Minutes of the GNSO Council Meeting 12 February 2026

GNSO Council meeting on Thursday, 12 February 2026 at 21:00 UTC: https://tinyurl.com/4fwnj9jd
13:00 Los Angeles; 16:00 Washington DC; 21:00 London; 22:00 Paris; 00:00 Moscow (Friday); 20:00 Melbourne (Friday)

List of attendees:
Nominating Committee Appointee (NCA): – Non-Voting – Anne Aikman Scalese (absent)
Contracted Parties House
Registrar Stakeholder Group: Hong-Fu Meng, Ashley Heineman, Volker Greimann (first meeting as Councilor, replaces Prudence Malinki)
gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group: Nacho Amadoz, Samantha Demetriou, Jennifer Chung
Nominating Committee Appointee (NCA): Gaurav Vedi
Non-Contracted Parties House
Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG): Lawrence Olawale-Roberts,Vivek Goyal, Osvaldo Novoa (apology,proxy to Susan Mohr), Damon Ashcraft, Susan Payne, Susan Mohr
Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG): Farzaneh Badii, Bruna Martins dos Santos, Julf Helsingius, Peter Akinremi, Tapani Tarvainen (apology, proxy to Julf Helsingius), Benjamin Akinmoyeje
Nominating Committee Appointee (NCA): Christian Dawson
GNSO Council Liaisons/Observers:
Justine Chew: ALAC Liaison
Sebastien Ducos: GNSO liaison to the GAC
Antonia Chu: ccNSO observer

Guests:
Board Caucus on Data Protection and Privacy: Wes Hardaker, James Galvin, David Lawrence, and Greg DiBiase

ICANN Staff:
Steve Chan – Vice President, Policy Development Support & GNSO Relations
Julie Hedlund - Policy Development Support Director (GNSO) (apology)
Caitlin Tubergen - Director, Policy Development Support (GNSO)
Saewon Lee - Policy Development Support Manager (GNSO)
Feodora Hamza - Policy Development Support Manager (GNSO) (apology)
John Emery - Policy Development Support Senior Specialist (GNSO)
Andrew Chen - Policy Development Support Senior Specialist (GNSO)
Terri Agnew - Policy Operations Senior Specialist (GNSO)
Julie Bisland - Policy Operations Analyst (GNSO)
Devan Reed - Policy Operations Coordinator (GNSO/Programs and Operations)

Zoom 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 11 December 2025 were posted on 05 January 2026.
Minutes of the GNSO Council Meeting on 15 January 2026 were posted on 31 January 2026.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, welcomed the guests from the Board to later discuss the next steps for SSAD. She invited Councilors to update the SOI's.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, SOI updated administratively from recent .Asia updates at their AGM to also include a financial interest in .kids.

Justine Chew, ALAC Liaison, updated that she will be an observer for the DNS Abuse Mitigation PDP 1.

Sebastian Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC, has updated his employer from GoDaddy to Unstoppable domains.

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.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, this was discussed during SPS, there will be a deep dive into those tools and how to organize them. Support staff is endeavoring to highlight upcoming voting items and flag them in the tool for Councilors to see upcoming votes. She queried if any current liaisons have any milestones or potential issues to flag for Council.

Item 3: Consent Agenda

- Confirm the GNSO-nominated ICANN Fellowship Program Mentor
    - Imran Hossen

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, introduced the consent agenda and moved to a vote.

All Councilors present voted in favor of the motion.

Vote Results

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, thanked the SSC for their excellent work on this.

Item 4: COUNCIL VOTE - Standing Committee on Continuous Improvement (SCCI) Policy Status Report (PSR) Final Report
4.1 - Presentation of Motion (Taiwo Peter Akinremi, GNSO Council Vice-Chair)
4.2 - Council Vote
4.3 - Next Steps

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, gave background on the SCCI and their review of the PSR for review.

After SCCI deliberations, this mechanism for the GNSO of EPDP, GGI, and GGP is working as intended. They made minor recommendations to the Council and Manju presented the last meeting. One recommendation discussed developing educational materials to improve the clarity of these processes and their recommendations to the Council and opened the floor for any reactions.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, read the [resolved clauses](#) and moved to a vote.

All Councilors present voted in favor of the motion.

[Vote Results](#)

Action Items:
- SCCI, in collaboration with the GNSO Policy Development Support Staff, to implement all three (3) recommendations as soon as feasible.

Item 5: Council Discussion - Next Steps for System for Standardized Access/Disclosure ("SSAD") Recommendations
5.1 - Introduction of Topic (Susan Payne, GNSO Chair)
5.2 - Council Discussion
5.3 - Next Steps

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, welcomed Board members from the Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus to discuss the SSAD and she proceeded to introduce the topic. During the recent SPS the next steps were discussed along with Greg DiBiase and Chris Buckridge. She expressed appreciation to the Board for the continued opportunity to have this discussion.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, outlined the next steps for SSAD recommendations and shared the following [slides](#) for background information.

Wes Hardaker, Chair of Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus, noted this is an important topic that the Board and community has been working on. He was pleased that a path forward was coming to light on this topic. He appreciated the Council following the recommendation of the Standing Committee to not adopt the SSAD recommendations as a package. There is no perfect solution, but non-adopting them as a whole would allow the easiest and fastest way to progress. By doing so, it will trigger the work on supplemental recommendation per the ICANN bylaws. We are hoping that new policy work can be accomplished as quickly as possible as the current continuation approval of the RDRS service goes until November of 2027. That is not a super long timeframe to consider policy changes and he added it is open discussion as to whether policy and implementation work can be completed in the same time period. They are trying to balance timeline pressures from the community to come to a long-term solution as quickly as possible. The Board does want to request that in the process of working on new policy changes that the Council make sure to consider the advice provided by the GAC and the SSAC in the supplemental recommendations as well. Both of those groups in particular have some strong opinions, but of course, the community as a whole will have opinions on the subject. And note that the disclosure policy related to registrars with affiliated privacy proxy services should also be aligned with the supplemental recommendations.

Greg DiBiase, Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus Member, agreed with the summary of Wes. He added that the Board is looking at the RDRS Standing Committee as it aligns a lot with the Board's

thinking on this matter and is a great starting point. It also noted that the Board has looked at alignment policy. If the supplemental recommendations could align with privacy/proxy could align with supplemental recommendations.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, circled back to the desire to get the work done as quickly as possible. That aligns with the SPS discussion, though there is not a firm timeline. In Council prioritization of workload it came in terms of months rather than years in coming up with supplemental recommendations.

Ashley Heineman, RrSG, asked about next steps, what actually triggers everything. The Board has to formally non-adopt and then there needs to be followed and she queried about what that looks like.

Wes Hardaker, Chair of Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus, responded that in March the Board will likely pass a resolution that will non-adopt and that will trigger the supplemental recommendations of the GNSO Council. He greatly appreciates the discussion around the timeline, so hopefully bringing into alignment from RDRS will ideally make that fairly rapid. The dialogue and formality he left to Greg to answer.

Greg DiBiase, Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus Member, said that resolution will be passed in Mumbai and then the GNSO will decide to start work on this and would facilitate conversations with the Board, there will be a template from last time on SubPro. The details of how those dialogues take place will be sorted out after the resolution.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, queried how the Board is approaching this. When this is non-adopted, how will the Board approach communicating the message for how the ICANN community will react.

Wes Hardaker, Chair of Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus, said that it is a great concern of the Board to get the messaging well-articulated so that many understand the rationale for doing this. This is especially true with the concerns of GAC and SSAC on this topic. This does not mean things are being thrown out. There has been more work than on a normal resolution text going back and forth on editing to ensure that the background whereas clauses are as clear as possible. The Board greatly appreciates the GNSO Council's interactions with the community to explain it from its perspective as well.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, raised the issue of a Small Team Plus or what mechanism, which Section 9 Annex A triggers a dialogue between the Council on the Board. Likely this will be a part of the Board caucus. It can be a dialogue with the whole of Council or it can be a subset of Council. In practice that is what happened on SubPro. The details of that do not need to be discussed at this point for the Working Group. That will be a WG with sufficient expertise going forward. Her recollection was that SubPro was relatively informal since the dialogue was already in place.

Volker Greimann, RrSG, concurred with the Board's approach of non-adoption having worked on these recommendations from the beginning and was a negotiated compromise and should not be subject to picking and choosing. The consensus was that all recommendations must be viewed together.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, next steps will be a Board resolution at ICANN85. Does the Board need anything from Council before that?

Wes Hardaker, Chair of Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus, if there is a correspondence that could be easily drafted that would be great.

Greg DiBiase, Board Data Protection and Privacy Caucus Member, a letter would not be necessary. From this conversation the Board has a sense that this is the right path with details to figure out after the resolution.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, thanked the Board for their dialogue in this matter and continued to the next agenda.

Action Items:
- Council Leadership to propose a draft letter to send to the Board, summarizing the dialogue and emphasizing the message that the Council, in recommending the Board consider non-adoption of the SSAD recommendations, does not intend to throw any recommendations away, that it will complete the work in a timely manner (e.g., less than one year), and provide brief rationale for why the suggested path is preferable.

Item 6: Council Discussion - ICANN85 GAC and GNSO Bilateral Proposed Agenda
6.1 - Introduction of Topic (Sebastien Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC)
6.2 - Council Discussion
6.3 - Next Steps

Sebastian Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC, the topics proposed for ongoing discussion included 1) DNS Abuse 2) RDRS/SSAD and 3 Urgent Requests/Law Enforcement Authentication. He emphasized moving away from reporting to the GAC on GNSO work, and creating more of a dialogue. After this call Seb will be sharing the bullet points with the GAC. The HRIA was cut last time and would encourage the topic to be added to the agenda given the additional time this meeting that GAC and GNSO have together. He noted that GAC will send questions to the Council and encouraged someone from Council to volunteer to be a topic lead for each topic and draft some bullet points to send to the GAC topic leads.

Bruna Martins dos Santos, NCSG, discussed how the HRIA could occur and the GAC has indicated that they would be interested in this topic.

Sebastian Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC, asked Bruna for some bullet points to share with the team on the GAC side.

Bruna Martins dos Santos, NCSG, agreed to send some points to Seb.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, wanted to address how to make this meeting participatory and not just presenting to the GAC.

Sebastian Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC, the GAC has no issue with us presenting to the GAC. If the Council has their own questions, pivoting into a discussion would likely be more comfortable. The GAC used to be absent in the past from the PDP, but now they are very present and part of our work. Usually the topic leads on the GAC side are aware, but the latest updates for them can be useful well before they start asking questions.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, asked if Seb needed leads for each group. She proposed Bruna leading the HR questions. This is a continuation based on the GAC answers previously given to us regarding the HR questions and stated that this should be a dialogue.

Lawrence Olawale-Roberts, BC, on the issue of urgent request and LEA authentication, he agrees that this should get feedback from the GAC and the PSWG. At the last meeting there was a question posed around jurisdictional issues and how that could affect ongoing work. As it concerns accuracy, there is little to report, but in the days ahead there may be useful information in the future to fashion a way to progress around accuracy to have something to report to GAC and close out this action item.

Sam Demetriou, RySG, asked in the chat "Seb and Council leadership looking for topic leads on the RDRS/SSAD and Urgent Requests/LEA authentication topics?"

Sebastian Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC, Seb had volunteered, but would prefer a councilor to take the lead for RDRS and Urgent Requests. He would push for that conversation for a topic lead on our end to have an expert if anyone wants to do it. As to accuracy, it is up to the Council to bring it up or not, if Lawrence wants to take the lead on that. He would like to have by COB a few bullet points of what they would suggest to talk about before they come up with their own questions.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, queried if there are any potential topics from GAC they wanted to cover.

Sebastian Ducos, GNSO Liaison to the GAC, other things may arise, but the top three topics were the only ones addressed.

Lawrence Olawale-Roberts, BC, will get back to Seb on the issue of law enforcement and jurisdiction.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, thanked Councilors who put their hands up to be topic leads on each. Seb is asking for a few bullets by Monday for further discussion during the GNSO Prep Webinar on Thursday the 19th. This will allow for some additional preparatory work before traveling to Mumbai.

Item 7: Council Discussion - Prioritization of Work
7.1 - Introduction of Topic (Jennifer Chung, GNSO Council Vice-Chair))
7.2 - Council Discussion
7.3 - Next Steps

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, reminded Councilors of the SPS discussion on this topic in the past. She highlighted Council tools including the ADR to assist what decisions are to be made on. This helps us to look at different work efforts coming up. There are some updates to ADR so we can see what is upcoming for Council votes. How the ADR can coexist with a Council prioritization document. The timeline has been updated with the items coming down the pipeline. The goal now is to discuss and agree on how to look at the prioritization element and how it can be utilized going forward with the ADR. The goal now is to look and agree on how Council is going to use the prioritization element and how that can be added to the ADR.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, There were three general ideas that were raised and discussed briefly during the SPS.

1) The first is having the ADR include a timeline of all the active work, so the active PDPs, EPDPs, all the policy development work so we can have a snapshot of what the current projects are scheduled to complete the timeline, the timing, and where there might be capacity to take on

extra work to sign on sequence things where it's more effective. The second idea that was raised and also discussed was to have the ADR contain a parking lot of items that are still important for Council, but these potential topics may not be at the very top of Council's list. So, they are priorities, but they don't currently fit in a sequence that we look at right now because the ADR, again, as all of us know, after Council Jeopardy, it is just for this calendar year.

2) The second piece is on the next round and moving from rounds to an open process. This potential topic was suggested by the team that's implementing the next round for the Council to consider. Next steps for this is Council's gonna receive a briefing from org to understand what the scope of the change might look like, potential solutions, and have that discussion further. So, that's the next step for this one.

3) The third one is the expiration policies. We've already listened to the briefing from GDS staff about this. They present to the policy status report on expired domain deletion policy, expired registration, recovery policy. Council looked at some potential ambiguities that could be cured, and this was already last year.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, she added that during the November meeting, Councilors were asked to reach out to respective SGs and Cs to see if they think this should be prioritized. Council hasn't received anything that indicates we should move this up on the priority list, but Council is going to probably keep it on our radar, keep it in the parking lot for us to not forget this piece of work. She added two more items. There's a Transfers Policy Final Report, the recommendation for GNSO to request an issues report on a potential dispute mechanism for registrants to dispute improper inter-registrar transfers. We've heard from NCSG, they've noted that this is a priority, but of course the report itself hasn't been adopted by the Board. Council has heard from them that they anticipate that this will probably be done quite soon, possibly in Mumbai. For DNS Abuse there has been the final issue report. The PDP on ADC is going to be kicked off in Mumbai. So, all of these are the topics that you can see in the prioritization document that's been updated right now. All of these could be integrated in the parking lot. So, that was a second kind of suggestion and idea that we talked about during the SPS. And then finally, there's been a suggestion from councilors about really looking at a very simple voting and ranking at the SG and C level. We can adapt this ranking as a ranked choice voting. We've also heard some concerns about this

The document referenced is available for download here.

Vivek Goyal, BC, queried if feedback is for prioritization method or the content.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, answered that the first step is the method and then subsequently the topics.

Damon Ashcraft, IPC, of the three topics, he personally likes the voting and ranking of SG/C's is likely what has been done before just not formally.

Steve Chan, ICANN org, had the idea of adaptation and ranking. Taking inspiration from the SSC to rely on voting rather than being the final and absolute result it is an input into the Council decision making to hear from groups, but also of course correct based on the Council flexibility.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, agreed that this was also used in the DNS Abuse priorities.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, asked for three mechanisms if these can be circulated for a

conversation rather than making a decision now. Can there be a document circulated on the Council list to look at these mechanisms to discuss amongst their groups.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, agreed with Steve's suggestion to allow groups for input via voting, but give Council the final say. As groups are working it is worthwhile to take into account what the organization is trying to achieve and a key message from WSIS is to get the work done and address problems. It is naive of us to think we operate in a vacuum and we should listen to the wider world for what we should be prioritizing.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, when we look at SG/C's we should know that outside input.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, how do we know what the outside community wants to prioritize? Do we rely on staff?

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, two-fold approach for numerical ranking first and she noted in the chat that one Councilor objects to that

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, disagrees with Steve and his idea for prioritization. They rank the candidates and have discussions, but then when they bring the results and we look at their decision and never say no. That is not suitable for prioritization. Ranking by us can not be a good prioritization mechanism and it needs further discussion.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, requests NCSG contribution for suggestions on the Council list.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, clarified that Steve's suggestion was not that Council set up a committee like a version of this SSC to do this job, and then take that input and we rubber stamp it. He was suggesting that rather than just go on numerical ranking and go, okay, this one got 10 votes, this one got eight, this one got five, those are the three we're taking forward. Rather than doing that, Council does that exercise, but that is an input then into a discussion rather than the final word on the outcome. That was, she thinks what Steve was meaning was like the kind of way that SSC works, which is they do some polling and then they have a conversation and explain why they voted the way they did and try to talk people around to their way of thinking effectively. She queried with Farzi if that clarification made a difference.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, said the short answer is no. The longer answer is that Council can discuss this, she's not blocking anything. But the thing is that most of the time, ranking topics and stuff like that without having -- let's discuss this a little bit more. We want to have ample time for conversation and giving our input and make the groups think about the issue at hand. And when you give them this ranking thing and they said, okay, so here is our ranking, then Council is not gonna give it further thought, and that's her concern and she said it in chat, especially for a group that is time constraint. So, let's think about how we can overcome those hurdles as well so that this ranking doesn't become de facto voting.

Jennifer Chung, GNSO Vice-Chair, aimed to have constructive next steps on this by coming up with proposals for the next steps on list with leadership and staff.

Action Items:
- Council Leadership and staff to draft a proposal for next steps and then allow for reaction on list.

Item 8: Any other business
8.1 - Update on ICANN85 planning and Draft GNSO Schedule
   ● GNSO Prep Week Webinar - 19 February 2025 at 13:00UTC

Terri Agnew, ICANN org, gave updates for ICANN85 including the GNSO Prep webinar on 19 February. She gave extensive updates on the logistics for GNSO meetings at ICANN85.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, noted that there would be a bunch of meetings in Mumbai including the Council meeting that follows quite closely after this one. There is always a google doc for people to propose items on the Council agenda. Please additionally share anything that you think should be covered during the working sessions at ICANN85, please share it. The Farzi item raised on PDP numbers participation will have some face-to-face discussion in Mumbai.

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, asked what type of information NCSG would need to provide for background to understand and consider the topic.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, replied that there is not a hard and fast rule, but will sometimes need some additional information leadership and staff will reach out for it. For timing, there needs to be time to organize the agenda, so earlier is always better. She acknowledged that there are a few open items from NCSG to discuss and leadership will be able to circle back on them. Finally, she highlighted that the LD PDP public comment is open, closing on 23 February.

8.2 - Deadline Reminders
   ● Latin Script Diacritics PDP Public Comment closes on 23 February

Farzaneh Badii, NCSG, added that the HRIA for the LD PDP was quite good and utilized the template the Council had approved. If Councilors go back to their group and look at the HR checklist and make comments on what can be improved and what they like about it.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, there's kind of two different elements here. One is that there is this section nine process that can be used, it talks about this concept of effectively having a dialogue Board Council dialogue and sending it back and further work being done at the Council level to develop supplemental recommendations. And then there's perhaps a slightly separate conversation, which we did start to have at the SPS and it wasn't really appropriate to have that conversation with the Board because the separate conversation is how does council want to handle the work? What structural mechanism does it want to use? Whether that is a small team plus or some other grouping of people to perform the work. And I think we don't seem to be entirely all aligned on that idea of a small team plus. I think we'll have to, by the sound of it, talk about it a bit more. I would say to my mind one could call it a working group, and perhaps it would be easier if we did. It's not that small. If you select a certain number of people from each group, it becomes no different to a group that we just selected to do a PDP on DNS abuse or whatever. But we can talk about that, and I think that's a different thing to -- how we Council want to do the work, I think is a different part of the conversation.

Peter Akinremi, GNSO Vice-Chair, was not talking about how the Board is doing that, but raising a question about the process. Because if there is a particular process that is not effective or problematic in such a way that Council cannot initiate that, then it should find a way of having a conversation and improving that process. Because it leaves the Council to actually initiate supplemental procedure or recommendation when the ICANN Board rejects any PDP recommendation.

Christian Dawson, NCA NCPH, clarified that anytime a PDP fails there should be lessons learned from that to improve the process for the next PDP.

Susan Payne, GNSO Chair, there is a lot of that integrated in Board Readiness and PDP 3.0. There were a few that worked on SSAD recommendations and Board readiness and EPDP intervened to improve the process. That wraps up today's meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 22:50 UTC