Minutes of the GNSO Council Meeting 15 May 2025

GNSO Council meeting on Thursday, 15 May 2025 at 05:00 UTC: https://tinyurl.com/knke3w
22:00 Los Angeles (Wednesday); 01:00 Washington DC; 06:00 London; 07:00 Paris; 08:00 Moscow; 15:00 Melbourne

List of attendees:
Nominating Committee Appointee (NCA): – Non-Voting – Anne Aikman Scalese
Contracted Parties House
Registrar Stakeholder Group: Hong-Fu Meng, Greg DiBiase, Prudence Malinki
gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group: Nacho Amadoz, Samantha Demetriou, Jennifer Chung (joined after the votes)
Nominating Committee Appointee (NCA): Desiree Zeljka Miloshevic Evans
Non-Contracted Parties House
Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG): Lawrence Olawale-Roberts, Vivek Goyal, Osvaldo Novoa, Thomas Rickert, Damon Ashcraft, Susan Payne
Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG): Farzaneh Badii, Bruna Martins dos Santos, Julf Helsingius, Tomslin Samme-Nlar, Peter Akinremi, Manju Chen
Nominating Committee Appointee (NCA): Paul McGrady
GNSO Council Liaisons/Observers:
Justine Chew : ALAC Liaison
Sebastien Ducos: GNSO liaison to the GAC
Antonia Chu: ccNSO observer

Guests:
Chris Buckridge (ICANN Board)
Chris Disspain and Sophie Hey (Co-Chairs PHRT)

ICANN Staff:
Mary Wong - Vice President, Strategic Policy Management
Steve Chan – Vice President, Policy Development Support & GNSO Relations
Julie Hedlund - Policy Development Support Director (GNSO)
Berry Cobb - Senior Program Manager, Policy Development Support (apologies)
Caitlin Tubergen - Policy Development Support Director (GNSO) (apologies)
Saewon Lee - Policy Development Support Manager (GNSO) (apologies)
Feodora Hamza - Policy Development Support Manager (GNSO)
John Emery - Policy Development Support Senior Specialist (GNSO)
Terri Agnew - Policy Operations Senior Specialist (GNSO)
Devan Reed – Policy Operations Coordinator (GNSO)

Recording
Transcript

Item 1: Administrative Matters
1.1 - Roll Call
1.2 - Updates to Statements of Interest
1.3 - Review / Amend Agenda
1.4 - Note the status of minutes for the previous Council meetings per the GNSO Operating Procedures:
Minutes of the GNSO Council Meeting on 12 March 2025 were posted on 01 April 2025
Minutes of the GNSO Council Meeting on 10 April 2025 were posted on 24 April 2025

Hong-Fu Meng, RrSG, updated his statement of interest.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, made a request for small teams to have observers when we have meetings.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, stated that they are recorded and is unsure if they have official observers.

Item 2: Opening Remarks / Review of Projects & Action List
2.1 - Review focus areas and provide updates on specific key themes / topics, to include review of Projects List and Action Item List.

Item 3: Consent Agenda
Aspirational Statement

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, introduced the topic and noted the grammatical changes made.

All Councilors present voted in favor of the motion.

Vote Results

Item 4: COUNCIL VOTE - Deferral of the Next Steps of Phase Two of the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms (RPMs) in All New gTLDs Policy Development Process (PDP) for an Additional Six Months

4.1 - Introduction of Topic (Susan Payne, GNSO Councilor)
4.2 - Council Vote (voting threshold: simple majority)
4.3 - Next Steps

Susan Payne, IPC, introduced the topic and discussed delaying phase 2 until key markers on implementing phase 1 were reached. RPMs phase 1 work is likely to finish at the end of 2025. In January a small team was convened to look at any need for additional data for phase 2. The small team has suggested deferring phase 2 for an additional 6 months. The need for a holistic phase 2, so a short deferral is necessary currently. She then opened the floor to questions.

 Susan Payne, IPC, read the resolved clauses and moved to a vote

All Councilors present voted in favor of the motion.

Vote Results

The GNSO Council leadership directs GNSO Policy Support Staff to notify ICANN org Global Domains & Strategy of the deferral.

Item 5: COUNCIL DISCUSSION - Han Script Character gTLDs (Recommendation 3.17)
5.1 - Introduction of Topic (Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair)
5.2 - Council Discussion
5.3 - Next Steps

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, referenced that Steve sent around a [discussion paper](#) on single character Han script.

Steve Chan, ICANN Org, identified a potential different option with an external expert advisory to provide outside expertise to PDPs. That is now included for the two options GGP and Expert Working Group identified previously. He took a step back and look at what the Council is trying to answer. Identify what the question is can help guide which mechanism makes the most sense. The issue encountered in implementation designated in the EPDP-IDNs determined that the party identified was not in a position to perform the work to develop single character Han Script gTLDs. Instead, ICANN org could perhaps identify an alternative party for the CJK GPs.

Steve Chan, ICANN Org, noted that there are two options: 1) Council doing the work themselves or ask the IRT staff to find the proper set of experts other than the CJK-GP and carry on the implementation work with a different set of experts. Or 2) use a GGP or Expert Working Group to identify experts to develop guidelines.

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, spoke personally that he had not realized that Council could ask the IRT to find the proper party, and this opens up more options than simply the GGP or EWG.

Anne Aikman Scalese, NCA, asked if the alternative party to do the work. 3.17 says that CJK-GP should do the work, do we have a method for revising the policy recommendation? How do we pursue this option procedurally?

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, does not have a direct answer to that. It is not that the panels could not be assisted with this work, we may not need to revise. Wanted to echo Tomslin's point where Council can ask ICANN to find the party that can do the evaluation, because the alternative GGP or EWG is having Council try to find experts and Council may not have that expertise.

Manju Chen, NCSG, reflected that Han script users is that there is no need to revise the recommendation as it should be implemented. Now IRT is having problems with this because of sufficient objections. After expert will be reviewing that has less ground than the recommendations. There has been this misunderstanding that the CJK panel could do it because they did not have the expertise. They refrained from doing it because it was out of their scope the whole time. They have not been given the scope or task to carry on this work, which is why GGP may not be the best option. External expert advice is what we are leaning toward and EWG is made up. NCSG leans toward the external expert advice, and they are willing to support that.

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, external expert advice must be initiated by the Board, which means the Council will have to request that from the Board.

Damon Ashcraft, IPC, reiterated that this is out of the wheelhouse of Council and experts need to help solve this.

Manju Chen, NCSG, added that we are leaning toward this option because the Board has already accepted Recommendation 3.17 and she thinks the Council should request the Board to do this.

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, queried to staff as to whether the group could be convened internally or must one of these three options be used.

Steve Chan, ICANN Org, it could be as simple as a correspondence to the IRT for EPDP-IDNs. Or it could be the external expert process and that could be subject to Board determination.

Peter Akinremi, NCSG, reiterated that we need to know the exact things that we want first to then determine the best path forward and the proper mechanism to address this.

Anne Aikman Scalese, NCA, the issue as she understands it is what is the risk of confusion in single character Han script. This assignment is about experts determining whether the degree of risk of confusion and that is a specific statement of work. She is not sure how we as Council formulates that. Susan and Anne had thought form a statement of work or ask the CJK panel to write a statement of work. Maybe since it is implementation maybe they could have a statement of work.

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, agreed that the question of what Council is trying to address is relevant to the point she was making.

Sam Demetriou, RySG, stated that this should be sent back to implementation as a first step. CJK generation panel has been consulted, and they have weighed in and do not have a purview to comment on potential user confusion. We as Council could not scope a question or problem statement to objectively determine user confusion. She would favor sending this back to staff noting this is an implementation issue and that should be part of the way future rounds. There is less of a role for Council as this is implementation issue.

Justine Chew, ALAC Liaison, looked at recommendation 3.17 and the phrase "risk of user confusion" is not present, but said that SubPro 25.4 mentions the requirement of "not introducing confusion risks that rise above commonplace similarities." She suggested that Council should consider writing back to ICANN staff, specifically mentioning the need of "not introducing confusion risks that rise above commonplace similarities" so that it would be included when chartering the expert group as their problem statement. This should absolve Council of any further responsibility on this topic.

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, consensus for Council to write back to IRT staff that this is an implementation issue and an alternative body of experts. Leadership and staff will work on drafting that.

Jennifer Chung, RYSG, is in full support of Sam's point and all the considerations that Manju and Justine outlined. Asked if Council is taking this back and what are the next steps? This issue has been marinating for some time, and she would like some clarity on how this work can start.

Tomslin Samme Nlar, GNSO Vice Chair, for starters, leadership and staff will put together the letter to the IRT and mention what Justine stated above.

Thomas Rickert, CSG ISP, agreed with Jen that a commonsense level of avoiding confusion is an important point. In the past, a lot of time and money was spent, and nothing is 100% possible to avoid user confusion. That sort of policy advice could help the IRT with this.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, noted that leadership will work on the letter.

Action Items:
GNSO leadership and support staff to draft a letter on the establishment of a group of experts to send to the SubPro IRT for Council to consider on the list for approval by non-objection.

Item 6: COUNCIL DISCUSSION - Council Alignment on the Future of Reviews
6.1 - Introduction of Topic (Paul McGrady, GNSO Councilor)
6.2 - Council Discussion
6.3 - Next Steps

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, noted the future of reviews is ultimately a Board decision, but Council input would be helpful. Paul will give a summary of where the pilot holistic review group is and that Sophie and Chris are on the call to answer any questions.

Paul McGrady, NCPH NCA, took Councilors through the following slides to give an overview of background and summary

Paul McGrady, NCPH NCA, problem statement is that pilot holistic review is often in conflict. Board and community is a little frustrated with that and has asked for Council's thoughts on how to resolve this.

Sophie Hey, Co-Chair PHRT, gave more context based on the slides. The main objective they were given was to meet the requirement defined as a holistic review from the ATRT3 final report. Challenges arose with the effectiveness and the continuous improvement side and the structure. The issue is that there are two contradictory assumptions. 1) You are doing continuous improvement assuming the status quo is fine. 2) You are reviewing the structure without the same starting assumption. The problem started in understanding what they were doing, which led she and Chris to write a letter to the Board.

Chris Disspain, Co-Chair PHRT, gave more context based on the slides. In essence, he and Sophie are here because in Seattle they notified everyone that there was a problem and moved to discussing the issues. The Board suggested one other alternative to stop everything. These reviews were invented when ICANN signed its affirmation of commitment with US government. It may be sensible for a review to be done of the reviews.

There was now an alternative path not previously open. So, the suggestion is to continue with continuous improvement, which is almost done, and run that separately and then create a review team for that. The second step would be to check consensus if it is in favor of ICANN's structure and then to empower a review team to design a specific review structure.

Chris Buckridge, ICANN Board, where the Board has come down, but there has been no resolution coming out of the Board. It was still not quite happy with the language. Informally there was huge appreciation for the PHRT. There is a need to pivot and reconsider where we are at as the status quo is not really an option. There is a need to maintain accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of the review process. The current approach is not fulfilling those needs of the community or the world. This should be continued to evolve. The Board feels there is a need for a community dialogue process to be initiated or a specific review to look at structural review.

Chris Buckridge, ICANN Board, continued that ATRT4 will likely be deferred until the community dialogue. The Board will look to direct the preparation for a community dialogue likely in Oman. This is still under discussion by the Board but will have more solid position by the Prague meeting.

Paul McGrady, NCPH NCA, summarized that there is no appetite for continuing along the same path as the status quo will not work. There will not be an immediate call for a review of reviews, but what needs to take place over the next few months. In the meantime, PHRT winds down and the continuous improvements process keeps moving forward.

Chris Buckridge, ICANN Board, answered a question in the chat from Farzi that ICANN is not getting rid of reviews. Instead, it is getting closer to what the community wants and sees as necessary as the most appropriate model for conducting reviews.

Chris Disspain, Co-Chair PHRT, it is accepting what we used to call independent reviews is replaced by CIP. Then there is a review mechanism for the CIP. The other specific reviews are going to be left alone for the moment with ATRT4 suspended to start a dialogue on what the reviews should be. The organizational review is encapsulated in the CIP.

Anne Aikman Scalese, NCA, asked some clarifying questions in the context of WSIS +20. Does there still need to be a decision on deferring ATRT 4 or refashioning it in some sense? These are some outward facing questions she had.

Chris Buckridge, ICANN Board, WSIS+20 is part of the conversation, but the implication is that we need to get it right. We need to maintain a confidence in ICANN. Refashioning ATRT4 had been considered and discussed at length and was felt to be a possibility, but already curtailing it seemed not necessarily the right approach.

Chris Disspain, Co-Chair PHRT, part of the issue with ATRT4 is the bylaw issue. But if you get into ATRT4 there are some scope challenges in that they can set its own scope. Personally, the right outcome is that reviews for an awful lot of work and having a look to say let us look at the structure of reviews that makes sense for ICANN.

Paul McGrady, NCPH NCA, proposed capturing the points for Council leadership to consider next steps and communicate to participate in the community process.

Justine Chew, **ALAC,** in chat: "But ATRT4 could be scoped narrowly so that it could still proceed and allow ICANN to be in compliance with its bylaw."

Chris Disspain, Co-Chair PHRT, noted that ATRT4 could not be scoped narrowly, because it goes against the fundamental principle of the ATRT.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, asked if any Councilors strongly objected to the proposed Board approach to let leadership know. If not, leadership will start working to write a summary of the Council's position.

Action Items:
GNSO Council leadership and staff to draft a letter to the Board concerning the Council's agreements on reviews reached during the meeting, and willingness to participate in a community dialogue on reviews if that is the option the Board decides to pursue.

Item 7: COUNCIL UPDATE: Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team on Recommendation 36.4
7.1 - Introduction of Topic (Anne Aikman-Scalese and Susan Payne, Council Liaisons to SubPro IRT)
7.2 - Council Discussion
7.3 - Next Steps

Susan Payne, IPC, referenced her background documents shared with the Council on list. There is a recommendation in SubPro 36.4 suggested a specific registry agreement for next round to address fraudulent and deceptive practices to close a perceived gap in the current RA. Yesterday, ICANN staff shared a new proposed text with the IRT mailing list, but they have not discussed it yet. Currently, there are not clear marching orders from the IRT in relation to this current language and it is flagged in the moment. This is frankly not the Council's job or Anne's and Susan's job to assess whether the language is good enough as written. Ultimately, she flagged the issue and would get another update once it was discussed with the IRT.

Anne Aikman Scalese, NCA, wanted to raise the visibility level here. If the base RA will go out for public comment at the same time as the AGB even if the IRT does not agree with the language. She noted current inconsistency between recommendation approved by the Board and the base RA language but noted it would be discussed in the subsequent IRT meeting next week.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, took the opportunity to flag for newer Councilors their role as IRT liaisons. For example, if they could not budge or change the language, Council could write a letter. He noted his appreciation to Anne and Susan and will await their update.

Item 8: Any Other Business
8.1 - ICANN83 Planning

Terri Agnew, ICANN org, updated there are 12 funded travelers not registered, and it is imperative to do so immediately. She noted the schedule will be published on Monday 19 May and the prep week schedule has already been published. The Council dinner is a work in progress.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, reiterated that funded travelers should book today or tomorrow.

8.2 - GAC Liaison updates

Sebastien Ducos, GAC Liaison, no updates.

8.3 - Update on the WSIS+20 work

Desiree Miloshevic, CPH NCA, gave a four-point update on the WSIS+20 engagement. 1) They have been actively participating in the SOAC informal discussion group. This has been working on a few core messages that the multi-stakeholder model works and that the internet fragmentation is a real concern. 2) Their GNSO mapping was highlighted as a practical and positive example, and the group asked that we publish the mapping well ahead of the Prague meeting. 2) They received positive feedback from the GAC IG leads when they shared the mapping exercise and said it was both insightful and extremely helpful in clarifying what was at stake, particularly regarding the WSIS action lines. They shared it with their GAC team, which currently includes 48 members from 30 countries. They also expressed a strong interest in
continuing collaboration with us and building on this work. With regards to this proposed ICANN Prague engagement, ICANN.org has also published a blog post with regards to the WSIS+20 and what's at
stake. 3) She suggested that she present the GNSO mapping work, so it would be possibly a slide presentation, which would reinforce how GNSO processes contribute to broader governance efforts. She asked to see if there is an agreement or any objections from the Council for us to do that.

Justine Chew, ALAC, asked: "the At-Large expressed interest in seeing the mapping, but I have refrained from sharing that so far. Can I do that now please?"

Desiree Miloshevic, CPH NCA, responded the document is ready to be shared. She made a final ask to the Council, because we have been asked by the SOAC group to publish it and we said we'll wait for the Council call. If the Council says yes, then we can share it with other groups as well. And hearing no objection, we could ask perhaps the staff to change the mapping document, because it's in a Word format, to put it in a slide presentation?

Desiree Miloshevic, CPH NCA, 4) she queried about their planned IGF participation. It is taking place in Norway at the end of June and there are more than 3,500 registered participants. ICANN org has a lot of sessions there as well, but both Jennifer and Desiree plan to attend in person. She noted they are not speaking formally at the stage they will aim to provide some constructive, supportive comments from the floor in the sessions that are touching on WSIS+20 review to reinforce the value of GNSO's contribution and multi-stakeholder model more broadly.

Susan Payne, IPC, had a couple of questions about the mapping document if Council had seen it. To which Farzi responded yes. The second question was about the relevant IGF sessions and the comments they will be making on the floor to share those with those who will be joining in person or remotely.

Desiree Miloshevic, CPH NCA, thanked her and stated that IGF bullet point messages from the document will be shared ahead of time.

Anne Aikman Scalese, NCA, asked if staff could make a PowerPoint from the [document](). She noted for Susan that Council was asked to approve or reject by the April Council meeting.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, responded that this would be asking staff to do something beyond their traditional policy role.

8.4 - Whois Implementation Advisory Group update

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, a consensus was reached on list, this work can be suspended indefinitely until a specific need arises. It will be added to the consent agenda for the June meeting.

8.5 - Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) Standing Committee Report - open question of public comment

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, outlined the topic and the open question as to whether or not that should be a public comment

Susan Payne, IPC, stated that feedback was a strong desire for there to be some opportunity for public comment, and it would make sense in the usual form for Initial Report for RDRS standing committee to take this on.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, that would be a public comment before the Council receives it.

Lawrence Roberts, BC, presented a position similar to that of the IPC, that there should be some public comments before Council considers the report for a community view of what the perception is regarding that report.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, registrar stakeholder group believed that public comment was not necessary as it is a factual report. However, if there is a belief that public comment is necessary.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, NCSG prefers to open a public comment, but she has also raised with RDRS to encourage the constituencies to raise awareness about what this report is for. This is not a piece of policy, something that RDRS can consider.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, this is different from policy work. If there is a public comment, we should be clear about the intent of the work here.

Susan Payne, IPC, responded that it is not policy work per se, but it has some unusual statistics. If the RDRS report is a factual restating, there may be a need for input. There are some conclusions and recommendations where the community ought to have the opportunity to review and comment

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, believes that did not conflict with what Farzi said and that they need to be clear on purpose of the report.

Damon Ashcraft, IPC, added that RDRS has been a controversial program and there should be public comment on this and outcomes will be related to policy.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, summarized that there is support for public comment with caveat that it will be clear on the scope of what the work is. Susan is correct in that the report is more than just factual and some public comment can be warranted here.

8.6 - [HRIA of Transfer Policy Review](#)

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, Seattle was the approval of the TPR recommendations. NCSG Councilors asked the Council to agree to do a retroactive Human Rights assessment. She had a meeting with the chair, Roger Carney, and they went through the HR checklist. Instead of using all 47 recommendations, they categorized them in these [slides](#). In the checklist they discussed issues of privacy rights and data protection. She gave two examples from the slides.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, further emphasized that NCSG recommends incorporating this HR assessment in the scoping of PDPs. Roger mentioned had they done this during and after the PDP to allow for standardization and consistency that would be something to uphold human rights. She looks forward to working with Council to resolve some of the shortcomings that they found in the TPR.

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, instructed Councilors to find this on the list, read it, and be thinking about how we can incorporate these lessons going forward and what we can do with recommendations regarding the transfer policy specifically.

Jennifer Chung, RYSG, noted that this checklist has been included in the Latin Diacritics PDP and this will be in their normal course of discussion and Council will not have to do anything additional.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, responded that one would need to consider the checklist during the PDP when you are coming up with the recommendations and when you are done before submitting them to the Council. She then asked for feedback for next steps even though these are already with the Board.

8.7 - Chair update

Greg DiBiase, GNSO Chair, informed Councilors that he would be departing Council a little early resigning on 1 August 2025 as he will be onboarding with the ICANN Board at the end of August. Tomslin and Nacho will take over as co-chairs until the election in October.

Meeting Adjourned 6:58 UTC