GNSO Activity Update for ccNSO Council
Patrick Myles – Feb 2015

For a greater detail on these topics and others, see the CENTR Report on ICANN52 due to be published later this week.

New gTLD Subsequent Rounds Discussion Group - A discussion group DG compiled a set of issues that it has identified from the first round of the new gTLD Program. Some topics include: community considerations, special cases, rights protection at 2nd level, string similarity, registry agreements, public interest, applicant support, name collision and IGO/INGO.
General mood on the topic is that GNSO should take a holistic approach and carefully thinking before jumping into things. Some predict that there wouldn't be any new rounds before 2019.

New gTLD auction proceeds - The GNSO are discussing the possibility of a cross community working group to determine how to deal with new gTLD auction proceeds which are reported be in the order of some 32 million. It's expected the GNSO will send out an invite for a potential cross group to other SO/ACs.

2 letter strings at second level - The Registry stakeholder group have been putting pressure on the Board who initiated a deferral of pending requests for 2 character labels at second level in gTLDs. The deferral reported came about as a result of correspondence from the GAC.

IANA Transition and Accountability - Although the GNSO council are well aware of the importance of this topic, it so far as not received the same level of in depth discussion (particularly on the different models) as compared with ccNSO during their ICANN52. The topic, as well as Accountability, has a slot at their council meeting (11 Feb). – more update in the CENTR ICANN52 report.

Policy and Implementation WG - Background: Focus on which topics call for policy and which for implementation work, including which processes should be used, at what time and how diverging opinions should be acted upon. Final report due June 2015. Selected recommendations from initial report:
- Experience shows that diverging opinions may arise during implementation policy recommendations that may or may not involve policy issues. Defining such issues as either "policy" or implementation was not as important as developing standardized mechanisms for addressing the issues efficiently regardless of characterization. WG suggest 3 processes:
    o GNSO input process - non-binding advice similar to public comment,
    o GNSO guidance process - binding advice to ICANN Board – not expected to result in new contractual obligations and typically involves on existing gTLD policy recommendations
    o Expedited PDP - develop recommendations resulting in new contractual obligations.
- WG recommends implementation review team be mandatory

Workload issues and Board engagement - GNSO have again expressed concern with general level of 'volunteer burnout' among it's working groups. The big question remains: 'how can you encourage people who don' make an income from domain names to contribute to the work?'. Fadi is very aware of the issue mentioning it's not sustainable also mentioning it has been a priority topic in discussions with SO/AC leaders.   He noted some ongoing work within ICANN staff on the topic and increased staff support that would not cross the line in policy development input.
Fadi was also supportive of increased support to working groups mentioning the 4.4% of ICANN budget dedicated to policy would hopefully be increased.
There are also growing concerns that ICANN leadership and too distanced from policy making progress. The GNSO miss the days when Board members attended their working sessions and had more engagement. The increased size of ICANN, workload and timing are general the reasons for the decreased engagement.