Latin Script Diacritics-Apr09

DEVAN REED	Good morning, good afternoon and good evening. This is Devan Reed for the recording. Welcome to the Latin Script Diacritics PDP Working Group call taking place on Wednesday, the 9th of April, 2025, at 1300 UTC. We do have apologies from Sylvia and Sarman Hussain from staff. Statements of interest must be kept up to date. If anyone has any updates to share, please raise your hand or speak up now. If you need assistance updating your statements of interest, please email the GNSO Secretariat. All documentation and information can be found on the Latin Script Diacritics Wiki page. Recordings will be posted shortly after the end of the call. Please remember to state your name before speaking for the transcript. And please note, all chat sessions are being archived. As a reminder, participation in ICANN, including the session, is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the Community Anti-Harassment Policy. Thank you. And over to our Chair, Michael Bauland. Please begin.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Welcome to the third meeting of our working group. And thanks to Devan for the introduction. Next slide, please. So today we'll start with a recap of the previous meeting and then move on to our charter questions 2 as the main part of this meeting and follow with next step and AOB, if there was any. Next slide, please. Thanks. Next slide, please. So last week we discussed a bit more about the basics, and the key outcomes are listed here. We agreed on the Unicode definition for diacritics as the basis for our work. And we also agreed that we would use the outcome of the String Similarity Review panel, and, only if that panel would consider labels to be confusingly similar, our PDP will become active. If the panel would say that strings are not similar, then there's no need for our rules, and the PDP would not become active, so to say. We agreed that we would allow multiple diacritics. So it's not just restricted to character having one diacritic, but it's also possible for a character to have two or three diacritics if those exist in the Latin repertoire. And we will also not restrict ourselves to certain TLD types. And we also agreed on the same entity management, so the TLD would need to be applied for and run by the same entity. And this is not restricted to existing gTLDs, but it's also applicable to just new gTLDs. For the action items, we presented to you a list of the characters that are in scope. The email has been sent out like an hour ago or something like

that. Much thanks to Mark for compiling this table that was very helpful. You can all have a look at that PDF. It's not meant to be the authoritative definition of what is included as cases, but it's more like the result of our definition. So we said it's defined by the Unicode tables, and if we apply that definition to the current version of the Latin script root zone LGR, then the listed characters are in scope, and the non-listed characters of the Latin root zone repertoire are out of scope. The next action item is to include the or consider the existing body of work. We will start with the ccTLD short track/version and then continue with the IDN EPDP fast-track process. Thanks, [inaudible], that's what I was looking for. And we will also invite ICANN Org to share details on the string similarity process. This will most likely happen in the call in two weeks' time. Next week it's the Easter break and we won't have a call. And for the call in two weeks' time, we are planning to have Sarmad available, and he will explain a bit more how the string similarity review process would work, and we can ask him questions should we have any regarding that process. Next slide please. So this is basically the same thing, just in a different way. That maybe more makes it more easy to see what we are looking at. So what is out of scope is for once the root zone LRG (this is a given fact) and also the string similarity review process. This is also a given, but both of these processes

or data will influence our scope and our work. So for example the variants which are in the root zone LGR are out of scope. We only look at the non-variant cases and then we also just look at the confusingly similar cases whereby we don't deal with the definition of what is confusingly similar, but we just kind of link into the process of the string similarity review, and whenever they say it's confusingly similar, then our policies come into effect, and thereby we also just look at the diacritics which are in the root zone LGR, and not any other characters that may have been found confusingly similar. Of these other characters, we are aware that there are several that would also be sensible to have some exception process, but we agreed that we would not cover this in this PDP, but we would encourage later processes to not overlook them and deal with them once we have a solution that hopefully would be applicable to those cases too. What we also agreed on is that we will not restrict this to just 2 TLDs (so the base ASCII version plus 1 diacritic) but it would also be possible for applicants to have three or more TLDs, if that makes sense for their use case. The danger of proliferation is rather low because they won't get this for free. They have to apply for those TLDs. And it's unlikely that one would apply for 10 TLDs just because they want to. As we said, there's no limit to certain TLD types. This would work for real-worlds, for geographic or brand TLDs.

Whatever the applicant has in mind for their TLD, the rules will always be the same. And that makes it much easier to understand when and how these rules apply. We have the same entity operating the ASCII and the diacritic version. And yeah, that's basically the key outcomes we had. Next slide, please. This is the question we have been considering in the last meetings: under what circumstances should a base of the gTLD and the Latin script diacritic version of the gTLD be simultaneously delegated, and (the sub question), if such circumstances exist, what measures should be put into place? This is what we will be working on for the future meetings, and the key outcomes are what we have already seen before. Next slide, please. By the way, if anybody has any questions or comments, just feel free to raise your hand. Interrupt me. I don't have to talk the whole session. If you have anything you would like to ask or comment, always happy to hear your voices.

[SAEWON LEE]   Hi Michael, I'm sharing this slide, so I can't raise my hand. I just wanted to note Asteway's comment in the chat, just for the record as well. He says maybe we need to state clearly "existing and applied-for." And I think he mentioned this while you were

talking about the list. But if, Asteway, you would like to elaborate, please do.

ASTEWAY NEGASH

Yeah, thank you. It's because, in the introduction, Michael was referring to that we are not just considering existing gTLDs but everything besides that. But I would also like to point out that we are not, in the way I understand it, considering not only existing gTLDs, but also applied-for and then [un]applied-for as well. So it was actually consolidated in the way that it was stated. He just said "existing," so I just wanted that to be cleared out clearly. So "existing" plus "applied-for." Anything besides "existing" and "applied-for." Something like that. Thanks. Not so much [this way].

MICHAEL BAULAND

Thanks. It's an important point to make here. Thank you for that. So there are basically two cases where this will be applicable. One is we have an existing TLD, either an ASCII-only or an IDN TLD with diacritics, and in that case, the same entity owning this existing TLD can apply for other versions of that TLD with diacritics changed. But it's also possible for some

entity that does not have an existing TLD get to apply for two or more TLDs in the same round, and they can also use the outcome of our PDP to have their TLDs allocated and not rejected due to being too similar. I just read Tapani's comment. I can imagine [Sjobeck, Sjobeck, Sjobeck, Sjobeck, and Sjobeck] (maybe the pronunciation was wrong on the second and third one) all wanting their own TLD, ignoring [Sjobeck] for now despite the risk of confusion. Yeah, well, even if they want to have their own TLD, they unfortunately will not be able to get that. I guess this is the way it has always been before, and I don't think our PDP will be able to solve that problem, because if they want to run those TLDs independently from each other, there's no way to avoid the user confusion. The only way to get the user confusion out of the way is by ensuring that the same entity runs all of these TLDs and thereby has some kind of policies in place which we are going to make that ensure that users won't be confused. Asteway, please?

ASTEWAY NEGASH   Yeah, thank you, Michael, for the explanation, but the way I understand it, an existing TLD is a TLD that's already accessible on the root zone namespace. So if a TLD is existing, then

anyone would type on his browser and get to somewhere, some website, maybe. But an unapplied-for TLD is a TLD that's in the process of application. So what I want to clear out is we are considering everything besides existing gTLDs and also anything besides applied-for. So whether a TLD has been applied for or not, then it's still within our scope. And whether a TLD is existing or not, still it's within our scope. So that's what I meant to mention in my comment. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Yeah, but a TLD that is not existing and hasn't been applied for of course is not in scope because any label falls under this. They must at least apply for the TLD. If it's not existing and not applied for, no one really cares what happens to the label because it's not a TLD. Or did I get you wrong there?

ASTEWAY NEGASH   Yes, but I think we have agreed that all version of the diacritics would be in scope. For example, if an ASCII version has been applied for or is in our scope, we'll be considering all versions of the diacritic. I'm not saying like we'll be referring to everything. That's besides the repertoire, but I think we'll be

considering all versions of the diacritic that an ASCII label could have. I could be wrong on that, but that was my perception. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Justine, do you want to respond to that?

JUSTINE CHEW   Hi. Not necessarily to respond, but I suppose I'm trying to seek clarification. I think I understand where Asteway is coming from, and the question I have in my mind is, are we limiting ourselves to the circumstance where the policy wouldn't apply to an existing TLD? What about the case of someone applying for a, for argument's sake, ASCII version of a string together with the diacritic version of the same string in the same realm? I would think that the policy would still apply in that case, right. So, yeah, so perhaps that's what Asteway is trying to talk about. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Yeah, that's right. Basically two possibilities: the label already has been applied for in one of the previous rounds, and now someone wants to apply for a similar TLD in the current round, or no TLD has been applied for, which is similar, and someone wants to apply for more than one TLD in the current round where those are similar. Just reading a new [comment:] as discussions are going on, the working group shall consider all TLDs existing as well as applied-for and even for new gTLDs yet to be applied for. Yeah, I guess that summarizes it too. Bill, please.

BILL JOURIS   I think we do have one small addition which is if you have similar … We have cases that would be covered by this [as] similar, but they're applied for at the same time by different people. I think we will also need to give some thought as to how do you decide which of the confusingly similar applications gets granted and which ones are rejected because they're confusingly similar? I'm not sure how we resolve that, but I think that's an issue that we will need to address before we get through. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Thanks, Bill, for that. I don't think we have to consider this case because that's already solved right now. If they are confusingly similar, they go into a contention set, and there's a contention resolution mechanism that takes care of which of those TLDs [that are] more than 2 will be able to proceed. And our policy will not change anything in that. We just look at the case where the entity is the same, and then our policies come into place. If the entity is not the same, we just leave the mechanisms in place that are currently in place. Okay, I see some agreement here. If anybody disagrees here, please raise your hand and come in. But I don't see any right now. So let's continue with slide 8. So the next part of the question, now that we have laid the groundwork to decide what is in scope and what is not in scope, is to define the measures that should be put in place in order to mitigate the potential for end user confusion. And for these to decide what measures are best suited, we will take a look at the ccTLD fast track process at the EPDP IDNs phase one and phase two reports as well as the topic 24 of the SubPro on IDNs. And so yeah, we need to look at the existing work to be able to answer this part of Charter Question One. So we will postpone that for the time being and first look at the existing

work and then come back to how exactly and what measures we want to put in place. Anil, please.

ANIL JAIN

Thank you, Michael. Anil. First of all, excellent picturization and presentation for Charter Question One and what we have done in the last two sessions. A small clarification about the ccTLD fast track. Are we talking about the IDN ccTLD Working Group 4 outcome or is it a different working group which we are referring to here? Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND

I think it's a different one, but you can see this, and hopefully the question will be answered once we look at the next slide to talk about the ccTLD [task check] process. And Saewon just put in the chat that we will also look at the PDP 4 Working Group and their outcomes. So as said, the other considerations like the string similarity review process will be looked at in more detail in the next call when Sarmad is there to provide some further input on how this process will work. Next slide, please. So the discussion topics for Charter Question One. Based on the working group's agreement that impacting the next one

string similarity process is out of scope, do we agree that we cannot predict the outcome of that evaluation with 100% accuracy? I think we agreed on that already in the previous call because we have no way to exactly know how this review panel will make their decisions. And so the question is, is it worth considering how we can provide applicants with more certainty? And I think this question has also been answered in the last session by stating that our policy will come into effect if the String Similarity Review Panel says that the two or more labels are confusingly similar. And if it's not saying this, then it will not come into effect. And that means that the applicants know that if they are letting the critics and base ASCII versions of a label, they are sure to not be kicked out of the process by the String Similarity Review Panel saying that they are too similar to each other because our policies would then come into effect and take care of that. And in order to provide recommendations within the existing next round mechanism, what else does the working group need to consider other than the existing body of work introduced? This may be a question for after the existing body of work has been examined. So we will now in turn look at the existing work and then after we've done that, we can come back to this question and see whether anybody has any other background information that we should look at that could help us with these decisions. Next slide,

please. So as stated just now, we will now take a look at the charter question 2. If a solution is needed to this issue, are any of the elements of the ccTLD fast-track process transferable? And with that I will hand over to someone to walk us through this fast-track process and what it says and how this might be applicable for us. Thanks.

SAEWON LEE   Thank you, Michael. I hope I can fulfill the task. I apologize for not being on camera today, but I'm unable to be camera ready this morning. So to start us off, just to kind of recap … And I also shared the charter in the chat, but I also do want to share the relevant documents for your reference and just kind of make sure that everyone has the relevant documents. So this is the ccTLD Fast Track Process Implementation Plan which came out of this IDNC Working Group final report. And again as also asked in the chat, this is the ccNSO PDP 4 final report. Okay, so I will move on to the next slide. Before going into providing a high-level overview of this ccTLD fast-track process, I do want to comment (let's say an editorial comment) that leadership and staff found little relevance from this process to be transferred over to our Latin Diacritics PDP Working Group. But as it is in the charter, as well as, let's say, has some

relevance, I guess it's helpful to cover all the bases that we may or may not miss during this process. So personally I wish we could have invited our ccNSO support staff to provide us with more details and answer any specific questions today that I cannot answer to. But I hope for today we can be satisfied with a high-level overview of what we have found in the documents which hopefully can serve as a basis to understand this work. So we'll start with what is a country-code TLD fast track process and why it may be relevant to us. So as you can see in the description as well, just in short, it's to allow for those exceptions where strings are confusingly similar. And in more detail, it's a method developed to allow those non-contentious IDN ccTLDs to be introduced while policy is being developed. These IDN ccTLDs represent their respective country or territory as also marked in the description. And this I'll cover in the next slides related to eligibility. Here in the description it also says scripts other than Latin, and I'll get into that in the next slide. Yes Anil. I really wish Bart was in place of me today. So the IDNC Working Group, as you can see in the background, was tasked by the ICANN Board to recommend these mechanisms where they published this report in June of 2008 which was followed by an implementation plan in November 2009. And since the first publication of the implementation plan, it has gone through several updates where what I have

shared in the chat with you, as well as what can be seen in this slide is the most recent version published in 2019. So this fast-track process was supposed to inform future policy developments, and the CC PDP4 was tasked to evolve the fast track process, amongst other responsibilities. And as I have also shared in the chat, this CC PDP4 final report is now also done but not approved yet by the Board and under consideration. It is stated within the IDNC Working Group Report that the fast track should be an ongoing process which ends at the time the overall IDN ccTLD policy is adopted by the ICANN Board. And so the scope of the IDNC Working Group was limited to developing feasible methods for the introduction of a limited number of IDN ccTLDs that do not preempt the outcomes of this PDP. And I guess this is something that we could note. So again, just to emphasize, the scope of this IDNC Working Group was limited to developing feasible methods for the introduction of a limited number of IDN ccTLDs which do not preempt the outcomes of the PDP. And this is why the script had to be non-Latin script to avoid such issues as this was to be considered as part of the ccPDP. I'll actually go on to the next slide and then maybe stop for some comments. So when going through this high-level overview of the ccTLD fast track process, again, not that it's all of relevance to us, but we believe walking you through the eligibility requirements, string

criteria requirements and certain processes would be useful. So as you can see in the eligibility requirements part, the requirements were that the country or territory must be listed under the international standard and that it only allows for the application for IDN ccTLDs as opposed to the two-character ccTLDs. And obviously these requirements are irrelevant to our PDP itself. As for the string criteria requirements, there are a list of script and meaningfulness requirements as you can see that I've listed here. But again, per our working group discussions from last week as well as recap through Michael today, they are irrelevant to our PDP. Just to note, this number of strings criteria refers to maximum limitation that applies where only one string per official language or script per country or territory is allowed. Again, it's irrelevant to us, as we had agreed upon multiple cases and versions of TLDs to be possible. And I've gone through the non-Latin script requirements, so I won't mention that again. And then moving on to the process itself (and again I'm only pointing out that that is of relevance to us, or, let's say, potential relevance to us), there is a DNS stability review which includes a string similarity process which is similar to the new gTLD process. And so for our PDP working group (again, this is where it becomes potentially most relevant), if the IDN ccTLD is found to be confusingly similar, there is an exception process that extends to the Extended

Process Similarity Review Panel which is abbreviated as EPSRP. And this looks like this. So I've just extracted what is within the document for understanding purposes. And so this DNS Stability Evaluation process … And you can find this in page 28 of the implementation plan that I've also shared. And this is also referred to in pages 51 and 52 of the CC PDP4 final report. And that's what I meant by that it's referred to in both reports. So again, just to highlight and read the parts that potentially could be of relevance to our PDP working group, in the event that the DNS Stability Panel or the EPSRP determines a requested IDN ccTLD string is confusingly similar to an existing two-tetter ASCII ccTLD corresponding to the same country or territory as the requesting country or territory entity, the DNS Stability Panel or the EPSRP shall document this in its report to ICANN. Fast forward, this will be demonstrated to ICANN that the intended manager for the requested IDN ccTLD and the manager for the existing two-letter ASCII ccTLD are one and the same entity and, 2), the intended manager shall request the delegation for the ID and ccTLD string if validated, and, 3, the IDN ccTLD and ccTLD shall remain to be managed by one and the same entity, and, lastly, the intended manager shall agree to specific and prearranged conditions with the goal to mitigate the risk of user confusion as of the moment the IDN ccTLD becomes operational. So after all this, then the

requested string is deemed to have passed the DNS Stability Panel evaluation. So before I go on to the next slide, which is discussion topics, I do want to conclude that this is the high-level overview of the ccTLD fast-track process that leadership and staff believe to be of relevance to this working group, and I will turn the floor back over to Michael to deal with the discussion topics, obviously unless there are any questions. But as I also mentioned, I am not an expert on the ccTLD fast-track process. I know there are some of you that contributed to this work, so either any of you or any of the colleagues here from staff, if you can answer any of the questions that I cannot answer, that would be greatly appreciated. So before I move on, if there are any questions or comments, I'll stop for a bit. But I don't see any so I want to quickly move on to Michael.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Thanks. Great summary, Saewon. That will be helpful to get an overview of what this [fast-track] process is all about is about. And also to maybe add to that is that the fast-track process as far as I understand it (please correct me if I'm wrong) was a possibility for ccTLD managers to get their IDN ccTLD in a fast way, so to say. It's a ccTLD process of the application round though it's not in in rounds and they can do that whenever they

want. I just wanted to say that most of the things that are in this fast-track process policy are already also in some way or another in the application ground rules. So like the string similarity review, stuff like that, is already existing policy in the gTLD work. The discussion topic is now whether we think that anything from this fast-track process may be relevant and could be used for this PDP. So if anybody has any suggestions, comments. I hear none so far. So from my—oh yeah, Amadeu, please.

AMADEU ABRIL   One thing that I think is relevant and important compared to how we were discussing about that last week from the ccTLD fast track (well, for this part of the ccTLD fast track) is that the emphasis is not only put on the same entities unmanaged. That's the way we are approaching that normally with the same entity, same registry, same registrar, same registrant. But they say that the same entity should manage that in a way to avoid confusion to take measures as to the management of those two TLDs. And I think that's important because we discussed briefly last week that should be the same database, or the database should be synchronized, which also implies same technical operator, same RSP. And we have not yet talked

about resellers and DNS providers, but perhaps we should in the future. So it's important that we take into account in our final recommendations not about only the legal entities, the person, the same registrar, the same entity, but also very relevant how this is managed with the scope of avoiding confusion from the end user. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Yeah, thanks, Amadeu. Important point. I think this will also become a bit more clear and more of a topic when we start discussing the IDN EPDP's outcome because I think the policies defined there for variant TLDs are much more concrete than what has been said set in the ccTLD process. There it just says that it must be some prearranged conditions with a goal to mitigate the risk, but it's not really defined. At least I don't know what this prearranged conditions are. And I guess since they are ccTLDs, they are not as such applicable to the ICANN rules. And for that reason, I think the IDN EPDP is a much better body of work we can look at and find more details for that we can then use for our PDP's recommendations. So anybody with any comments regarding the ccTLD fast-track process that you think we should look into in more detail and that might be useful? Maybe it's also an idea to next look at the IDN EPDP in

the next sessions and look at the outcomes which are there and if and which of those would be applicable for us. And once we have gathered that information, we can then maybe come back to the ccPDP and see if there's anything that was missing in the IDN PDP work that could be used for our PDP from the ccTLD since from my perspective most of the questions are covered in the IDN EPDP, and if we use some or many of those policies recommendations, I think we are mostly set with that and don't need that much from the ccTLD work. Philippe, this is just like just a random thought for future work, but is there a way to stress test that procedure for ASCII diacritic strings to see how far that goes? Yeah, please.

PHILIPPE FOUQUART   Thank you, Michael. Apologies if that was cryptic. And again that's just a thought. So the notion is really to determine whether the CC part and the IDN that we'll be reviewing is to some extent applicable to the problem space that we've got here. Maybe to help us get around the notion that some of these principles could be applied to ASCII diacritics, picking up a few examples could be a good idea (various strings in various languages) and just to move away from the simple sort of high-

level general notion. It's just a thought, but that may help me at least. Thank you, Michael.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Thanks. Always good to come up with ideas. That's what we are here for. And yeah, we should definitely see that we have some real examples and check how this would work out and see if any open questions, any corner cases, arise by that test. And yeah, definitely a good suggestion. Thanks for that. Any other comments regarding the ccTLD process? I see none at the moment. So next slide, please. There's an overview. So this table looks quite empty as we are still in the beginning of our deliberations but the idea is to have this table be filled during our process and revisit this every time we change it and, this way, have a good overview of what we have looked at so far and what topics or elements for solution we took out of these existing bodies. So in the first line we have the ccTLD fast track process which we were just looking at now. And then we have the phase one and phase two reports of the IDN EPDP and then as mentioned the support topic 25 and other existing consensus policies. So yeah, there's not much to see there right now, but hopefully in the future and in the end we have a table that makes much more sense and hopefully gives you a

good overview of what has been looked at and what the outcome of these deliberations have been. So with still a bit of a time, so I recently raised the question in leadership, and I would like to go to this with the whole group. Could you please forward to 23? There was some case that came to my mind, and the question was how we would deal with this whether it's in scope or not. So we already decided that we want to allow multiple TLD versions. So if you look at the table and at scenario one, we just have an artificial label called test and two diacritic versions with the "e "and two accent[s] in one, and the other direction acute … And I forgot the second name. Sorry for that. Pardon my French. It's [not] non-existing. Probably Louis will be unhappy with me. Great, thank you. So yeah, scenario one is case we said that we agreed is in scope and should be possible. So if someone applies for all three of these TLDs in the same round, then most likely the String Similarity Review Panel will [decide] those three TLDs to be confusingly similar. So our policy will become effective. And we will say that if it's run by the same entity, and some further policies are applied, which we are going to develop, then those three TLDs can coexist at the same time. The question for scenario two, or basically three, which is more or less the same, is, what if someone applies just for the diacritic versions without applying for the ASCII-only version? Would that also be in scope? Would that

be allowed to do? Or is this not possible? And similarly, if one of those diacritic TLDs already existed from one of the previous rounds, what if someone wants to apply for the other one without also applying for the ASCII-only? Should that be possible? Is that allowed? Now, the working group charted says (and I quote here), "In circumstances where a base ASCII gTLD and the Latin script diacritic version of the gTLD, not variants of each other, what mechanisms is needed in order to allow a single registry operator to simultaneously operate both gTLDs? And under what circumstances should a base ASCII gTLD and the Latin script diacritics version of the gTLD be simultaneously delegated, if any?" So in all these questions and from the charter, it's always talked about the base ASCII gTLD as one of the mandatory things to exist. So it seems like that these scenarios two and three are out of scope and it's not possible to have these situations. Are there any comments or question? Is the case made clearer? Any objection or agreements? Already falling asleep, everybody. Oh, Amadeu? I woke you up. Sorry.

AMADEU ABRIL   Well I am not sure it's out of the scope, but as I said (I think it was two weeks ago), we should be careful not to step into

difficult terrain that would damage our final solution. But I would be very reluctant not to say anything in these other two cases. So I think that if we have doubts about whether this in a scope or not, we do something for what's clearly in a scope and then we add "And we believe that should also apply to these other cases." That is, we separate what's really our solution for what's in the scope and we suggest (strongly suggest) that the same solution be applied for situations whether we are not completely sure whether they are in scope or not. But I think that if we spend too much time on discussing what's within a scope or not, we will never reach the solution.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Yeah. Okay. So your suggestion is to handle this question similarly to the one we already had where we have like the O with a strike through compared to the O which is not a diacritic and therefore it's not in scope but still it's a very similar situation, and people might want to have that but we won't deal with that at the moment and just get these narrow-scoped rules ready and just suggest—

AMADEU ABRIL

Unfortunately, I think that it's clear that the one with the stroke, even [if it's] exactly the same functionally, is out of scope due to the clear definition of the … I mean, [it's] that we need the definition of diacritics. I am not completely sure that the situation with two diacritics that would relate to the same base Latin ASCII but where the Latin ASCII script is not actually delegated [or requested] … I am sure it is out of your scope but I prefer to then separate the advice for what we are sure of and what we are not sure of.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Okay, thanks. Any other questions? Comments? Tapani says, "This is no reason to exclude this because the exclusion of the O was based on a different reason," even though he's not agreeing with it but he seems to have accepted that reason. So he suggests that all three scenarios should be in scope. Yeah, I'm also not clear here what the best solution is. Technically speaking (and my background is mostly technical), I also see no issue with allowing scenario two or three because the technical solution will be exactly the same as for scenario one. The software/computers don't care really whether one is an ASCII-

only or as an IDN in the DNS. It's just a different string in an XN Punycode notation. Justine, please?

JUSTINE CHEW

Sorry. I may be a bit slow today, but I don't really understand this table. Could you explain it to me, please?

MICHAEL BAULAND

Yeah, sure. This table wanted to give you three scenarios, and the question is whether we should or may consider those, or whether they may be out of scope. So the situation is we look at three TLDs. In scenario one, none of those three exist yet. The three TLDs we look at is dot-test with ASCII-only characters, and dot-test, and dot-test with grave and acute accents. So it's these three, and the presumption is that the String Similarity Review Panel will most likely put all three of them to be confusingly similar. So we can assume that our policies will be applicable for those. And now we have one scenario where one applicant applies for all three of those; he base ASCII version plus the two diacritics one. And we are all clear that this is in scope, and we will deal with this and find a solution to how these three TLDs can coexist together. The

more problematic case is where the ASCII-only version neither exists, so it hasn't been applied for in any of the previous rounds, nor is it applied for in this round. So in this round, scenario two, the applicant just applies for the two diacritic versions. And scenario three, which is kind of similar, is that one of the diacritic versions already exists, it has been applied for in one of the previous rounds, and they now want to apply for the other diacritic without wanting to have the base ASCII version. So the question is, are we allowed to make policy, and do we want to make policy for the situation where the only applied-for and/or existing TLDs are diacritic versions of the same base ASCII version, but the base ASCII version one is not applied-for and does not exist, and we don't know whether in any time in the future this will ever be applied for?

JUSTINE CHEW   Okay. So I have—oh, Steve has his hand up. Maybe he wants to elaborate before I continue.

STEVE CHAN   No, no, thanks, Justine. Please proceed.

JUSTINE CHEW

Okay, thanks. So my difficulty now is I don't think we can mandate what an applicant wants to apply for or should apply for. That's number one. It's entirely the choice. So if the applicant decides that they want the two diacritic versions of a string (let's call it string for now) but not the base ASCII one, then it's within their right. If they come back the next round and say, "Okay, now I want the base ASCII one," then it's fine too because so long as it's the same entity, it doesn't really matter because at the end of the day, what we're concerned about is user confusion. So long as it's the same entity that's operating all three, it doesn't matter to us whether they choose to take one or two or three whenever. The problem with that is that the charter question one talks about base ASCII gTLD, so now we are kind of limiting ourselves to the scenario where the base gTLD is involved—the base ASCII one is involved—which is kind of suggesting that if the applicant doesn't apply for a base gTLD, then we have a problem with the policy applying to the other diacritics. I think that is a problem. I don't know whether we can do anything about changing that position because, as I see it, the policy should

apply to all three scenarios, logically speaking. So I don't think we should limit ourselves in any way. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Yeah, thanks. Good point. Just two sentences before I go to Steve. I agree that it's sound similar, and of course even in scenario two, they can apply for it, but if our PDP is not applicable to that situation, it would just mean that they would be found confusingly similar and would go into contention set, and they would just be able to get one of those. But yeah, Steve, please.

STEVE CHAN

Thanks, Michael. And I think it's already been probably hinted at really strongly, but I just wanted to provide maybe a bit of context and color from when the Council was talking about this topic. You can see there's intention to try to keep this as narrow and tight and focused as possible, I think for a variety of reasons. One was to try to keep the PDP in position where it could complete its work quickly. That's one. But I think two is that there's a recognition at the Council level that this is by its nature an exception process to two mechanisms that are

intended to limit user confusion. So I think there is multiple reasons to try to keep this as narrow and tight as possible. And you can see, from the introductory text to the scope and charter question and then the first charter question itself, that the Council's charter that they adopted is pretty explicit about mentioning the base ASCII. So, at least from the staff perspective, we think this is probably by the plain language of the charter, out of scope. If there's disagreement with the working group, that's one thing. It could mean that if the worker did want to pursue this further, we could pursue it with the Council to seek expansion of the scope. I think one of the other options that has been tossed around, (and it relates, as you mentioned, to the other examples of characters that might be out of scope for this group) is to potentially recommend future work for things that are out of scope for this PDP. So if there is a desire to pursue this further, there are mechanisms, I think, available that would allow the working group to do so. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Okay, thanks, Steve. So it seems like that the language is clear that at least one of those TLDs where we make the exception process has to be the base ASCII version. Otherwise we cannot

make an exception based on the charter of this PDP, which does not mean that no exception can be made in the future at all. It just sounds like for this narrow scope PDP, the exception is not possible for scenario two and three. Amadeu, please.

AMADEU ABRIL

Okay, I have a question for Steve. As I said before, A) I am in favor of treating exactly the same way the three scenarios. B) Being a lawyer, I see that the scope is limited and that going beyond the scope, I think it's purely outside the powers of the PDP working group itself. The scope is owned by the GNSO Council. Correct, Steve. Now my question would be, do you think that the GNSO receiving our advice would need to start another PDP or another work to apply to the similar cases or they can, as they are the owners of the scope, finally say, okay, this was the scope we gave, and yes, we see that these things are completely the same, so we vote to implement the solutions for these other cases"? That was my question to you. Or would we need really a formal new process for that?

STEVE CHAN

Thanks, Amadeu. That was directed at me, I presume. Yes. Okay. I think Seb will also be able to answer this one because I see he's next in the queue. There is something that allows the PDP to have its charter amended, and that would be an official action of the Council. So if this PDP did want to expand its charter and scope, that would presumably go through Prudence as the liaison to the Council. The Council would deliberate whether or not it agrees with the expansion of scope and then it would, if I remember correctly, actually vote and require a resolution to actually instantiate that updated charter, and then this PDP would be able to operate against the updated charter. I hope I answered your question. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Okay, Sebastien?

SEBASTIEN DUCOS

So, three points here. To Steve's last comment, yes, I believe that it's exactly right. I wouldn't expect the Council to push back furiously against it, but any of these things take months just to be drafted and accepted and scheduled and then voted on. So I would strongly discourage, if we want to go and

proceed with this as efficiently as possible. The next comment (and this doesn't need to be answered immediately) is that this is already the second week that we find things in the charter where (I want to say this as diplomatically as possible) essentially nobody is either diacritic or IDN experts on the Council, or there's very few of them. And so is this something that was voluntarily done because somebody was seeing the importance of having the canonical ASCII in the mix, or is this just sort of a quick oversight and this is where we want to go? So is there a reason to have it that we don't see immediately?

And third point. Then, at some point in this PDP, I assume that we're going to talk about fees, and I'd like for us to then earmark this moment, because if we are deciding that we want to go with the course and just leave the PDP as is and decide that this ASCII (I don't want to use "canonical") representation is a mandatory in our mix, we need to remember that when we're forcing it on applicants about fees because as Justine stated before, it is the applicant's absolute right to say, "No. Actually, I want to exploit only one of those TLDs." And so if for some administrative reason we're forcing having also the ASCII base alive, I'd like to make sure that that's remembered when we talk about fees. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Okay, thanks, Sebastien, for that input. I also read Tapani's, who thinks this looks like an oversight from the Council. Since we are running more and more out of time, I think we will take this back and discuss this a bit more on the leadership team and then follow up during the next meeting with this problem and whether it's in scope and, [if not], how we should handle this, if that's okay for everybody. I see agreements. So I would like to hand over—oh, Mark, please.

MARK DATYSGELD

Thank you. So to clarify the situation, there were, let's say, three diacritic experts on the Council at the time. Two specialized in Latin diacritics—me being one of them, the other being Nacho Amadoz. The problem was being able to get a text or being able to get a version of a description of events that the other counselors would understand. To most of the counselors, they weren't even considering this important, never mind understanding it. And as it exchanged hands, things get lost and revisions get lost and you end up with something that is a best effort, but not necessarily a direct result of the consensus of the people who are experts within the Council, but more a result of what the entire Council ended up thinking was correct. So a good place to amend those things is this

group where we can actually put out an expert opinion back to the Council and say very targeted things such as, "Hey, this one thing needs an amendment," instead of just rewriting the PDP, pointing to that certain things were insufficient in this exchange of hands and so on. That shouldn't be anything that will be seen as too alien by the Council because it was very clear that this was being driven basically by three people together with Steve's help (Steve Chan, or the man of the plan here). So, yeah, nobody will be too shocked if one thing or another ended up being sent with an oversight ahead. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Okay, thanks. I will go to Justine and then close the comments for now to have this wrap-up possible. Justine, please.

JUSTINE CHEW   Yeah, thanks. Michael. So I may be out of line here, but I think, from my perspective, when even I considered the scope of the charter of this PDP, I didn't think about multiple diacritics, to be honest. So it was always going to be just a base gTLD and one diacritic. In that scenario, you have to go in the pair, which is why it worked out being written as base ASCII gTLD, because

it's only the base ASCII TLD and one diacritic that we're talking about. So it's a pair that goes together. Now that you've introduced the concept of multiple TLDs or multiple diacritics, the scenario changes. So that's where I come into this conclusion that I don't think it was always intended to be that base gTLD has to be in the mix. It poses a different scenario altogether. So I think this is something that we probably can ask our liaison to take back to council, obviously, after leadership and staff have had discussion on it. Thanks.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Okay, thanks, Justine. Good point. So, yeah, we will discuss this internally and then suggest a way forward to the team in the next meeting and then we'll see how we go from there. And now over to John. Thanks.

JOHN EMERY   Thank you so much, Michael. Saewon, if you can go to the slide for the upcoming schedule. Just as a quick reminder, we will not be meeting next week over Easter holiday. So no meeting next week. And for our meeting four, we should theoretically have Sarmad come and present on the string similarity review

process. So some decisions today: we were just recapping from last time the agreement that String Similarity Review Panel, based on the decision of that our PDP, would come into effect. We've not restricted to two TLDs, but can have three or more. There's no limit to certain TLD types like brand or geographic areas. Through our discussion, we also determined today that this working group shall consider all TLDs—so ones that are existing, ones that are applied for and yet to be applied for. Another outcome: leadership and staff found that there's little relevance of the ccTLD fast-track process. However, an action item for us today is that in our future sessions, we'll look at the IDN EPDP and those outcomes that would be applicable and then go back to the ccTLD to see if there's anything missing that our PDP could benefit from. Another action item is to come up with examples to help us stress test to draw out from IDN ccTLD, to kind of look at these edge cases. So it's to come up with a number of examples to kind of help us talk through it. And in the end, our big discussion here based on these is an action item for leadership team and staff to come together to see whether or not we need the ASCII requirement, whether we need to return to Council, or to amend the Charter or to simply give recommendation for future work on this. So that's what we have for today. Anyone have anything else that we missed or need to discuss? Yes, Mark?

MARK DATYSGELD

Thank you everyone. You may have seen on the list being circulated an email containing a document that outlines the general scope of where we are in terms of the current definition. So that report was generated using … I basically called it a tool in Python to generate it programmatically from the resources we have from the Unicode tables and the RZ LGR. And within the scope of what we discussed so far, this is where we are. These would be the characters that we are taking into consideration. So have a look into that when you have the time. Check it out. And the good thing about that is that if something changes in the scope, we can just programmatically change that and you can generate your own report if you have the technical knowledge. And actually if any of the methodology doesn't seem sound to you, there's a GitHub, and you can just make a pull request and we can discuss it that way. So it's a bit of a programmatic solution to a problem so that we don't have to outsource this to some consultancy or anything like that. We just have that ready already. So it's another step that we are kind of leapfrogging by already having a solution for this. And it's an iterative one. It just depends on where the conversation goes. But for now, for what we know, within the scope of what we have decided so far, those would be the code

points that we are looking into as non-variants that have an ASCII base and can be modified by a diacritic. So do have a look at that and if you have any comments, please send them to the list or directly my way. Thank you.

JOHN EMERY

Thank you so much for that, Mark. That's extremely helpful, and staff will take an action as well to post that to the wiki page in addition to it being in the email. So Michael, over to you to wrap things up.

MICHAEL BAULAND

Thanks. Yeah, so three more minutes. And I see a hand up Saewon, please.

SAEWON LEE

Thank you, Michael, and thank you, John, also, for the next steps. I just kind of wanted to add to the reminder as well. After next week being off, we return on 23rd of April where we will have this string similarity review presentation by Sarmad, but right the next day is the early input process deadline. So I

just wanted to remind everyone that if you are discussing this with your respective groups, please do so by then. And maybe through that, we might have some kind of determination on this issue that we potentially may need to proceed with. And then the other thing again (I'm still on that slide) is I just wanted to re-emphasize that the 7th of May will also be cancelled. Michael reminded us that there's a CP Summit, so also please mark your calendars with that. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND   Yeah, thanks. I guess some of the team here are also on the CP summit, so if you're there, please come and see me. I will be there, and it's always nice to speak to people in person. Okay, I guess that's it. Any last minute comment? Justine says, would we consider an extension of time on the early input? I don't see it necessary at the moment. But if you have reasons that say your group would need an extension, we could discuss this. John nods his head. So, okay, we'll check that. Okay then, thank you all for your participation. Happy holiday next week. One week to read more documents to prepare for the next meeting. And then I'll see you in two weeks' time. Thanks, all. You can stop the recording now, please.