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TERRI AGNEW: For the recording, this is Terri Agnew. Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, and welcome to the GNSO Standing Selection Committee Call taking place on Friday the 13th of February, 2026. We do have listed apologies from Pedro Lana. All documentation and information can be found on the Wiki space. Recordings will be posted on the public Wiki space shortly after the end of the call.

Please remember to state your name before speaking for the recording. 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 concerning statements of interest. With this, I'll turn the call back over to Chair Julf Helsingius. Please begin.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Terri, and thank you everybody for joining. Good whatever time of the day it is at your place. Just to clarify, make it very clear to everybody, we are back to the normal rules for this. This will be recorded, this will be made public, so just so you're all aware of that. And I see Jeff has his hand up. So, please go ahead.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah, thanks. This is Jeff Neuman for the record. I just wanted to thank everyone. I know there have been lots of emails back and forth on the process this last week or so, and I think we've come out in a good place. I'm happy to see that we are now doing things out in the open and

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transparent, and I think ultimately that'll make for a better process. So, thanks everyone for bearing with all those emails, and like I said, I think we're in a better place, so thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. Yes, and I agree. And so, hopefully we can now move on to actually doing our job instead of discussing how to do it. Just one clarification. That's of, yes, Pedro is has sent his apologies, and I think we have Benjamin standing for him, just to be clear on Benjamin's role this time. Right, let's get on with the actual work.

And I'm sure you all see in the poll results, the way I can see it, it's clearly so two strong candidates pretty equal and less favorably viewed candidates. The one question I do immediately have, because I think when I approach this, what I usually do is I first look at the no votes, and of course those can be interpreted as well, I'm not sure, I don't think this person is qualified enough or a real strong no vote, as in I don't approve of this person being selected.

So just to be clear, we had one no vote for Thomas, and I'm not gonna put whoever voted no on the spot. But to be very clear, I'm just gonna ask that, is there anyone on this call who absolutely would be against Thomas if that was the group consensus that would veto that consensus if we pick Thomas? Vivek, go ahead.

VIVEK GOYAL:

Yeah, I want to clarify that maybe I was in a full state when I voted on this, but I thought Paul is the best candidate, so I voted no for the other

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two candidates, but that's based on my belief that Paul is a better candidate amongst the three. That's all.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Okay, thanks for clarification. And bummer, this would've been a quick meeting if you considered two candidates vetoed out. But okay, so now we actually have two candidates that can be approved and can be recommended and we need to make a decision between the two strongest ones. Paul has a slight lead in the points, but it's only pretty much one person's evaluation that makes that difference. So, do you guys want to have opinions on these candidates and talk about it why you are going for one or the other? Anyone want to speak up? Vivek, ho ahead.

VIVEK GOYAL:

I'm sorry, I'm willing to wait if there is anybody else who wants to speak first. I'm just gonna repeat what I said earlier. I've never worked with Farell Folly directly, so I won't speak about that candidate, but I have seen both Paul and Thomas in action, I've had a good fortune to listen to them speak on various topics and work with them.

And I believe of the two, I would say Paul is a more neutral candidate and has the respect of the community across all SCs and different constituencies. And I believe given the high-profile nature of this and the way this is being perceived and looked at, I think Paul will be a better Chair to guide us through this PDP.

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JULF HELSINGIUS:

Okay. I have Jeff next, then Gaurav, and Susan.

JEFF NEUMAN:

Yeah, thanks. This is Jeff Neuman. I want to say that I think both Paul and Thomas are very well qualified for this, and both of them I think are very well respected. And I ultimately think or hope that whoever is the Chair picks maybe the other, or that the working group picks the other to co-chair.

And also note that we have several other PDPs, or at least one other PDP on DNS abuse that's coming shortly. So, whoever's not selected for this one, hopefully will put the name forward for the next one. But I do want to also agree that I've seen both of them in action, I think they're both great, but I think Paul has been certainly on top of this issue, certainly led the Council small team, or at least the first one on this, and I think he did a really great job with an issue that is, I won't say mitigating DNS abuse is controversial in and of itself, but certainly the steps that need to be taken.

And I think that part can get controversial, and I've seen Paul deal with controversial topics. And I was just to tie it back to a couple years ago, Paul initially came from the Commercial Stakeholder Group side, but then became a nominating committee rep on the Council for all of the contracted parties, but non-contracted party, sorry, the commercial and non-commercial.

And I saw him do an excellent job in bringing those two stakeholder groups together in a way that hadn't been done before. And so, just based on his ability to be accepted into both of those sides and to try to

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work out things just impressed me. And I think this topic will require those same kinds of skills. So, for that reason, I think Paul makes the best candidate for this first one. And like I said, I hope that Thomas and Farell for that matter raise their hands for future ones. Thanks.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Jeff. Gaurav.

GAURAV VEDI: Good morning, everyone. Yeah, so, I completely agree with what Vivek and Jeff said earlier. So both candidates, Paul and Thomas, they are really strong candidates and I don't have any personal bias for anyone. I think both are equally strong, I've seen both of them for several years now. So my vote will be neutral for both of them.

But my only concern here is when I review the comments from each of the team members, most places I've only seen yes, no, yes, no, or don't know. When I provide comments, I usually provide strengths and weaknesses for each of the candidates so that it's visible to all the members just to make sure that we are not missing out on anything.

So my request to the team members is, when you're putting or grading or ranking these individuals, maybe just add their strengths and weaknesses so that it gives more visibility to all the other members as well so that we can select the candidate based on the judgment and not necessarily it should come out as a bias. So, that's all I wanted to say.

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JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. And that's a very good point. I think we should all take note of that. Thanks. So, Susan, and then Cameron.

SUSAN MOHR: Thanks, Julf. Good morning, good evening, good afternoon, everyone. I think we find ourselves in a position that's a really good one, and that is that we've got some great candidates here. And for me for what it's worth, I struggle because I know Farell ended up a little lower, but when I looked at his expression of interest, I don't know Farell well, but he seems like someone that would be a great candidate.

And at some point, Paul and Thomas had been given a chance where they didn't have experience chairing a working group, and I think Farell would likely do a really great job. When looking at Paul and Thomas, they clearly have strong background, they have been in leadership positions in the organization.

The only reason the, well, not the only reason, one reason that I ranked Thomas higher than Paul was because in his expression of interest, he did describe his role in leadership, specific examples of leadership roles that he has held. And I think that's one thing, I'm not sure how we can get folks to be more descriptive in their expression of interest because not everyone has the benefit of knowing all of the candidates when they submit their documents. And so, for me, that's what put Thomas a little higher.

But I agree, at the end of the day, I really agree with the comments that Jeff made. I think Paul and Thomas both have leadership experience, they're both really good candidates for the position. Whether we select

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co-chairs or have one chair in this PDP and the other chair the other PDP, I think wherever we land, we're gonna have really good chairs, so thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. And yes, I totally agree. We have a wonderful luxury problem that whatever we pick, I think we all can all agree it will be a good candidate, whoever we pick. Cameron.

CAMERON PANEPINTO:

Thanks, everybody. Hi there. I just wanted to echo really quickly what Susan was just saying. I also am, well, I'm fairly new to this all, so to the extent that we could get any of the candidates for the processes going forward to be a little bit more descriptive in their EOIs, I think that would be very beneficial to the team as a whole, and especially to me as I just don't have the experience working with many of these folks as a lot of you do. But I just wanted to quickly come on here and voice my support for Paul.

My understanding is that Paul just has a wealth of experience here and he's been eight years on the GNSO Council, and then I think it was nearly two decades on the ICANN community experience. And he really does understand the PDP mechanics and consensus calls and how Council working groups work and keeping the work aligned with expectations of the Council. So, I think that's important, particularly for this PDP.

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And just on a personal note, Paul's a great guy, very knowledgeable and has a wealth of experience, so I think he would be well positioned to chair this. And just my own observations, it seems like Thomas has great experience behind him that could support him as well. Farell just seemed a little less experienced. So, for those reasons, I voted for Paul number one, and then Thomas number two, and Farell number three. So, thank you all for the time.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Sure. Thank you. Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN:

Yeah, thanks. And like I said, I'm still supporting Paul, but I do want to throw in for those that may not have gone back that far just to give you some more information perhaps maybe for the next selection of a chair of PDP. Thomas does have a lot of experience on the Council as well. He's been on, I think, a couple different occasions.

And I think for those of you that go back to 2016 or sorry, 2014 to 2016, when we were going through the whole IANA transition, Thomas was one of the chairs of that group and really did an amazing job with very complicated subjects bringing us all together for that. So again, I'm still supporting Paul for this, but I do want people that may not have had that experience with Thomas to know that the reason why I think they're both capable.

And why I hope to see Thomas for the next PDP is that he does have a bunch of experience and did a great job with the transition. So, again,

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that's more for next time, but I just wanted those that may not be familiar with Thomas as well, just to have that. Thanks.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. And yes, I can echo that the work that Thomas did in the IANA transition discussions was really great. So, definitely, that's good to point that out. Susan.

SUSAN MOHR: Thanks, Julf. And Jeff, thanks for those comments. I appreciate that. And I don't go back that far myself, but I know that I am aware of that background with Thomas, and for that reason, that's why I leaned closer. I lean towards Thomas for this particular review just because he did spend a little more time, I think in his expression of interest to provide more background on his specific experience. And so for that reason, and all the reasons you pointed out, I lean towards Thomas, but again, we've got two really good candidate.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Any more views?

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: Julf.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Yeah, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: I've got something to share that I got from Pedro.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Go ahead.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: And I'm just going to share his opinion. These are not my opinion. This is Pedro's opinion, so please just listen. So, Pedro's view is the fact that haven spoken to people who work with DNS abuse team, things like that, he feels that his preference will be around selecting Thomas. That was his own view, so I think he wanted me to share that. However, this is the result, I don't have any problem with it, but that is was his view that his preference would've been Thomas, especially as it concerns his constituency and DNS abuse in particular. So, thank you. I just wanted to share that.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Sure. Thank you. And that's a good strategy to blame Pedro for everything. Let's set up that in the future. Thanks. Any anymore views? Pedro is non commercials. Yeah, I don't see any other views. I haven't really kept count here, but I think I've heard a little bit more opinion supporting Paul than Thomas, but it's been both have been strongly supported, so it's not an easy choice, but it seems we are leaning towards Paul. So, should we just go ahead and appoint Paul or recommend Paul? Can everybody live with that?

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I see a lot of thumbs up. Nobody's saying no. I'm still giving you all a chance to say no if there is someone who wants to say no, but I don't see any nos. Again, head of some difficult choice here, but I think we have made a choice. And so, Paul is the one we are gonna recommend to the Council. And in the end, it will be Council's decision, but this will be our recommendation. Thank you everybody.

SUSAN MOHR: Thanks, Julf.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Okay, Vivek.

VIVEK GOYAL: Thank you. I'm glad that is done. I just have a thought, just want to share with everybody. We always have an ICANN challenge that the same individuals are asked or they take up the same roles and there is a capacity constraint and all. And maybe in future when we ask for chairs, we would not lean on that the person should have chair experience because how do you get chair experience if you always ask for people with chair experience? So, maybe in future, for future PDPs, we would also consider eligible candidates with good background who could make a good first-time chair. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN:

Yeah, I support that from Vivek, I support Vivek's view completely. I think most of the chairs, and I guess someone from ICANN can correct me if I'm wrong, but most of the chairs for working groups are generally chosen from the working group itself. And that gives a much better opportunity for those that don't have the chair experience to get into that position.

I think the ones that come to the SSC are generally ones that might be higher profile or ones that -- yeah, I think that's it. Like a higher profile really. So I would strongly encourage us to go out to our memberships and encourage them to volunteer for those kinds of chairs first to get the experience or even vice chairs and kind of work their way up. I'm hoping that most PDPs in the future won't be selected by the SSC, that they'll be done by the working group. But for ones that we get, yeah, it's kind of we're put in that position where I think being chair or having that chair experience is important.

But I also do in our message to the Council, Julf, is if we can emphasize that we think Thomas was an excellent candidate and to the extent whether we are or are not involved in the PDP DNS abuse too, that we would strongly encourage Thomas to put his hand up for that as well because I do think it's important for us to go with our recommendation, obviously, but then also make a comment just to say that we think they're both qualified and that we hope to see Thomas for the next one. Thanks.

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JULF HELSINGIUS: Thanks, Jeff. And that's a good point and I will definitely take that point. And actually, we have Peter on the call, so from the Council leadership, so he can also take that message back along with my message. But before Peter, I let you talk, I have Benjamin first in the queue, so Benjamin first. Ben.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: Sorry, my device was acting up. Yes, I just want to say I support that point because if you remember our last election, I also raised the same point that how do we get new people to build capacity if we always rely on people who in the systems have occupied these roles multiple times? So I just wanted to give my support to that as this privilege of alternate today to say, yes, we need to give new entrance some opportunities. That's just what I wanted to support as well. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. And I think we all agree with that sentiment. I just want to point out that in this specific case, we were given rather clear instructions from the leadership that we wanted a really, really experienced person. So, I'm sure Peter can explain more about that.

PETER AKINREMI: Thank you, Julf. Thanks, Jeff, for actually raising that. These are the things that we discuss and pay attention to. And the descriptions of these is actually defined in the charter, especially because of the high-profile nature of the PDP. That's a good concern to actually point out, and that was why I was actually trying to speak up to ask because I went

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listening to the SSC members discourse. I wanted to like ask is there any message you want me to actually take back to leadership?

And especially because I hear one or two people say that some of the expression of interest is not as well detailed. Is there anything that you wanted to inform the leadership in terms of encouraging future PDP to pay attention to descriptions on and putting themselves forward rather than relying on who know who to make their point. So, wanted to know if you want me to take that message back, or if not, so I can just be silent. So, that's what I wanted to say, yeah.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Yes, please, do take the message back to leadership and also encourage the leadership to actually engage in a dialogue with the standing selection committee leadership in advance whenever there's cases like this coming up. I think that would be good. We are easily contactable and so we are happy to discuss with the leadership about all the details for slightly more difficult cases like this one. Thanks.

PETER AKINREMI: Thanks, Julf.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Anyone else who wants to comment? If not, right, so, the next steps will be the consensus call will be sent out. And can we get a slide up on what's coming up? Well, we have something. We have the schedule for what's gonna happen next. So, we'll just have to wait for the consensus call to end and then our job is done for now. And the next point would

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then be to think about what's coming up next. Do we already know what's gonna be on our radar coming up?

SAEWON LEE:

Hi, Julf. This is Saewon Lee from staff for the record. Unfortunately not, we don't have anything on the radar right now. So, there's nothing to share. All I can share for now is the timeline, as you can see in the screen, the consensus call to finish on 17th or by 17th of February, Tuesday because there's the weekend in the middle. And that's all for now. And this will obviously be sent to the Council for confirmation by 11th of March during their Council meeting.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

All right. Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN:

Yeah, thanks. And because this is being recorded and not everyone is familiar with the consensus call, so this consensus call, like all the others is going to be, we'll put the name of the consensus choice and it's assumed that everyone's in support unless they state otherwise. So, if anyone looks at the mailing list and sees nothing, that's actually a good thing, that means that the candidate does have consensus.

So, I just wanted to throw that on because it's in the record. And then just ask the question for the future. Do we know, are there certain positions that are appointed on an annual or every other year that we know will come up this year? I believe there may be a GNSO Council

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liaison to the GAC. I know the current liaison has can do it for another two-year term.

I don't know if we're involved in that, but just to ask if there are any kind of regular positions that we appoint annually, if we could just get a schedule of that not like as detailed as this, but yeah, look in July or August we may have this to deal with or anything that we know on an ongoing basis.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Yeah, let me start with that, yeah, the GAC liaison is one that could come up, but if I remember correctly, what has usually happened is that if the current one agrees to continue, that's standard decision for the Council leadership. And it's only when we have to find a new one that we actually get the job. I might actually misremember that. Saewon, do you have anything to add?

SAEWON LEE:

Nothing to add specifically, so just to add to the GAC liaison. So, this was selected last year and Jeff remembers because he handed the torch to Seb last year. So, this year there's no selection process in that matter because he's termed for the two years. And for anything that's to come up regularly, so we just had that process.

The ICANN Fellowship Program Mentor, that's annual, which always comes up at the end of the year and we do the process at the beginning of the year. So, that's pretty much regular every year. Other than that,

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it's either every two years or five years, and for this year, there's nothing that's on the horizon.

That's how I understand it. And then for example, last year we had the review of reviews team selection which suddenly came up. There were certain selection processes that just came up without any -- that suddenly came up. And so, other than those that we cannot really foresee anything this year that is regular, that's not really existing. The regular process doesn't exist for this year other than the ICANN Fellowship Mentor Program that's already done.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Right. Thank you. Yeah, so if we are lucky, we are actually gonna have a feel reasonably quiet rest of the year, but who knows? Okay, I think we are coming to the end of the meeting. Is there any other business anyone wants to bring up?

I don't see any hands, so I guess it's just up to me to thank you everybody. Great attending and we had a good discussion and we did our job, so thanks. And let's see when we actually have to meet and again, next time. Thank you, everybody.

VIVEK GOYAL:

Thank you, everybody. Have a good weekend.

PETER AKINREMI:

Thank you. Bye.

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