

20 October 2019

Candidate Statement for GNSO Chair

Candidate: Keith Drazek (Registries Stakeholder Group – North America)

Citizenship/Residence: USA

To my fellow Councilors,

It is an honor to be considered once again for election to the position of GNSO Chair, and I accept the nomination by the Contracted Parties House. I will take this opportunity to provide information about my background, my history with ICANN, my role at Verisign, and my views and vision for the GNSO over the next 12 months. I look forward to our in-person interaction at ICANN 66 in Montreal and will gladly make myself available to answer any questions you may have.

In looking back over the course of the last 12 months, I must acknowledge the significant contributions of Rafik Dammak and Pam Little as the Council's Vice Chairs, and the incredible support provided by our colleagues on ICANN's Policy Staff. Without the Council's outstanding leadership team and staff support, the job of Chair would be infinitely more difficult.

While the last year has seen a significant amount of policy development work by the GNSO community, including the finalization of the EPDP Phase 1 recommendations, initiation of the EPDP Phase 2 work, continued work of the RPM PDP WG, and continued work of the Subsequent Procedures PDP WG, each of these are currently on track to conclude their work or pass significant milestones in 2020. As such, the GNSO Council has a tremendous amount of work ahead of us to manage these processes to a successful and timely conclusion. In 2020, I look forward to working with each of you to advance these policy development processes, to fully implement our PDP 3.0 improvements, and to contribute meaningfully to the broader ICANN community. And, of course, to carry out our responsibilities as a Decisional Participant in ICANN's Empowered Community.

My Background and History with ICANN

I have been involved with ICANN since the year 2000, and my first ICANN meeting was ICANN 7 in Marina del Rey in the fall of 2001. After spending the first decade of my career at the U.S. Department of State (1990-2000), I left government service and joined a start-up domain name registrar named BulkRegister, one of the early entrants in the newly competitive registrar market. This was my first introduction to ICANN and the DNSO, which later became the GNSO, and to the concept of multi-stakeholder, bottom-up, consensus-based policy making. At that time, I was primarily involved in business development, but was also responsible for the ICANN policy portfolio.

After approximately 15 months at BulkRegister, I was recruited by Neustar to help launch the .biz gTLD in 2001. My role at that time was to help develop Neustar's registrar channel and manage those relationships. After the launch of .biz, and subsequently the launch of the .us ccTLD at the second level, I left Neustar in 2002 and returned in 2004 in a different role – policy manager. I eventually became

responsible for managing the .us ccTLD agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce, became active in the ccNSO, and ultimately was elected to serve on the ccNSO Council. During this time, I also actively tracked developments at ICANN and in the GNSO.

In 2010, I was recruited by Verisign to take the position of Director of Policy, and I had the benefit of working very closely with Chuck Gomes, my predecessor and a former GNSO Council Chair. With Chuck's anticipated retirement, I was promoted to Vice President of Policy & Government Relations in 2013. In 2010 I was appointed by the Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) as Vice Chair, and then succeeded David Maher as RySG Chair in 2012, serving for two years. During my tenure as Chair, the RySG experienced significant growth in membership due to the launch of the New gTLD program, and the ICANN community became engrossed in the IANA Transition and ICANN Accountability work. In late 2014, I handed off my responsibilities as RySG Chair to become a GNSO Councilor. As of the AGM in Montreal, I have one year of GNSO Council eligibility remaining.

Making a difference in the ICANN Community:

As noted above, my tenure as RySG Chair covered a very intense period of work for the ICANN Community and for the GNSO. I'll highlight two areas that demonstrate my leadership and commitment to engaging with all parts of the ICANN community to protect the multi-stakeholder model and ensure respect for bottom-up, consensus-based decision making.

1. Expansion of the RySG

With the launch of the New gTLD program, the RySG was faced with a significant expansion of members in a short period of time, from less than twenty Registry Operators to nearly one hundred. To ensure the newcomers had a voice and platform, under my leadership, the RySG allowed, for the first time, the creation of an "interest group" within our structure that became known as the New TLD Applicant Group (NTAG). It was an important development because applicants, prior to executing a Registry Agreement with ICANN, were technically not eligible to be full members of the RySG. We understood and acknowledged that the applicants deserved to have a place in our structure and that the RySG would benefit from early and active involvement of potential and future Registry Operators in our substantive discussions. It was a time of significant change and churn, but we were able to manage it in a constructive and inclusive way.

Further, once contracts were executed and applicants became RySG members, we acknowledged the need to enable and support other interest groups, to include the Geographic Names Interest Group and the Brand Registries Interest Group. These early and inclusive steps paved the way for a responsible and successful expansion of the RySG. From a leadership perspective, the key was to anticipate the challenges to come, to look over the horizon, to understand and appreciate the needs and views of others, and to prepare for evolution before it was upon us. In addition to the day-to-day tactical management of the group, I was able to bring these strategic skills to my role as Chair of the RySG, and I look forward to doing the same as GNSO Chair.

2. The IANA Transition and ICANN's Accountability

Following the March 2014 announcement by NTIA that it was planning to transition its legacy responsibility for the IANA Functions to the private sector, and ultimately to ICANN, the ICANN community broadly recognized that ICANN required additional accountability reforms to ensure such a transition would be appropriate and successful, and to ensure that the ICANN Board was accountable to the community. In my role as RySG Chair, I was an early organizer and leader of the community's response to the announcement, and our eventual demands for a meaningful accountability track. During the June 2014 ICANN 50 meeting in London, I wrote the following blog post and rallied the GNSO community to make its first-ever consensus statement at the public forum:

- ICANN 50 Blog: http://www.circleid.com/posts/20140625_iana_ensuring_icann_accountability_and_transparency_for_the_future/
- ICA Review of GNSO Community Statement: <https://www.internetcommerce.org/gnso-constituencies-issue-unanimous-joint-statement-on-icann-accountability/>

Following ICANN 50, the ensuing months saw the creation of the IANA Transition Coordination Group (ICG) of which I became a member on behalf of the RySG. It also was a period when the entire ICANN community came together in an exchange of several letters between SO/AC/SG/C community leaders and ICANN demanding a meaningful reform process, which was finally realized in October 2014 at ICANN 51 in Los Angeles when the Board approved the CWG Transition and the CCWG Accountability and, for the latter, acknowledged the need for a Work Stream 1 and Work Stream 2. I was a key contributor and coordinator of the joint community effort that secured the Accountability CCWG track, and I helped to deliver that group's results. I am extremely proud of the work we did together. It was and is a demonstration of my ability and desire to work across groups and interests to achieve a common goal for the good of ICANN, the ICANN community, the bottom-up multistakeholder model, and consensus-based decision making.

My Role at Verisign

As noted above, I am Vice President for Public Policy and Government relations at Verisign. In this role, I am responsible for managing our engagement with ICANN -- Board, Org and Community --, with governments, and in the broader Internet Governance arena. Verisign fully supports the multi-stakeholder model of Internet Governance, bottom-up consensus-based policy-making, and is committed to supporting a strong and stable ICANN operating within its mission, bylaws and budget. If elected, my views and actions as GNSO Chair will respect and defend these positions, particularly if we are ever called upon to invoke the Empowered Community powers to hold ICANN accountable.

My Vision for the GNSO Council

As noted in my introductory statement, I believe the GNSO Council has done very important work in 2019, including its focus on implementing our PDP 3.0 recommendations, with a goal of ensuring the long-term success and viability of our multi-stakeholder policy-making approach. Organizations and processes require review and adjustment to ensure they can adapt to changing influences, and our GNSO is no exception. The stated goal of “efficiency and effectiveness” is very important to ensure bottom-up, consensus-based policy decisions are both timely and targeted. That said, with the challenges facing us, we have had successes and we need to recognize and reinforce where our structures are working well.

Looking ahead, I see the following as important areas in need of focus by the GNSO Council:

1. Costs of Implementation -- Early assessment of potential costs associated with the implementation of GNSO policy recommendations. We need to better understand the impact of our decisions and recommendations on ICANN, on Contracted Parties, and on third parties. A cost-benefit analysis of PDP decisions and the follow-on implementation work is a critical and currently-missing component of informed decision-making. This will require improved coordination with ICANN staff.
2. Independent Review Process (IRP) IOT – Under the new ICANN bylaws, this is one accountability mechanism that is significantly behind the implementation curve. There is much substantive work still to be done by the IRP IOT, and the GNSO need to pay attention and support this work with capable volunteers. We should soon see an announcement about a re-populated IRP-IOT and will need to monitor its work carefully.
3. Other Policies Impacted by GDPR and EPDP Phase 1, Phase 2 Recommendations – The GNSO Council has significant work ahead of us in 2020 to properly assess the impacts of the EPDP recommendations on other existing policies. At our Strategic Planning Session in January 2020, we will work to identify, prioritize and act upon these conflicts to ensure GNSO policies are compliant with applicable law, and not inconsistent with each other.
4. Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA) – In recent years, following work in the CCWG Accountability, there has been an increase in focus on Human Rights, HRIAs and their possible inclusion in GNSO PDP processes. I expect this will be an important topic, particularly as we assess the efficiency and effectiveness of our processes.
5. Vibrant Volunteer Engagement – For several years, we’ve heard references to “volunteer burnout” and in my view, the issue has become more challenging, not better. There is a significant risk to the viability of our multi-stakeholder model if we don’t have enough people to do the actual work and commit the time needed to deliver informed and timely policy recommendations. There is also risk to the legitimacy of our multi-stakeholder engagement if there is an imbalance in participation among and across our Stakeholder Groups and

Constituencies. This is something for the Council to consider as we look at ICANN's next budgeting cycle. In particular, is ICANN spending to support efforts that have nothing to do with policy-making at the expense of our ability in the GNSO to perform one of ICANN's core responsibilities?

6. Managing the Work – We need to help drive ongoing PDPs to conclusion and I will encourage the Council to be very judicious in the initiation of future PDP Working Groups. We must prioritize our work tracks to ensure we are efficient, effective and able to deliver timely recommendations with a full understanding of the impacts of implementation.
7. New Efforts and Issues – In light of the recent community discussions around the Global Public Interest, MSM Evolution, Legislative/Regulatory tracking, and DNS Abuse, the GNSO community and Council will need to engage constructively in these conversations to ensure ICANN respects its remit as defined in its bylaws, and to ensure the GNSO community is well-represented in these evolutionary discussions.

I will conclude by saying I look forward to working with each of you in the year to come, and I ask for your support and your vote for GNSO Chair. You have my promise and commitment that I will always work to reach consensus, to be willing to compromise, and to run an effective and efficient meeting. And, ultimately, I recognize that the Chair responsibility is essentially a neutral coordinating and facilitating role with occasional moments representing the GNSO in external meetings with ICANN Board, ICANN Org, GAC, etc. In those moments, I will always represent the consensus views of the GNSO, as directed by each of you, my peers on Council.

Thank you for your support!

Regards,

Keith