

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

Brussels March 3rd, 2011

GAC Communiqué - Brussels

I. Introduction

The Governmental Advisory Committee at ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) met with the ICANN Board in Brussels between 28 February and 2 March 2011. 37 members and observers to the GAC were present and 2 participated remotely. The GAC thanks the Board, staff and community observers.

II. Intersessional Board/GAC Consultation on new gTLDs

The governments and public authorities who are members of the GAC found the meeting to be a very important and timely opportunity to discuss their concerns with the Board and to offer further clarifications to the Board on GAC advice regarding how they could improve, from a public policy perspective, the implementation that the Board has proposed for the major expansion of the number of Internet generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs).

It was agreed that this was a significant moment for ICANN given the global interest in the new gTLD process. The decision by the Board to call such an extraordinary meeting to attempt to find ways to incorporate GAC advice on public policy requirements in the new gTLD process was therefore very much appreciated by GAC members. While the discussions were sometimes challenging, the GAC felt that the process as a whole was extremely useful in clarifying the GAC's concerns for the Board and identifying possible approaches which might be followed to resolve some of the outstanding areas of difference.

While recognising that it did not represent the Board's final decision on GAC advice, GAC members expressed particular appreciation for the provision by the Board of its "best current thinking" on the issues raised in the GAC Scorecard (see the Transcripts at <http://meetings.icann.org/board-gac-spring11>). The GAC appreciates the Board's offer to confirm its provisional views in writing on those areas where it thinks GAC advice can be accepted and areas where more work or discussion is required, and to make this available as soon as feasible, allowing GAC members to consult appropriately with their stakeholders.

Given that there appear to be a number of issues where the Board and the GAC still need to agree a common approach, the GAC proposed that priority be given to continuing these bilateral discussions in the forthcoming ICANN public meeting in

San Francisco. The GAC appreciates the Board's positive response to this suggestion, and confirms its commitment to this process -working with ICANN - in resolving all remaining points of difference.

While fully respecting the Board's right not to accept GAC advice, the GAC is obliged to ensure that existing rights, the rule of law and the security and protection of citizens, consumers and businesses, and the principle of national sovereignty for governments are all maintained within the new environment, as well as respect for legitimate interests and sensitivities regarding terms with national, cultural, geographic and religious significance. The GAC is committed to taking whatever time is required to achieving these essential public policy objectives.

The GAC envisions that discussion of the issues involved will continue up to and through the ICANN/GAC meeting in San Francisco in March, and looks forward to continued fruitful cooperation with the ICANN Board and community.