
DEVAN REED:

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. For the recording, this is Devan Reed. Welcome to the Latin Script Diacritics PDP call taking place on Wednesday, 15 April 2026. 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 assistance is needed updating your statements of interest, please email the GNSO Secretariat. All documentation and information can be found in the Latin Script Diacritics Wiki space. Recordings will be posted shortly after the end of the call. Please remember to state your name before speaking for the transcript. All chat sessions are being archived. As a reminder, participation in ICANN, including this session, is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy, and the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct. Thank you, and back over to Michael Bauland. Please begin.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Devan, and welcome, everybody, to our thirty-first meeting of the Latin Script Diacritics. Next slide, please. The agenda is as usual; we will do a recap of the last meeting, and then we will continue reviewing the public comments. Next slide, please. Next slide.

For the key outcomes, last week we talked about PR6 and the newly introduced IG7, and the working group agreed on separating this into PR6 and IG7, with IG7 explicitly outlining all scenarios. We will take a look at that again in the next slides. Regarding IG8, the working group agreed to add a sixth item to that implementation guidance while also explicitly outlining the scenario where an ASCII is dropped and two or

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more LD TLDs remain, because that case was not totally clear in the wording before, and we will see the update in the next slides.

Next slide, please. For action items, as usual, we continue to review the public comment review tool. We had some minor wording changes in the IG7, and all of these are done and can be seen in the next slides. Leadership and staff added explicit language to outline the scenario for the remaining two LD TLDs when an ASCII gTLD fails to proceed with the set and application process, as we can see on the next slides.

Next slide, please. For the Preliminary Recommendation 6, which now does not contain the Implementation Guidance 7, it reads as a final version now: Consistent with Final Recommendation 3.25 of the PDP IDN Phase 1 Final Report, after submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw an applied-for gTLD string from that application, but is not allowed to add any other gTLD strings that were not originally applied for in that application. Only an applicant for a .brand string who has applied for an ASCII gTLD string and/or Latin diacritic gTLD string that are placed in a contention set is allowed to change its applied-for ASCII gTLD string and its Latin diacritic strings under the conditions set out in SubPro PDP Recommendation 20.8.

Are there any thoughts about that? I mean, not thoughts, but we agree to that language. Does anybody see any issues with this? Seeing none, we will take a look at the new Implementation Guidance 7 version, which reads at the moment: With respect to the withdrawal of an applied-for gTLD string per Preliminary Recommendation 6, it can be divided into one of the following scenarios. 7.1, if the application contains a single ASCII gTLD string and multiple Latin diacritic gTLD

strings, and one applied-for Latin diacritic gTLD string is withdrawn from that application, the application will continue to be treated under the exception process. Or 7.2, if the application contains a single ASCII gTLD string and a single Latin diacritic gTLD string and either of the applied-for gTLD strings is withdrawn, the set will cease to exist, and the application of a single gTLD string may proceed only through the standard process.

Here, we basically left the wording as is. We already agreed to that, and we just introduced an "or" between 7.1 and 7.2. Then we added the part which was in the Implementation Guidance X to this one, as decided last week, which reads: With respect to the withdrawal of an applied-for gTLD string that corresponds to its existing gTLD string, pursuant to Preliminary Recommendations 3 and 4, it can also be divided into one of the following scenarios. 7.3, if the application that corresponds to an existing gTLD contains either a single ASCII gTLD string or a single Latin diacritic gTLD string, and the only applied-for gTLD string is withdrawn, the application is no longer relevant. 7.4, if the application that corresponds to an existing ASCII gTLD contains multiple Latin diacritic gTLD strings, and one applied-for Latin diacritic gTLD string is withdrawn from that application, the application will continue to be treated under the exception process. Or 7.5, if the application that corresponds to an existing Latin diacritic gTLD contains a single ASCII gTLD string and at least one Latin diacritic gTLD string, and the applied-for ASCII gTLD string is withdrawn, the set will cease to exist and the application cannot proceed. If an applied-for Latin diacritic gTLD string is withdrawn instead from that application, the application will proceed in accordance with Scenario 7.4.

Are there any issues or problems with this one? We discussed this last week. This is just the small changes based on the comments we received. So if there is any new discussion point here or any wording and language changes due to not being understood easily, then we can continue with this. I see agreement from Anil and two thumbs up, so thanks for that. With that, next slide, we will come to the IG8.

That one reads now as follows. Points 8.1 to 8.5 are the original ones, and we just added 8.6, but I will still read the whole IG8 for completeness sake: With respect to the evaluation of the information submitted per Preliminary Recommendation 7, in accordance with Implementation Guidance 3.6 from the EPDP IDN's Phase 1 Final Report. Of course, the numbering will change because we introduced a new IG7, so this will then become IG9, and the preliminary recommendation it refers to will be Preliminary Recommendation 8, but in essence, it still stays the same.

8.1, the evaluation panel must include evaluators with Latin script expertise. 8.2, the evaluation panel should apply criteria based on a general standard of reasonableness, and the criteria must be established during implementation. 8.3, consistent with Recommendation 27.2 of the SubPro PDP Final Report, evaluation scores on the questions should be limited to a pass-fail scale, 0 or 1 points only. 8.4, the applicant must pass each element to enable the applied-for ASCII gTLD string and/or Latin diacritic gTLD string to proceed to the next stage of the application process. 8.5, the evaluation outcome of any one applied-for Latin diacritic gTLD string should not impact the evaluation or outcome of any other Latin diacritic gTLD

strings in the application, including the ASCII gTLD string, and now we should have a semicolon and "end".

8.6, this is a new one. The evaluation outcome of an applied-for ASCII gTLD string impacts the evaluation of any other Latin diacritic gTLD strings in the application by causing the dissolution of the set. For the avoidance of doubt, if only multiple Latin diacritic gTLD strings remain in the application process, the applicant must select one Latin diacritic gTLD string to proceed under the standard application process. This clarifies the situation, which was not totally clear in the last weeks, that in case the ASCII TLD fails the evaluation and there is more than one LD TLD left, what happens then? The decision was that the applicant then will have to decide with which single one they are allowed to continue. I see Anil's hand. Please, go ahead.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Michael. Anil for the record. In 8.6, one scenario is that evaluation of all the... let us assume that there is one ASCII gTLD and two LD gTLDs in the set. Evaluation for all three is completed. We found that the ASCII gTLD is not good enough to go ahead. In this scenario, we offer it to the applicant to select one of the LD gTLDs, and then the application can proceed as a standard one.

Now, there is another scenario where we found that the ASCII gTLD is invalid or cannot proceed further, but we have not evaluated the future LD gTLDs also at this moment. There is a possibility that both LD gTLDs may pass, or one of them passes, or none of them passes. In that situation, how does the implementation process proceed? Should we

offer to the applicant before evaluation of the LD gTLDs that he may select one? Or should we evaluate both the LD gTLDs and then reach out to the applicant to select one of them? Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Anil. That is an interesting question. I think the timing of the evaluation is not something we have to deal with. I think we can assume that all TLDs have been evaluated before the applicant has to take any decision. I do not know if the process can guarantee that the evaluation result will reach the applicant at the same time, or maybe someone from the ICANN team can say a bit more about how this is going to be. From my point of view, there is no need to have special rules here because it makes no sense to ask the applicant to take any decisions if the evaluation is not yet complete. Anil, please.

ANIL JAIN:

Michael, thank you for the clarification. I agree that this PDP may limit itself to the first scenario itself. Why I have raised this issue is that if we have not evaluated the LD gTLDs and the ASCII gTLD is not able to pass through the test, then if we offer it to the applicant, maybe ICANN can save both evaluation cost and time in the process. That was the intention when I raised this particular thing.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Okay.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Okay, thanks. Maybe Ariel can talk a bit to that. Ariel, please.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Michael. Just to answer Anil's comment about the evaluation timing, generally speaking, the program will be conducted in several stages, so all of the applications will go through string evaluation at the same time. That is for checking things like string similarity, safeguard assessment, and singular/plural. They will all go through it at the same time, and then at the end of this stage, there will be an outcome report that reports on the evaluation situation for all of the applications. Then there will be another process kicking in. Following that will be contention resolution, and then after that will be applicant application evaluation, which are based on prioritization of applications. It is a little complicated and we do not have to go into detail, but I think it is okay for the working group not to be too specific because the program is already designed in a way that is implemented based on community policy, especially from the SubPro PDP. I think it is okay to leave it as is and then we will just follow how the program is implemented. An applicant will be informed of their respective evaluation result at the respective stage of the program. That is just a quick comment on the background and context for how the program is going to be run.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Does it solve your question, Anil?

ANIL JAIN: Yeah, Michael. I think clarification is given. Yes, I agree with Ariel that this PDP may limit what is written in 8.6 and specifically focus on Scenario 1, when all three gTLDs are evaluated and then the situation has come. Thank you very much.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Okay. Thanks for the question and response by Ariel. I see in the chat a comment by Tapani, who says that 8.6, as the wording is now, seems to imply evaluation outcome causes dissolution of the set regardless of what the outcome is. He suggests that the intended meaning is more like, "if it causes." So, we write that the evaluation outcome of an applied-for ASCII gTLD string impacts the evaluation of any Latin diacritic gTLD strings, which is so far okay. But saying "by causing the dissolution of the set" is probably not correct because if the ASCII gTLD evaluation is positive, it will of course not cause the dissolution of the set.

He suggests to say something like the evaluation outcome of an applied-for ASCII gTLD string impacts the evaluation of any Latin diacritic gTLD strings in the application if it causes the dissolution of the set. Yeah, so something if it is negative and does not pass, then it will dissolve the set, and then this will happen. We will take another look at this in the background and check whether we may need to rewrite this slightly. Thanks for the comment, Tapani. Any other questions or comments?

Being none, then I will hand it over to Saewon for the presentation. What we want to do now is to take a step back before we decide what we do with our question of what is a diacritic, because ICANN said we

have to take care of the conservatism principle. This comment was not solely based on this question of what is a diacritic, but it is a bit more far-reaching and encompasses a bit more. I think it is better to take a more holistic view of that comment before we actually decide on something. For that, Saewon is going to present this whole view, and then we can discuss this further. Thanks. Saewon, please.

SAEWON LEE:

Thank you. Let me just unmute. This is Saewon Lee from staff, for the record. Like Michael introduced, the leadership team and staff thought that it may actually help with the discussions if we actually look at all the comments received for Preliminary Recommendation 1. Hopefully, by looking at all the comments, it will actually help us understand the overarching comments by ICANN Org, as well as taking a step back to consider all the comments before we actually make a decision or take a path forward. Today, I will be sharing with you all the substantive and non-substantive comments that we had received for Preliminary Recommendation 1.

I know that during ICANN 85, I had said that we would start looking at all the comments through the public comment review tool. But for your ease and convenience, for today, we will actually look at them all through the slides. Just to recap—and this will be an exercise we will be doing moving forward as well—I will read through the recommendation so that for any of you who have forgotten what the recommendation stated, it will give you a good reminder.

If you see this slide, Preliminary Recommendation 1 says: In order for any gTLDs to be considered an ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set, they must meet the following requirements. 1.1, the only distinction between an ASCII gTLD string and its corresponding Latin diacritic gTLD strings must be the presence of diacritical marks. Each diacritic character in the string must be decomposable into an ASCII character and one or more combining diacritical marks as per the Unicode table. 1.2, per the Unicode table, only characters that can be decomposed in this manner and appear within the table are eligible for the ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set. 1.3, as determined via Recommendation 25.2 of the SubPro Final Report and Final Recommendation 1.1 of the PDP IDN Phase 1 Final Report, the use of diacritic characters must conform to the eligibility criteria defined in the root zone LGR. 1.4, a base ASCII gTLD is required in order to constitute an ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set, and the set will cease to exist if the ASCII gTLD is removed from the root zone. In such a case, the gTLD registry operator may retain a single IDN gTLD, which will no longer be considered part of an ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set. 1.5, none of the gTLD strings that constitute an ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set may be part of a variant TLD set.

Now looking into the comments, again, like ICANN 85, I have divided them into the non-substantive and substantive ones. I know there is a lot of writing here, so please bear with me. There were four non-substantive comments where the commenters supported the recommendation intent, but either wanted the working group to consider certain aspects or present a more detailed justification. I would like to note here—and again, this is in the public comment review tool as well—that a wording change may not have been required from all of

the commenters, but under our five categories, these comments were organized under this one especially. Keona Blalock did not leave a rationale or any suggestions for us to consider, so we will skip that.

Starting with Nitin Walia, as an individual contributor, he asked for three clarifications. First of all, he asked that it would be useful to explicitly acknowledge that the eligible character set may evolve over time as Unicode and the root zone LGR are updated. This is obviously still pending the working group's determination. But a small portion of this, which is explained, is in the Initial Report as a footnote, as well as in the rationale on pages 28 and 30. Obviously, we can try to strengthen or emphasize this part for the final report. Second, he asked for the clarification of the exclusion of non-decomposable Latin letters, which again is still pending agreement from the working group. He does understand that the narrow scope of work is clarified or justified; he is just asking for the strengthening of the rationale that the exclusion of the non-decomposable Latin letters is purely procedural.

I am just also trying to check the chat here. Lastly, he asks for clarification on the base ASCII gTLD as a requirement. I think for the last few weeks we also pretty much determined that this follows the working group charter guidelines. Again, Nitin does understand the intent and context, but he just asked for some clarification in the rationale.

Going over to the second commenter, ISOC Norway also commented on the scope of this work and mentioned that it deliberately limited the Latin characters to the Unicode decomposable ones. They raised similar points to Nitin. They say that while the rationale for maintaining a

narrow scope is clearly articulated, the technical framing actually results in the exclusion of certain Latin script characters. In the slides, you will see the examples that have been given, which we as a working group have also been examining in the last few weeks. The request is just that at a minimum, in the final report, we make clear that the exclusion of these characters is a function of scope and technical framing.

The last non-substantive comment was from ALAC, and the concerns were similar. It was about the ASCII gTLD as a base requirement. Their reasoning was that this requirement creates an unnecessary label contention. ALAC also states that our report does not provide any linguistic prioritization criteria, culturally informed evaluation, alternative anchoring models, or special contention resolution for independent diacritic traditions. The request is just to clarify or provide a justification for why this solution outweighs the negative impact on the end users.

All three commenters mention the ASCII base requirement, and as I just mentioned, we did cover this over the last few weeks. I also have this in our slides for your reference, where an ASCII as a base is described in the charter and in the Initial Report on page 30. Bill is mentioning in the chat he is not clear why this is qualifying as non-substantive. This is just a characterization in the sense of how we have categorized the comments when we requested the commenters to comment on our recommendations. We are not saying that it is non-substantive as in the contents are non-substantive; we are saying that they did not request a change. In the non-substantive category, they agreed with our recommendations but wanted strengthening of some language in the rationale.

Substantive comments are the ones where the commenters are requesting that the intent is wrong or the information is wrong. They ask that our language or the recommendation is either deleted or changed so that the intent of the policy is updated. I hope that answers the question. Tiffany is saying "at a minimum" is actually asking for a substantive change, but again, this is just based on the classification of how the comments were organized. Before we get into all this discussion, I am going to go into the substantive ones. Again, this is based on the submission form and how they categorized it or how we classified it.

If you see here, these are classified as substantive. We received comments from three commenters. First is ICANN Org. It is basically expanding on what Sarmad was pointing out last week, and their comment is based on adhering to the conservative approach. Org mentions that the introduction of the sets—ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD sets and domain sets—present a departure from the principles that actually enable the IDN variant TLDs. They are asking for three things for the working group to consider. One, what additional stability or security risks may arise to registrants and end users from the introduction of these sets? Second, whether the existing outputs, including Preliminary Recommendation 1 and 39, Preliminary Recommendation 7, and Preliminary Recommendations 12, 13, 18, and 19 on fees should be revised or updated according to the conservative approach. Lastly, whether all our recommendations are sufficient and if there are additional measures needed to prevent the potential proliferation of these exceptions.

The second commenter was Werner Staub, an individual contributor. He is pointing out that our Recommendation 1 inappropriately defines the PDP scope by excluding characters like O with a stroke or the small letter AE. Like Tapani, he does comment that decomposability of a character from a Unicode standpoint is irrelevant. He mentions that our principle should actually consider whether a sufficient number of users will consider one string as practically equivalent to another in the context of online communications. Again, the working group still has to determine this path.

The last substantive comment is from the NCSG. They emphasize throughout the comments the rights of minorities and minority languages. The two comments that they made especially were objecting to the character set limitation, especially shown in Preliminary Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2, and objecting to the requirement of a base ASCII gTLD related to Preliminary Recommendation 1.4, which they say is poorly justified. I want to again mention that the second point ties into the working group's charter requirements, but they also mention they understand that it may be difficult to change everything, so just for the future, we should move away from treating ASCII as a special case. These were all the comments that we wanted to provide an overview of. I will hand the floor back over to Michael for the rest of the slides. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Saewon. These were the comments. Before we start the discussion, here is some more background information on the next slide. These are referring to Preliminary Recommendation 7 and 12, 13,

18, and 19. I am not sure if you still have them in mind, so maybe I just read them quickly. Back one slide, please.

Preliminary Recommendation 7 says: Consistent with Final Recommendation 3.5 of the EPDP IDN Phase 1 Final Report, in addition to explaining the mission and purpose of the applied-for ASCII gTLD string or existing gTLD string, the applicant seeking one or more Latin diacritic gTLD labels will describe the justification of such need. The justification given by the applicant shall at a minimum provide the following information. 7.1, the meaning or intended meaning for non-dictionary words of each of the applied-for ASCII gTLD string and/or Latin diacritic gTLD labels, including sources. 7.2, explanation of how the ASCII gTLD string and Latin diacritic gTLD labels are considered the same. 7.3, the benefits of the user communities who will benefit from the introduction of the applied-for ASCII gTLD string and/or Latin diacritic gTLD labels. 7.4, a description of the steps that the applicant will take to minimize the operational and management complexities of the corresponding ASCII gTLD and its Latin diacritic gTLD labels that impact registrars, resellers, and/or registrants.

Next slide, please. Then we have Preliminary Recommendation 12, which reads: Consistent with Final Recommendation 3.10 of the PDP IDN Phase 1 Final Report, the fee structure associated with future applications that include the ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD label set and ASCII gTLD and/or Latin diacritic gTLD labels applications from the gTLD registry operators of existing gTLDs must be consistent with the principle of cost recovery reflected in the 2012 Round AGB and affirmed by the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP.

Preliminary Recommendation 13: Consistent with Final Recommendation 3.13 of the IDN EPDP Phase 1 Final Report and Preliminary Recommendation 12 of our report, a future gTLD registry operator applying only for the corresponding ASCII gTLD or Latin diacritic gTLDs of their existing gTLD must incur an application fee consistent with the principle of cost recovery reflected in the AGB. ICANN Org will decide the discount based on what it considers to be proportionate to any cost associated with evaluating the application and consistent with the cost recovery principle.

Next slide, please. Then we have Recommendations 18 and 19, which read: 18, consistent with Final Recommendation 7.4 of the IDN EPDP Phase 1 Final Report, the registry fixed fee for a gTLD registry operator that operates the delegated gTLD labels that constitute the ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set must be the same as the gTLD registry operator of a single gTLD. 19, consistent with Final Recommendation 7.5 of the IDN EPDP, the calculation of the registry-level transaction fee must be based on the cumulative number of domain name registrations of the combined delegated gTLD labels from an ASCII Latin diacritic gTLD set.

So, these are the recommendations ICANN Org's comment is referring to. Next slide. Just a quick overview of our working group's charter. We already looked at this quite a few times, so I would skip that. If there are questions, we can come back to this. Next slide, please. Here is again a summary of what ICANN Org considered that we have to take a look at, especially that we have to consider taking the conservative approach, which Sarmad already explained in detail last week.

Then next slide, we received a new comment suggestion by Claude via email to the leadership team. He suggests the following, considering suggestions provided by ICANN Org, the inclusion principle, and the conservatism principle, and taking a conservative approach to create a deliberate set and only include necessary characters. He suggests starting from the root zone LGR Latin script repertoire, which contains 287 glyphs. Then reduce it to the smaller set for diacritic eligibility with 172 glyphs, exclude the diacritic set (20 glyphs), the ASCII set (26 glyphs), and the remaining 69 glyphs for variant and cross-script.

For the purpose of the LD PDP, 21 different diacritics in the present Latin script root zone LGR are defined as: diaeresis, ring, circumflex, stroke, macron, cedilla, breve, acute, grave, hook. We have "breve" twice; we have to remove one. Then tilde, ogonek, dot, caron, horn, comma, tail, stroke, bar, and line. The position of one or combining diacritic is described as left, below, and above. If a diacritic association is qualified in the name of the glyph, the terms used are either "with", "and", or "plus combining". Claude suggests the following path: PR1 can define a fixed set. The above list could bring consensus, which is easy for implementation. Provide a policy recommendation for future updates. Since the root zone Latin script panel is the authority to update the repertoire, guidance could be provided for future updates. That is, the panel identifies new glyphs introduced to the top level, the diacritic for each glyph and the specific ASCII letters related to that glyph, or the included eligibility of that glyph for diacritic ASCII pairing. Before I go to Mark, a question to Claude. Did I cover your comment correctly, or did we miss something?

CLAUDE MÉNARD: No, I think this is exactly what I presented. The only point that I want to bring forward is how did we exclude the diacritic set. It is when a glyph is not related to an ASCII letter. This is an obligation per the charter. As soon as there is an absence of the ASCII letter, the glyph is automatically excluded from the set.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Okay.

CLAUDE MÉNARD: Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Makes sense. Thanks. Then up to Mark, please.

MARK DATYSGELD: Thank you, Michael, and thanks to Saewon for the presentation. Very good. I have had a problem with ICANN Org's comment on PR1 from the moment it arrived. As of this meeting, I can now scope what my problem with that is. They are essentially asking us to do three different things with the same comment. One, they are asking us to be the RSAC, and we are not the RSAC. We can ask them for input or elevate this to them and have them return the answer to these questions for us, but it is not within our remit of what we are supposed to do to evaluate the consequences to the stability of the root zone. This does not relate to the choosing of the scope of the characters, which is a different subject matter.

That is the second thing that is trying to be done, which is to talk about the scope of the characters being considered. Then it is asking for a third thing, which is that we come up with the mitigations for the thing that we were not supposed to be doing, which is being the RSAC. I think that is complicated for us. Speaking now not as a group member but as a vice chair, I do not want to have to steer our group in those directions because it is not where we are supposed to be, it is not what we want to be doing, and it is not what is actually of interest to us. The thing that we are trying to solve is what characters are reasonable to be accepted within the scope of this project, and that is the problem we are trying to solve as a group.

If they want all of these questions answered, then we get the RSAC involved. We are not supposed to be dragging this into our considerations. If what it summarizes to is to be conservative, the answer is we are being conservative, and that is about it. We are. I have some difficulty in bringing this scope back to the group and then turning this into something that it is not supposed to be. That is my position in terms of stewardship of the group. If the group sees it differently, now would be a great time to raise concern. But that is the way I see it right now. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Mark, for that comment. Any other thoughts or opinions? I have seen in the chat Satish agrees with Mark. As a group, we are not equipped to answer this question. Thumbs up. Sarmad, please. Go ahead.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you, Michael, and thank you, Mark. I am just going to add a little bit more context to the comment by Org for everybody's information. Basically, what this PDP will eventually do is allow for some strings to go into the root zone. There are two sorts of kinds of strings which can, through this PDP, go into the root zone. One is a set where you have an ASCII string and then you have a diacritized string, and they would have gone to the root zone through a regular application process irrespective. Through this process, what is being said is that the applicant can, in some ways, pull those two strings together into a single application and a single set, and they could still go into the root zone through the process.

There is then this other case where there are two strings or three strings potentially which could not have made it to the root zone together through the regular processes. An example is if you have an ASCII string which would have made it to the root zone, and then there is another Latin diacritized string, and that is considered similar to the ASCII string through the string similarity review process. The normal policy basically says that any two strings which are similar may not proceed to the root zone because of user confusion issues. That is what the regular policy says for gTLDs.

In this particular case, there is an exception process which is obviously triggered because this particular PDP is allowing for such strings to still make it to the root zone and be delegated. Of course, this is in some ways similar to what happens when strings are variants, but those variants are in some ways well-defined and they are actually allowed

through the policy process. This obviously is extending that whole process to strings which are, of course, not variants, but they could still go to the root zone. The policy which is being developed by the working group in some ways uses some of the same policy framework which was devised for variants as well.

I guess what the Org comment is saying is that variants is obviously a well-defined process. It is basically predictable in the sense that these are variants which are agreed by the community and therefore everybody uses it through the root zone LGR. These particular sets which are Latin diacritics are sets which are defined by the applicant, not through the process which defines the root zone LGR. We are in some ways creating an exception process which is allowing some strings to go into the root zone LGR which through the regular process would not have made it. I guess what Org is saying is that since it is an exception process, doing it in such a way that it is conservative is something to consider. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Sarmad, for the summary. Basically the problem Org sees here is that while variants have been developed in a rather conservative manner so that only the very minimum of variants are allocatable, here in this LD PDP, we kind of say that all the LD characters are allocatable. Did I get that right?

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Yep.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Okay, thanks. Mark, please.

MARK DATYSGELD: Thank you, Sarmad. I think the answer to that query is very simple then. Yes, we are being conservative. This would be our official answer then. See the amount of meetings we spent on this and the amount of correspondence. We are being diligent and we are in active discussions. No, we cannot predict the impacts on the root zone server, but this is an exception process, and yes, this will carry exceptions. That is about it. That is the size of what we can do without becoming the subcommittee on Latin diacritic safety on the DNS. This is the extent of what we can actually do. The mapping has been done. It is in the root zone LGR. The things that were deemed to be safe are already done. It is there. I do not see why we would drag this forward other than discussing the scope of the characters. We should focus on that, get to a solution on that one aspect, and we are addressing all comments by coming to the conclusion of what characters are acceptable. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Pallav, please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. I will add a couple of other points here. In the case of variants, if you look at what can go into the root zone as variants for the Latin script, you will see that there are extremely few variants which are possible to be delegated. Variants, obviously, there are many, but they

are all blocked variants. When a variant can actually go into the root zone, it means it has to be an allocatable variant. There are in Latin only, from my recollection, two characters. One is a dotless I, which has an allocatable variant to a dotted I. Then there is a sharp S, which has an allocatable variant to double S. Everything else is blocked.

From a variant perspective, it is extremely tight. This is an exception process to allow for some of these TLDs to move forward. But through this exception process, in some ways for any basic ASCII character, all the diacritized versions are getting sort of an allocatable disposition. In that sense, this becomes very different from the way, for example, the root zone LGR was designed. We are asking whether this is a conservative solution or not. What is presented from a character-level variant disposition, what is possible through this policy is more productive than what is in the root zone LGR.

Also, if you look at it not just at a character level but at the string level based on what the strings are produced and they can go into the root zone in Latin script. Generally, if you do variants, the calculation was that at most there were four possible allocatable variants which were possible in a case where the string included both dotless I and an SZ. But theoretically through this process, there can be more strings which can be introduced into the root zone. Both at the character level and at the string level, this policy is in some ways suggesting a less conservative solution for the root zone. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Sarmad. I see Amadeu's hand. Please go ahead.

AMADEU ABRIL: Okay, am I unmuted? Can you hear me?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Just...

AMADEU ABRIL: Okay. Please bear with me, Sarmad, if I am making a mistake. But if I read the root zone LGR correctly, I think that E and E acute, or A and A grave, or any other of the diacritics we are dealing with here are not defined as blocked variants. Is that correct?

MICHAEL BAULAND: So sorry, I was reading the chat. Could you please repeat the question?

AMADEU ABRIL: Yes. Before answering Sarmad, I want to make sure that we are on the same page here. As far as I can understand from reading the root zone LGR—and I confess I do not know it by heart—I think that E and E acute and A and A grave or most of the Latin diacritic things we are discussing here are not defined as blocked variants. They are simply not variants—not blocked, and not allocatable. Is that correct?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Yes and no. There are a few diacritics in the Latin LGR which are variants.

AMADEU ABRIL:

Okay, sure. A few are variants, and these are probably out of our scope here. But let's say once again, E and E acute, just to take one example. This is not defined as a variant. Or A and A acute. There may be something for O grave regarding a Greek letter, if I remember correctly. But in general, they are not. If they are not blocked variants, I do not understand all this speech about we are somehow making an exception to what is acceptable in the root. The root zone LGR and all ICANN rules allow all these characters to be used in TLDs.

The question is whether they can be simultaneously used not because of the root zone LGR, because we are not touching that at all. We are providing absolute faith to what was done there and respect, and we are going to what is there certainly. But what we are doing is something else; we are doing an exception process to define what is similar but not confusing. How will this not be confusing? I do not know in which respect we are touching the root zone LGR decisions in any way. Let me give you a stupid but probably clarifying example. Contrary to 2012, now we cannot accept singulars and plurals. But imagine that somebody in a different PDP says, "Well, we have a solution. The problem here is not having 'car' or having 'cars', or having 'melon' and 'melons'. The problem is confusion."

So if it is the same registry with the same registrar and the same registrant, there cannot be confusion. Are we saying anything there about how we are not abiding by the principle of some conservative approach to the root zone as approved by the root zone LGR? Certainly not. I think that here is exactly the case. What we are doing here is a

process to define what is not confusing, even if it is similar. We are focusing on something that the root zone LGR decided not to take into account. They did not decide anything about E and E acute. We are not changing anything because nothing was decided. I really do not understand all this discussion about being somehow bound by a decision from a group that was dealing with a completely different problem. That decided something that does not affect, in any sense, the sets of characters that we are trying to solve here. We are trying to solve the problem of user confusion. In that, we need to be conservative. We need to make sure that there is no confusion, certainly.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks for that comment. I think there are two opposing opinions here, mainly most of the working group and ICANN Org. The question is how can we find a compromise here that works for everybody? If I understood Sarmad correctly, to be able to uphold the conservatism principle, there are two possibilities. One is to restrict the set of characters. But it seems the group is mostly opposed to that, and several other commenters in the public comment are opposed to our original restriction and even try to increase that. This most likely is not a good way to achieve conservatism, keeping in mind that we do not want to give precedence to any language or user group by arbitrarily selecting just two or three characters.

But I think Sarmad also mentioned that there is another possibility to be a bit more conservative, and that would allow us to keep the set of diacritics we have or even increase it to the second option we have

been discussing, which was introduced by Tapani. That would be to change some of the recommendations in a way that will make them more conservative. Is that a correct understanding, Sarmad? I can put you on the spot here. Please go ahead.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Certainly. I think the end goal is that there is a possibility that through this policy process, similar strings which would otherwise be not allowed through the regular policy would be allowed into the root zone to exist together. I guess conservatism would say that, yes, this is an exception and that is perfectly fine. But for that set which is then allowed into the root zone, is there a mechanism to reduce it or make it smaller?

It can be done obviously in multiple ways. As you said, reducing the character set is one way. If that is not possible, there are other ways to reduce the number of strings which are eventually allowed through the policy. As I shared earlier, this is not an isolated kind of request or suggestion. Even in the variant discussions and eventually the policy which incorporated the root zone LGR, the root zone LGR by design does exactly the same thing. Even though it creates a lot of variants, it actually minimizes as per design features the allocatable variants. It is precisely doing that; it is trying to reduce the number of variant strings which can eventually be delegated into a root zone. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks. I see Bill's hand. Please, Bill.

BILL JOURIS: Perhaps I am misunderstanding Sarmad, but he appeared to be raising concern about us making a policy which allows us to add items to the root zone without going through the usual process to do so, and I simply cannot see where we are doing anything like that. Maybe I misunderstood Sarmad or maybe I have misunderstood something else, but I am just not seeing that at all. Thank you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Could I quickly respond to that?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Yeah, sure.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you, Bill. I think the specific example which I was giving was that if we go through the regular policy process, it is very clear that two strings which are considered similar by a similarity evaluation panel would not be able to proceed to the root zone. They are put in contention and only one of them can proceed once the contention is resolved. What I was saying was that if those strings normally would not be able to go through the regular policy process, what this policy is allowing is that those strings could still make it into the root zone. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. Bill, please.

BILL JOURIS: Okay. I understand better now. Yes, I think that is exactly what we are doing, and I think that was the purpose for which we were created in many ways. It is to take cases where there is the potential for confusion because of a variety of reasons and allow them to both be registered. That is exactly what we are here for. Something that bounces from the similarity review panel could go through under this process, but I do not see that as a problem at all. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. Mark, please.

MARK DATYSGELD: Thank you. Yeah, I am confused. If this is not the purpose of this group, then what is? If this is not an exception process to let strings that would not ordinarily belong in the root to coexist with each other, then what is the scope of the group? Because that is what is in the charter. So, what is the scope of the group if not this one?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. As I understand it, that is not what Sarmad is objecting to here, but it is the number of possibilities we are introducing. The exception is kind of getting to be it, but Sarmad, please. Go ahead.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: I certainly agree with you, Mark and Bill, that this is exactly the charter and this is exactly what we are doing. I think the Org's comment is more about whether this is being done conservatively enough. Can it be done more conservatively? This is just for the working group to assess. Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Okay. Thanks. Anil, please.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you. Anil for the record. Sarmad, I am listening to your comment as well as the comment from this PDP very carefully. Now, if we are talking about conservatism of the delegation just to have stability and safety, then what is the definition of conservatism which we are talking about today? I personally feel that what we have done in the PDP is highly conservative. In fact, if you see the comments from the public, they are against this very strict conservatism. You are raising an issue which I agree with you, because it is important for the whole ICANN system to deliver a more secure and stable internet to the people. But here again, the question is a dilemma. What is the definition of conservatism today? Number one. Number two, tomorrow after, say, one year, two years, or three years, if there is another group who looks into this aspect, then they may have a different definition altogether. So, where do we stop it? Thank you.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Thanks, Anil. Unfortunately, we are out of time for Sarmad or anybody else to respond to that, but that is a good thing to think about for our next meeting. Make up your mind about what conservatism means, what is enough, what is not enough, and potential solutions to maybe increase conservatism at some point that would work for ICANN's comment. But yeah, let's think about that and continue the discussion next week. Thanks, everybody, for joining in, and Devan, you may stop the recording now. Thanks.

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