

GNSO Liaison to the GAC annual report 2019

In 2019 GAC involvement in PDP activities has been active, especially through the EPDP and the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Work Track 5. This has helped raise awareness of PDP procedures among GAC members.

The shift in communication between GAC and GNSO that I identified in the 2018 report has continued, increasingly based on direct contact between the leaders. This has led to multiple parallel communication channels (leadership, support staff and liaisons) that are not always well coordinated. The GAC liaison role is still not fully incorporated in the established communication procedures, with copying the liaison being more of an afterthought (that sometimes gets overlooked) rather than established procedure.

While the GAC-GNSO Consultation Group (CG) on GAC Early Engagement in GNSO policy development activities reviewed the early engagement mechanisms and the liaison role in 2016 after the first two years, it might again be time to have a joint look at the mechanisms to see if any updates or changes are needed. In addition to this, it might be useful to look at the more efficient use of the joint GAC/GNSO meeting slots at the ICANN meetings. It might be useful to once per year have a dedicated session on informing new GAC members (in view of the high turnover) about the functioning of the PDP processes. Unfortunately webinars and other tools used to accomplish this have proven to be ineffective due to many GAC members being unable to dedicate sufficient time between the ICANN physical meetings.

This year the scheduling at the physical meetings have been a special challenge. While it is extremely important for the GAC liaison to be present present at the GAC meetings to answer questions and provide additional information about ongoing PDP activities, but at the same time staying up to date with both GNSO Council and PDP activities (with meeting schedules that conflict with the GAC sessions) is also important. Especially the EPDP has presented intense time demands (with two days of face-to-face scheduled for the EPDP WG at ICANN65). Involvement in such a high-intensity PDP while holding the liaison role might not be very advisable going forward.

As stated in my previous report, it has been very convenient to have a designated contact both with the GNSO and GAC leadership, but in some instances it would be more expedient to be able to email the full GAC leadership directly. Unlike the case with gnso-chairs@icann.org, the liaison does not have direct email rights to gac-leadership@icann.org, so messages end up in the moderation queue.