

ICANN76 Readout – Highlights & Take-Aways from the Community Forum: A Short Summary

On 28 March 2023, eco – Association of the Internet Industry and ICANN – Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers held a joint ICANN76 readout to summarize and discuss selected topics from the Community Forum¹ event in Cancún, which had taken place from 11 to 16 March 2023. At the ICANN76 readout, speakers from different constituencies of the ICANN community provided an overview of the highlights and key take-aways of the hybrid ICANN76 meeting.

The ICANN76 readout was moderated by **Lars Steffen**, Director eco International, and was co-hosted by **Christopher Mondini**, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement & Managing Director, Europe ICANN Org, and **Thomas Rickert**, Director Names & Numbers at the eco Association.

Reports from the constituencies were provided by:

- **Sebastien Ducos**, gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG), Chair of the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council;
- **Philippe Fouquart**, Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG), Chair of the Internet Service Providers & Connectivity Providers (ISPCP);
- **Joanna Kulesza**, Vice Chair of the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), ALAC Leadership Team Member Poland, EURALO;
- **Rudy Nolde**, Representative of the ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of Germany;
- **Tatiana Tropina**, Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), Nominating Committee Appointee to the Council;
- **Michael Bauland**, Senior Systems Architect.

In commencing the online readout from Brussels, **Christopher Mondini** provided an initial overview of the hybrid ICANN76 Community Forum. In total, 2,000 participants from 164 countries took part in the meeting in Cancún, 1,200 of whom attended the meeting on location, with an additional 800 attending remotely. As Mondini also reported, recordings and transcripts of the sessions that took place over the six days are available on the [ICANN76 website](#). He was happy to note that, for the first time, there are two women at the head of ICANN: Sally Costerton from the UK, who has been appointed as interim Chief Executive Officer of ICANN, and Tripti Sinha from the University of Maryland, who serves as the Chair of the ICANN Board. In these women’s opening remarks at ICANN76, they observed that ICANN is at an inflection point towards producing outcomes that build on important community work. Two core issues subject to implementation were highlighted as follows: a work plan for an expansion of new generic top level domains (gTLDs); and a launch of the “Proof of Concept” system to make registration data available to authorized access seekers.

Mondini rounded up by drawing attention to a range of additional ICANN events, including the concurrent Universal Acceptance Day, which involved a multi-faceted set of 50 events, and the forthcoming [ICANN78](#) Annual General Meeting, which is due to be co-hosted in Hamburg in October 2023 by eco Association.

¹ The Community Forum structure includes time for internal work of the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees (SO/ACs), cross-community interaction, and plenary sessions on topics of community-wide interest.

Following on from Mondini's overview, high-level summaries were subsequently delivered by the panel, with a primary topic addressed by several panelists being that of Domain Names Systems (DNS) abuse.

Sebastien Ducos, who has been Chair of the GNSO since October 2022, reported on three updates that the GNSO focused on at the ICANN76 meeting. The first of these related to work on the core topic of DNS abuse: Last year, a small GNSO team on this topic went through contracts and ran a survey, coinciding with work from the contracted parties. In referring to the GNSO's contract negotiation on DNS abuse with ICANN, Ducos emphasized that the priority was not on inventing new requirements which would be unlikely to be accepted, but on refining important points of the contracts. Ducos' second update concerned the Registry Data Request Services (RDRS), which has recently been devised by the GNSO: this relates to the [System for Standardized Access/Disclosure \(SSAD\)](#), which was seen to require a less complex and less expensive alternative than the likes of the \$100 million dollar Operational Design Assessment (ODA). The more simplified RDRS system was given the greenlight by the ICANN Board in November 2022, and is expected to connect people who want registration data with ICANN-accredited registrars. Ducos' third update entailed the Subsequent Procedures Operational Design Phase (Sub-Pro ODP): With the GNSO having forwarded the SubPro to the ICANN Board last year, the vast majority of recommendations were voted upon and accepted. In the meantime, a small GNSO team is working on triaging and tackling the sector of 38 recommendations that were not voted upon, due to the ICANN Board's identified need for further clarification or additional work.

In the follow-on readout input, **Philippe Fouquart** also referred to the SubPro ODP; in this context, he homed in on the topic of closed generics, which was one of the 38 recommendations that had been flagged by the ICANN Board, ideally to be dealt with by June 2023. Progress on the closed generic framework will involve three steps: the application phase, the evaluation phase, and the contracting and post-delegation phase. A number of principles under those steps have been defined and agreed upon, such as the elements for an application on closed generics, ensuring that the adherence would not be an exception, as well as the need for predictability and subsequent policy work. As Fouquart indicated, however, there are also three 'pain points': the relationship between a global public interest and the interest of the primary target of the application; whether the assessment is subjective or objective; and the timeline, with the work expected to be completed by mid-May 2023.

The next readout section was presented by **Joanna Kulesza** who pointed out that, while ALAC is an advisory committee, it has become clear that it also needs to be involved in the policy development process; this meant that ALAC's participation at the Cancún meeting was a little different to prior meetings. ALAC has now placed substantial emphasis on building capacity on individual policy-related topics, including DNS abuse, Universal Acceptance, Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), and regulatory advancements. At the ICANN76 meeting, ALAC focused in particular on DNS abuse and is of the very strong view that a consistent DNS abuse policy based on reliable data and fair and equitable conditions is something that will benefit the entire community. A high-priority issue which ALAC also intends to work on in the future is that of the advancement of the multi-stakeholder model; as ALAC views it, if the Tunis Agenda is not fulfilled, individual states could regulate a top-down approach which would directly impact DNS.

Rudy Nolde commenced his part of the readout by sharing that there's been a change of leadership in GAC, with a new GAC chair and five vice chairs having been appointed in September 2022. He also noted that 71 GAC members were in attendance at the ICANN76 meeting and informed the

attendees that an overview of GAC activities at the ICANN meetings are always available online via a [GAC Communiqué](#). In discussing GAC positions, Nolde started by discussing DNS abuse, indicating that GAC welcomed the proactive initiation of the contract DNS abuse negotiations by the contracted parties with ICANN. GAC also encouraged the negotiations to proceed expeditiously and looks forward to providing feedback on the proposed amendments during the public comment period. Some highly informative sessions were also reported to have been provided by the GAC [Public Safety Working Group \(PSWG\)](#), whose two-year work plan has now been endorsed; GAC has now advised ICANN Org to promptly engage with the PSWG to identify and advance solutions for confidentiality of law enforcement requests. GAC has also offered consensus advice on intergovernmental organizations (IGO) protection to the ICANN Board, in order for it to proceed with the approval of the recommendations of the [Expedited Policy Development Process on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data \(EPDP\)](#) on specific curative rights protections for implementation. In addition, GAC has advised the Board to maintain the current moratorium on the registration of IGO acronyms as domain names and new gTLDs that are presently in place, until the recommendations of the EPDP are fully implemented.

The ensuing readout section was presented by **Tatiana Tropina**. As she initially noted, Alejandra Reynoso has been re-elected as the ccNSO chair, while two ccNSO vice chairs have also been confirmed. In reporting on various topics, the first factor that Tropina mentioned was the establishment of the [ccNSO DNS Abuse Standing Committee](#) in 2022 and its current involvement in several issues, including the repository metrics about DNS abuse. Based on the DNS abuse survey, factors have been identified such as helping ccTLD managers to coordinate their efforts through collection of more data. A second topic that Tropina highlighted was that of ccNSO work on the internal structure of governance: Drafts on a current statement of interest were issued at the ICANN76 meeting, which have since led to further consultation rounds. With regard to the implementation of ccNSO policies, the [ccNSO Guidelines Review Committee](#) has identified a policy that has been adopted by the ICANN Board: namely, the policy on the retirement process of ccTLDs. In terms of governance structures, a 360 degrees feedback process for the ccNSO Council is also being conducted. There are also two policy processes – on review mechanisms and the (de)selection of IDN ccTLD strings – which are expected to be finalized by the time of the ICANN77 meeting. In closing, Tropina highlighted the 20th anniversary of the ccNSO, with the celebration to be conducted over the course of the full year.

Michael Bauland added a short history on the IDNs and ICANN to the readout. As he reported, while previously there were no rules for the top level domains (TLDs), in the last few years there have been several working groups to create label generation rules (LGRs) to form the basic binding rule law for all future TLDs. Many of these LGRs have now been completed. On the topic of the IDN EPDP, Bauland noted that they are currently finishing a Phase One report to be published on 21 April, with a core topic being the requirement of the same entity at the top level. A second important topic that will be spelt out is the objection processes entailing string similarity review and contention resolution. Bauland also noted that there would be a Phase 2 of this initiative, which, unrelated to policies, will deal with domain name lifecycles, registration disputes, trademark protection, and the IDN implementation guidelines. This phase is anticipated to be completed by April 2025.

In wrapping up the readout, **Thomas Rickert** provided a brief update on the [Network and Information Security \(NIS2\) Directive](#), issued by the European Commission, which now has a new clause, entitled “[Article 28, the database of domain name registration data](#)”. In the coming months,

transposition of the overall directive into national law is expected to occur. In the meantime, the directive states that best practice should be obtained from multistakeholder organizations. In this regard, while ICANN has not been explicitly mentioned, Rickert stated that it is nonetheless clear that ICANN is regarded by the European Commission as the natural contributor. From this end, according to Rickert, ICANN needs to engage in sufficient liaison with the national government representatives in order to ensure that there is a minimal fragmentation and a simple baseline regulation which would leave sufficient space for national lawmakers to come up with specific rules for the ccTLD. In the leadup to ICANN78 in Hamburg, a day zero event with the focus on NIS2 is scheduled, which is expected to involve the participation of Commission representatives.