification of owner, email address, or whatever it is.

Talking to the Registrar Stakeholder Group and especially to this group who has to confirm RAA amendments, their at least unofficial opinion is to wait until all transposition of national laws have been done and then start discussing whether this template is okay or not.

This is a non option, at least for me. In Austria we have, since last week, we have a government again. And they will do this transposition within this first half year. So then we are under the obligation of NIS2. So I said to this group, and I will meet them this afternoon—Owen Smigelski the head of the Registrar Stakeholder Group and someone from this RAA amendment acceptance group.

I will give them, based on the Thomas Rickert template, four of TLDs RAA amendments, .vienna, .koeln/.cologne and .tirol I'm operating. And said this is my version based on the template. Do whatever you want. If you accept the template, you can just wave it through. If it is the pressure to start talking about this, here we have four concrete examples. I will report back to all of you what was the outcome of this.

I can share this document, this RAA amendment, where I just put the name of the registry in and selected the options that Thomas

gave. Do you want the full dataset? Do you want to have a minimum dataset? Or whatever. We have this. You can have it. You can have access too. It should in my opinion and in the opinion of our lawyers, and especially of Nacho Amadoz who is also a lawyer, that it covers all the things that a GeoTLD might need.

With this concrete example of .vienna is having the full dataset because our data protection agency, our law enforcement says we will contact you and you will be obliged to answer within 72 hours. Whether it's proxy or it's whatever, I will never contact a rather in China or something, it's [inaudible] to have this full set of data. This is why we will demand the full dataset.

The registrars are obliged to do the checking of the correct data they deliver to us, and it is in this RAA amendment. This derived from the Rickert document. It's one example. And you are never, none of this group members is bound to use this template. But if it helps you, you can use it.

This is a deliverable that we somehow managed, the ExCom managed to get for the members' sake. So if you want to use it, use it. If you have other ideas, that's up to you. But it should be the case that if you use this template, your RAA amendments will just go through. This is the aim. Cannot promise, but this is at least the end that we are trying to reach.

DIRK KRISCHENOWSKI:

Thank you, Ronald, for the explanation. In Germany the situation is we don't have a government right now. And what I heard from our

persons in the government is that they want to rebuild the German version of the NIS2 from the scratch, and that could take five to six months already. So we count on the end of the year that this goes through the political decision-makers.

And it's so different in Europe. The amendment, it's a question if all our registrars really signed that amendment. We tried to have some amendment when we started in 2014 or something like this. So only a few said, okay, yeah, we would do this, but the majority didn't sign that. And I'm not sure if the registrars really are signing this because they might want to keep the data then for themselves.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

So the position is clear. They have to. They don't have to sign an amendment, but they have to accept it. If they don't accept it, they get de-accredited. So it's a question, do you want to have a rather de-accredited who has 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 domains with you? But it is mandatory. ICANN provision is it's the new, I don't know, data accuracy policy, something like this. What the registry states and the registry can state this and the registrars have to accept it once it's an RAA amendment. If they don't accept, they are out of the business with you theoretically. That's the clear version as far as I know it. Whether it's feasible or not, that's another question.

DIRK KRISCHENOWSKI:

I guess that some registrars would send you like they do today completely redacted data and then there's no win in that but they fulfill the requirement.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER: Redacted is...

MARIANNE GEORGELIN: Now that the NIS2 directive is also providing a stipulation where it says that you need to provide data when the request is made to you under 72 hours, if I remember correctly, so you need the data to be able to provide it.

I think we have a voice here, and I fully agree with you on that, because as GeoTLDs we have a voice in this matter to remember that some of us, most of us, are Thick registries. We need the data because we have sometimes nexus. It's the case for .paris, for .bzh. You need to live in such region to be able to a domain name, and for that reason we need to have access to this data.

So I understand that there is this will to go directly to registrars and here at ICANN and say, okay, this is definitely a registrar issue. But it's not the case at all. When you read the directive itself, it's registries, registrars, proxy, resellers. So all those actors liable and somehow if registrars are not signing as you're saying, although I don't really understand because of course they do not respect your accreditation policies, okay? But then you might be liable yourself as a registry if you don't comply with the transposition of the directive that will be in Germany. I don't know yet, of course, but that's what's at stake.

So I think we have a voice here on NIS2 that we can be vocal on that.

JOSU WALINO:

Yeah, yeah. In our case, for example, being a community TLD and having Thick data, having real data for us is mandatory. It's part of our policy. We have been following this since the very beginning. And now with NIS2 we are, for sure.

In the case of those registrars that we were having redacted data, they weren't complying with our policy. We had conversations with them. We had these discussions one-by-one, and there was no problem at all. They understood, they were eager to solve it, and we have not 100% of the data but practically everything and the registrars are complying with our program. So I think that they are ready to, they are open at least to discuss it and solve the issue.

Okay, so that said, next topic on the list is an update on the ICANN grant project we presented last year, .cat leading the project on behalf of the GeoTLD Group. The GeoTLD Group was in the Registries Stakeholder Project. And as you know, according to the ICANN grant program you couldn't represent two projects or you couldn't be partnered in two projects. So in this case, .cat presented a project. They lead the project focusing on developing SEO study.

The intention of this project is to solve I think that's an open question since the beginning. At least we are listening to that many times that how are GeoTLDs performing to what's SEO in Google, in different search engines? So the aim of this project is to develop

a deep study to see how GeoTLDs are performing in SEO in different search engines.

For that as I said, .cat is leading the project. And many of, I think 12 more or less, of our members are being part of this project. So this study will do a deep research in each of the GeoTLDs being part of the project to see how they are performing compared to others, analyzing different data. And hopefully, the idea behind this is to show us a result that GeoTLDs don't perform worse than others at least. And if possible, that they perform better. We'll see.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

In one of our last meetings, [inaudible] presented the predecessor to this study. They did it within Catalonia, and they were able to prove that webpages being in the Catalan language being searched within Catalonia ranked better in Google than the exactly same pages with the ccTLD or the .com. So this is very specific. This is specific in language, it's specific in a location.

Probably .vienna in German which is not only the language for .vienna but the methodology is based on this Catalan approach. So GeoTLDs perform better or at least not worse than similar? In our case, it will be a .at and a .com will be compared to it. In Germany, it would be a .de compared to a .berlin, to some .berlins. I think it will be 20 or 10 of them with exactly same content linked to the same machines. In France, .fr, .paris, and .com.

Yeah, it would be interesting to see that at least as soon as you get into language constraints or special things that it is probably better

to have a geo which is good news for your Inuit or some other communities.

So it is a project. I think it will last for two years led by universities, by some professors doing this methodology correctly, statistically. So it's not something that you and I are just thinking it's a trend, it could prove that. No, it is a real methodology behind it, and we are very happy that we that .cat/geos got this support from ICANN grant program. Starting next month, so you will be contacted.

BENJAMIN LOUIS:

SEO is quite difficult to feel because Google is something very complicated. For example, you cannot compare two identical websites because de facto Google will consider that, if the content is the same, one of the two is a duplicate content from the other. So I'm very interested in that study, but we hope they are using a huge quantity of websites in .eus, .cat, .whatever, .com because it's very complicated to follow the performance of a website if the content is the same. It's the main problem of Google.

JOSU WALINO:

Okay, anyway, this is just starting. It's something that is coming for the next couple of years, so we will continue discussing this. We will have time to talk about all these things in our future meetings.

So we are reaching to the end of our meeting. Last point, any other business. Something important for the group that this year September we are going to have our meeting, our [general] meeting in Friesland, .frl will be hosting our meeting. And during

that meeting we are going to have our GeoTLD elections. The ExCom is reaching to its end after many years. So anyone who wants to apply for ExCom for a position start thinking into this. We are going to start preparing the elections for next September.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

So that's a surprise to me. I think we are doing end of year elections in the next [Friesland] meeting, but we'll start talking who could apply for or go for president and vice president and so. Be aware, currently our statutes are you must be some kind of officer and a member. So an observer, for example Lucas, could not apply for becoming an ExCom member. So only members can have someone delegated, let me call it that way, to the ExCom. And it has to be either the primary or the alternate of this company.

So what we will be talking in Friesland is, is this still adequate or should we change that? For example, [inaudible] from Friesland (.frl) raised his hand and said I could be interested in joining the ExCom. He's not the primary and not the alternate. It will need our decision whether to change the provisions that were in the 2016 statutes. Probably it is out of date. Or [Andre] is working for another TLD by that time, then yeah. Being only member said I want to become ExCom, currently you could not because you're CEO of an observer. So if we want to open that, these will be the kind of discussions. Having nominations in the September meeting and the discussion about the modus. Also, in voting only in primary or an alternate can vote for the new ExCom.

So these are some of these constraints we should clarify. This is why we are bringing up this topic here. If you have any ideas about that, as well as we are looking for women also or especially but there's very little. Yeah, Marianne. And if we, for example, insist on this kind of thing that only an alternate or a primary, then you're the only one who will be able to. No, I think [Gloria] would also be. But it would be a good sign to have someone sitting here.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Do you see that as a burning issue that associate members looking to be standing for positions in the geo? Is it an issue? Is it something that we need to consider or change the [inaudible] for that? And are there any benefits for that?

JOSU WALINO:

Currently our status they observer members don't even have a vote. So it makes no real sense being part of the ExCom if you can't even vote afterwards.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

[inaudible] is there, but if we think we need to change that, the September date is the latest that we have to do it.

JOSU WALINO:

Okay, we have Nacho raised his hand. So, Nacho, please go ahead.

NACHO AMADOZ:

[inaudible] I had to say hello. I think that it plays well into what the role of the full member and the role of an associate member is that they can become part of the managing body. So I don't think there's anything against associate members being part of the governance structure, but only full members are contributing to the association aims, so to speak.

An observer can be sympathetic, but they are not by decision or by design because they cannot be or because they don't want to be. They cannot be a full member, so they are not representing the entity by being one of the members that are one of the reasons why the association was created for which is advocating for the cause represented by members.

So I think there's a debate there, but the distinction between associate and full member has some consequences and this could be one of those.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER:

Thanks, Nacho. Good recovery to Barcelona. And there is a good reason, for example, why .swiss cannot be members. So I would say an associate like [inaudible] or something or .swiss is different, but the rules are you're an observer and therefore you can't [inaudible]. So there might be different reasons for that. And we gracefully embrace .swiss being member/observer but if we think we need to change that and Nacho our president said it was good reason why we introduced this in the statutes if it has not become outdated, then we should leave it with that or change it in the September meeting which will be most likely in the second week of September.

I think the beginning of the second week, but it's not yet fixed. The place is fixed. I've forgotten the name of this.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Leeuwarden.

RONALD SCHWÄRZLER: Leeuwarden, okay. Never heard of. But, yeah, [inaudible] invites us to come there. We had a wonderful time. We were in [inaudible] in Brittany, and so we will have a wonderful time going to another beautiful place not directly adjacent to a large hub or an airport. So it will take some time to get there, but I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

JOSU WALINO: Okay, we still have three minutes if anyone wants to jump in. Okay, [inaudible]?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I have an announcement to make. We're going to hold the UA day on 4 April. If you want to know what's happening with the PDP on diacritics, we're going to be talking about that. We're going to have a session in Spanish, French, and English. We're going to cover also the situation with the First Nations in North America and abroad because we will probably cover some countries like Uruguay and other places where there are similar issues as the ones our [inaudible] people up north are living also.

I have flyers for those who want to have the information. I will just hand them to you, and you are welcome to attend. It's a virtual meeting, of course. Thank you.

JOSU WALINO: Thank you, [inaudible]. [inaudible]?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Could you please spell the name of the location where [inaudible] is inviting us? I didn't get it.

JOSU WALINO: Anyone else? Okay, thank you. Thank you all. Thank you for coming. It was a real interesting session. And thank you, Sue.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]