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Candidate Statement for the position of GNSO Council Chair

Candidate Name: Thomas Rickert

Citizenship: German

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to the Non-Contracted Parties House for nominating me for the position of the GNSO Council Chair. The nomination is a huge honour and I have not taken the decision to accept a nomination lightly.

In this candidate statement, I am going to share a few thoughts and facts with you that were decisive factors in why I believe that I am the right person to be the GNSO Council Chair and why I am willing and prepared to devote the time needed to that function.

### 1. Professional Background

As you can see from my various activities since 1999 mentioned below, I have been working with companies and organizations that reflect almost the full range of stakeholders in the GNSO community. As a result, I believe that I understand the interests and business of those represented both in the CPH as well as in the NCPH. In addition, providing a stable, reliable, secure and safe Internet has been the core mission of many projects I have managed over the years.

I am joint owner of Schollmeyer & Rickert Rechtsanwalts-gesellschaft m.b.H., a law firm with 15 staff ([www.anwaelte.de](http://www.anwaelte.de)). Our firm primarily advises on legal matters related to the Internet and IT, such as contract law, IPR and data protection law, and also provides local presence and trustee services. I have focused on DNS-related legal issues since 1999, such as domain name disputes, providing legal advice to trademark holders, registrants, registrars and advising clients with respect to the new gTLD program (both active and defensive approaches).

Additionally, I have been working with eco Verband der deutschen Internetwirtschaft, the Association of the German Internet Industry since 1999. eco is an association whose members include ISPs, Registries, Registrars and a variety of other companies active on the Internet ([www.eco.de](http://www.eco.de)).

The projects I have managed are primarily industry responses to illegal content or use of the Internet, such as child abusive material, spam, phishing and DNSSEC. Since 2008, I have been Director Names & Numbers, chairing the eco Names & Numbers Forum, which addresses the interests of the domain industry. Amongst the 20+ events I have organized there were numerous events to provide information about the new gTLD Program. Some of the events were carried out in collaboration with the German Trademark Association. I regularly host and chair meetings and speak publicly in this capacity.

Prior to my appointment to the GNSO Council by the NomCom, I have represented eco in the ISPCP.

### 2. Neutrality / Leadership

My fellow Councillors have witnessed me working with the Council. I have been approached by various people who have applauded the fact that I took positions that I

thought to be right, regardless of which group in the GNSO community supported them. Being an NCA allows for such approach, which – I have been told by various members of the community - has added to my credibility.

However, the skills needed to be a good Chair are different from those needed to be a good Councillor. I have managed not only my own staff for many years, but also numerous projects and the teams involved. As an example, I was President of the INHOPE Association from 2002 to 2005, an umbrella organisation of national contact points, also called hotlines or tiplines, for the general public to report alleged illegal material ([www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org)). The mission of this organization is to facilitate the exchange of expertise and reports and develop best practice for such hotlines. I managed staff, was responsible for the organization's policy development and its budget, and represented the organization internationally. The biggest challenge was to bring together and unite membership organizations with diverse cultural, legal, linguistic and organizational backgrounds. Members from 20+ countries (at the time) were NGOs, government organizations or industry associations. I successfully chaired discussions, listening to diverging views and accurately reflecting these when representing the organization.

I am a self-starter and a team player and I work well under pressure. I would, if elected, work closely with the Vice-Chairs and strive to include them in all projects and discussions to ensure excellence in leadership. I would also work closely with the excellent staff. Naturally, I would work with all Councillors and seek close collaboration and a regular exchange of thoughts with the SG and Constituency leadership. Time is a scarce resource and avoiding staff and volunteer fatigue will require careful prioritization of projects and focus on matters which are in the remit of the Council.

As an NCA I do not report to a group. As a consequence, I do not hew to any group's agenda and do not have to change hats while chairing meetings to present a certain group's view. I would be as neutral as humanly possible something that I feel is critical in the Chair position and necessary to ensure I have the confidence of all across both houses. Also – while clarification is currently being sought with the General Counsel – I assume that an NCA Chair would be non-voting. I would welcome non-voting status, as adding further to the neutrality of the position.

#### 4. Commitment

I am fully aware that the position of the GNSO Council Chair is very time consuming. I am already devoting a considerable amount of time to my work as Councillor, but – after carefully considering the impact on both my professional and private life – I am willing and able to dedicate whatever time is needed to adequately fulfil te responsibilities of the position. We have recently hired an additional lawyer in my firm to augment our resources and eco also supports my engagement in ICANN work.

#### 5. Challenges

Numerous challenges and changes are ahead. The implementation of the new gTLD Program might be the biggest challenge, and will have enormous impact on ICANN. Nevertheless, we must not forget that there is other important policy work going on, which is becoming even more important as ICANN comes under increasing scrutiny by the outside world.

A smoothly operating GNSO Council and working closely with the whole GNSO community is essential to ensure that ICANN is seen to be both efficient and the right organization to manage an important public good.

I truly believe in the bottom-up multi-stakeholder Policy Development process and I will protect this approach from being eroded. Finally, I will put my time and expertise at the disposal of the GNSO Council to enable the Council to work efficiently and fulfil its policy-making mission in a timely manner.