
YEŞİM NAZLAR: ...you would like me to start the roll call.

WOLF LUDWIG: Okay. I think we should start our call now. Welcome to the second preparatory call for the rather new At-Large Working Group on the Public Interest, which was decided at the ICANN Marrakesh in spring. And as some of you may remember, we had the first [direct] call some weeks ago, in early July. And luckily, we decided to have a working group call every month. And that process is now the second meeting. And I think, due to holiday season, our circumstances, and as Olivier mentioned already, it's a holiday in France today, and some people may still be on holidays during August, I think we have to confine ourselves with only a few participants.

Welcome to all those who could make it to this call. And I would like to ask At-Large staff to start with the roll call.

YEŞİM NAZLAR: Certainly, Wolf. Please start the recording, and I'll start the roll call.

WOLF LUDWIG: Yes, please.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

YEŞİM NAZLAR:

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, everyone. Welcome to the At-Large Public Interest Working Group call, taking place on Monday, 15th of August, 2016, at 13:00 UTC.

On the call today, on the English channel we have Wolf Ludwig, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Alan Greenberg, Satish Babu, Tijani Ben Jemaa, Yrjö Lansipuro, Aida Noblia, Isaac Maposa, Bastian Goslings, and Judith Hellerstein.

On the Spanish channel, we have Alberto Soto.

We don't have any apologies noted for this call. From staff, we have Heidi Ullrich, Ergys Ramaj, and myself, Yeşim Nazlar.

Our Spanish interpreters today are Veronica and David.

And finally, I'd like to remind everyone to state their names before speaking, not only for the transcript purposes, but also for the interpretation purposes, as well. Thank you very much. Wolf, over to you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay. Thanks, Yeşim, for the roll call. I think you had a chance to look on our today's call agenda. As we discussed last time at our first call, I think it would be a good idea to broaden the leadership of this working group by a few more people. And it should also be under regional considerations. It should be broader based. In the meanwhile, we contacted several people directly. And one of the people were Evan Leibovitch, from NARALO. We contacted Carlton Samuels from LACRALO. And we contacted Satish for APRALO. And meanwhile, we

have confirmation from Satish that he is interested to be one of the co-Chairs for this working group. And probably due to the short time between my request, Carlton and Evan didn't answer so far, and I think we should wait a few more days, etc., to give them a chance to respond. If they are not interested or if they cannot step in as co-Chairs, I think we should reflect who else could be suitable candidates for such a co-Chair function.

So this is still open. I'm very pleased that Satish has accepted. I know that the public interest in India, from personal experience from years ago, I know that the public interest is a political issue in India and international discourse. And I think there could be some important inputs from this part of the world, because the paper we had prepared so far, let's say constitutional paper for this working group, came from EURALO. And it was written under a very European angle. And as we discussed last time, I think it would be important to have inputs from other regions, as well. And as it was a political idea behind asking some representatives from other regions to step in and to act as co-Chairs for this working group.

Are there any questions from your side, or comments on this point regarding appointment of co-Chairs? Yes, I see that Tijani has raised his hand. Tijani, you have the floor, please.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you very much, Wolf. You said that you are changing the leadership and taking into consideration a regional balance. But I don't see any Africa in your list. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG: Yes, that's a good point, Tijani. Thanks a lot. Let me just give the question back to you. We discussed, and you were the only one that came into our minds. Therefore, the question is now, are you interested to step in as a representative from AFRALO?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: I think that we would need an applicant, not necessarily Tijani. So let me speak with my colleagues, and they will give you a name if you want. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG: Okay. Thanks, Tijani. I think it's a good idea, Tijani, to ask you now to start some verifications in your region, if anybody from AFRALO would be interested to step in as co-Chair, as well. So you start with your verifications, and as soon as you have some responses or some ideas from your side, you let us know, if it's okay?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Okay.

WOLF LUDWIG: Okay, thanks a lot, Tijani, for your verifications. Any further questions or comments regarding agenda item 3, appointment? I see no – Glenn stepped in. This was not a raised hand. Welcome, Glenn, to participate in this call.

Are there any further questions regarding agenda item 3, or comments? Otherwise, I would continue with our next agenda item, which is 4, introduction and discussion of the draft At-Large consumer agenda. You may have seen this some weeks ago. There is a particular draft which was prepared by Garth and sent to the At-Large community. There is a workspace. You see it on the screen now.

This is a draft version, to be adopted by ALAC. And there are some parts in it, I think, that could [feud] or [overlet] our discussions for any attempts to define the public interest and to elaborate aspects of public interest, and consumer-related papers and ideas, in my opinion, may be substantial for the public interest discussions, as well. I see at least a few parts of this first draft, submitted by Garth and Heidi. And I tried to contact Garth meanwhile and to ask him to participate in this call. Unfortunately, we didn't get any response so far on this. And as Garth cannot participate in this call today, I would like to suggest to postpone this item to the next call in September, and to give Garth a little bit more time to confirm that he would like to discuss this draft in our context and to give him a chance, as a penholder for this draft, to reflect and to say whether he thinks it's reasonable to make such a link.

I see approval from Alberto Soto on this suggestion. I think it's relevant. Okay, it's approval from Olivier, as well. I really see some links between the two discussions, and we should give it a chance, and give Garth a chance, at our next call to bring in his ideas, etc., and to say what he thinks about this.

Can I ask this as a next action item for us, to postpone agenda item 4 from today's call to the next Public Interest Working Group meeting or

call, and to ask Garth Bruen again to participate and to let us know his ideas and point of view?

Any comments, questions from your side on this? Yes, it is Alberto who has raised his hand. Alberto, you have the floor, please.

ALBERTO SOTO:

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everyone. I would like to make a suggestion, not for discussion right now, but perhaps to start thinking about it. I don't like definitions, but according to the legislation of each country, there are certain consumer protection laws that are not coherent, perhaps, with the terms that we are using or applying for end users or end consumers, or to defend the rights of consumers of Internet end users.

So I believe we are also defending the rights of those who are not connected yet to the Internet. So that is a discussion we should take into account, as well. As long as we have local legislation, and perhaps we have to review those regulations internally, we know there are people who have no protection because they are not end users, because they do not have the necessary connections. So we have to take that into account, as well. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay, thanks a lot, Alberto. I think this is a very good point, to refer to consumer protection regulations in particular countries. And I think there may be some regulation in some countries who may closer refer to the public interest. But I know about consumer protection

regulations in Germany, there is some saying and some mentioning of the public interest, or the broader public, as consumers. And I think this could be another field of respective studies for this working group to have a closer look into this direction. It's a good point, Alberto. Thanks for the idea.

And I see Alan Greenberg has raised his hand. Alan, you are next.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you very much. I think we have to look at this in number of different ways. With regard to the term "consumers," there's a discussion going on directly with regard to Garth's paper on whether we should be using the term "consumers" or "users." Garth used the term "consumers," if I remember his argument correctly, because when you mention users within ICANN, you often get a ho-hum reaction, and when you mention consumers, well, consumers have money, and therefore we'll have to think about them. But that discussion is going on.

From the point of view of our interests – this working group's interests – there are two aspects to it. Number one, we clearly have to consider what the public interest means, from an At-Large perspective. And to a very large extent, our public interest, or our interest in public interest – that's getting to be a confusing sentence – do revolve around the involvement of end users, because everything we do has to be done from a perspective of its impact and involvement with end users. So that's part number one.

But part number two is there's a larger discussion that will be going on within ICANN, that is going on, and will be going on within ICANN, of what does the public interest, and global public interest, mean from an overall ICANN perspective. And our aspect of it is part of it, but it's not the only part. And one of the rationales for creating this working group was to participate in, and be an advisory group to, the larger discussion that would be happening within ICANN of what does the public interest mean, in a more general sense.

So, yes, it has specific impact and interest from a user point of view, and we obviously can't ignore that. And "user" may be synonymous with "consumer" or may not be. But then there's the larger ICANN definition, which is a superset of that. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay, thanks a lot. Good considerations, Alan. And I should also think and work in this direction. And I also see a comment from Olivier in the chat, "Regarding consumers versus user, strictly speaking, they have different rights. But I think that in the context of the public interest, I do not think that it is worth differentiating between the two, as the public incorporates both consumers and users."

I think that's a valid point, again. And it's also ideas and suggestions are paving the way, are very important at this stage of our discussion to have substantial reflections on this.

The next on my list is Aida. Aida, please, you have the floor.

AIDA NOBLIA:

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everyone. Well, I raised my hand to say that I agree with Alberto, in terms of consumers. But I also believe that it is necessary to define the concepts from the ICANN's perspective. We have to define end users, consumers, and public interest. Those concepts are not the same. So I believe it would be good to go deeper into the sense, the meaning of these words. We may have consumers included within the public interest, but public interest does not imply only consumers. So we have three different words with different definitions and with different scopes. So perhaps we have to make a clarification there. For me, it's of vital importance. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay, thanks a lot, Aida. I think it's a very important point, and I think it needs some more clarification. What I recall from past discussions in this direction, there were debates during ICANN meetings when we talked about the terms "consumers" and "users." And one argument was that "consumer" is more traditional definition, but it's based on mere consumption of consumer goods and articles. And there should be – and there are – some regulations for consumer protection, to protect consumers against fraudulent practices, etc. And some people were arguing that a user is a much broader term, because the term "user" also includes a proactive role of a consumer, not only to buy an article, a consumer would, but users also could use content by themselves on the Internet. It's a more diverse definition than just the term "consumer."

This is what we discussed in the past already. And I totally agree, we should try to continue this debate here in our context, and to come up with, perhaps, some more clarification.

Next on my list is Yrjö. Yrjö, you have the floor, please.

YRJÖ LANSIPURO:

Yeah, thank you, Wolf. I think I may be stating the obvious, but anyway, I want to tell you that actually, in this area, talk about public interest in ICANN, obviously At-Large and the Governmental Advisory Committee share interest in the same issues. And I think that this is one of the areas where we have to explore this common ground within governmental interest and Governmental Advisory Committee and At-Large. And as the newly appointed liaison, I am very happy and very eager to engage in that.

The other thing is that when it comes to these terms, I prefer, obviously, “user” to “consumer,” because, like in Germany, also in Northern Europe, the word “consumer” is [the model], actually. It’s someone who is in a formal relation to the producers. And also, if they consume something, that something will diminish. Internet is not diminished by adding users.

So I hope that this [kind of] logical discussion will continue. Of course, in the end, the important thing is what do, than what we call it. But still, I think that you have to find the [bridge with] terms. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Thanks a lot, Yrjö. I totally agree. And also, thanks for pointing to the fact that we have a very strong issue here in common GAC, with Governmental Advisory Committee. Usually in the ICANN context, it was the GAC who was always pointing to the public interest and,

furthermore, was arguing that they, the governmental representatives at ICANN, are the defenders of the public interest. And some of the At-Large community, they're also saying, the very moment we defend interests of the Internet users, we also have a stake in this debate and in this struggle. And it should be a common ground for the At-Large community and the GAC. And as you are the current interim liaison from ALAC to the GAC, I think it's very important to have you closely included in this debate. It's a very important issue, also, under strategic considerations, in my opinion.

Next on my list is Alan. Alan, you have the floor again.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you. I think if we're going to spend our time defining these words, we are going to get into a deep pile of mud. Words have various definitions. When we look at "consumer," yes, the origin is "consume," but consumers are also users of things which are not necessarily diminished by their use. I consume books. That doesn't mean I physically eat them and they disappear. So if you look at a consumer as an Internet user, as someone who uses – or consumes, because "consume" does mean "use" – Internet services, that all users are consumers of Internet services.

So the word was picked, as I suggested, partly for its value in getting people interested. But the substance is not going to be in the name, but in what that paper discusses and what we're discussing. So I really don't think we should be agonizing over definitions so much, as

understanding the impacts and understanding how At-Large and ICANN should be interacting with these various groups.

And the same is true from the larger ICANN definitions. I think trying to define things is often misdirected, because public interest comes in, from ICANN's perspective, in evaluating, how do we make some future decision considering the public interest, factoring in the public interest? ICANN decisions almost invariably have various balancing things against them.

So we are trying to make sure that the domain name system is secure. That may or may not go along with the public interest on a specific level. But the overall public interest demands that the Internet name system be secure. So these are complex questions. And trying to get definitions of each individual word along the way, I think, is going to be a misuse of our time. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Thanks a lot, Alan, for this good comment. To me, there is one thing which is very clear, that the public interest is much broader than any particular interests from any stakeholder groups. So business interests, in my opinion, are mostly very particular interests, market-related and business-related interests. And the public interest, in my opinion, is something much, much broader. And in my opinion, user or consumer interests can be defined somewhere in between particular interests and the public interests, which are, in my opinion, closer to the term of the public interest.

But that's exactly the challenge of our working group over the next couple of months, to have a closer look into these issues and to come up with more clarifications. And that's the main challenge of this working group, in my opinion. And there is a lot of work that needs to be done. But I see Alberto, who has raised his hand next. Alberto, you have the floor.

ALBERTO SOTO:

I agree with Alan in the sense that today we should not continue discussing this. And I'm sorry I'm introducing this again. My intention is that each of us, in our countries, should check our own legislation, because here in Argentina, we have a law for the defense of the consumers. And so with these local laws in mind, maybe we can deal with this issue better. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay, thanks, Alberto. Good point. I have simply some small reservations regarding legalist discussion and definition of the term, because if you see it under strict legal consideration, it may become a juridical seminar. And to me, historical context into European history and discourse, the public interest was mostly, and from the beginning, a political term. And the political definition, starting in Ancient Greek, and all the references we can find in the city-states, where they tried to define policies for the inhabitants of city-states. And there was always common understandings that any politics and regulations should be designed and made in the public interest. Therefore, it's much older

than just a legal definition. It became afterwards an issue in the public law, as well. But in my opinion, it's broader than just a legal discourse.

It's just a comment in my side. And before I give the floor to Olivier, there was a good comment from Satish in the chat: "Public interest, according to Random House Dictionary, is first the welfare or well-being of the general public or commonwealth. This is exactly referring to the tradition of any public interest discourse in a European context. "Consumer is conditional upon consumption. How about public who are not yet users, but would-be users?" And I think we have to include this aspect, as well.

But next is Olivier on my list. Olivier, you have the floor, please.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND:

Thank you very much, Wolf. You have, actually, two separate things here, I think, which we're discussing in parallel. We've got the public interest on the one hand. And I agree with you that when it comes down to the public interest, it's probably likely to be less based around laws and regulations. But consumer regulation is, by its very name, is a regulation and is a legal thing. So if we are to treat the public interest and also the consumer agenda at ICANN, we would need to either have two parallel processes or see how the two work together.

And just, finally, responding to Alberto's suggestion for being able to make a consumer agenda on a local level, I think that this might be very helpful. Maybe just have a wiki page, and every member who knows about the consumer protection in any specific countries could just fill in links to that, as a starting point. I don't know how we would relate later

on with the public interest, but there might be some angle here which is helpful. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Thanks a lot, Olivier. Yes, I totally support your argument that all members of this working group should, from their experience and from their expertise, try to find good points and references, and introduce it to the debate. It must be a broad-based debate, in my opinion. It should not be restricted in any way. And it's afterwards upon the group to discuss and to decide how close it may come to this unknown animal of the public interest, or whether it's a [side aspect]. But I think this debate should be inclusive from the very beginning, and all ideas in this direction in this field are welcome.

I see Evan has raised his hand. Evan, you have the floor, please.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH:

Hi there. And thank, Wolf, and I'm sorry to have come into this late. This is midday for me now. I'm talking from my desk in Geneva, so it's difficult. But I wrote half my intervention here.

I will graciously disagree with you, humbly, Wolf, on that. It is a fact if we have too little focus on the people who we are trying to represent and we have too little focus on what interests we're trying to protect, we will end up doing nothing. And part of this is, I think, reflected in the fact that here we are, in 2016, and how many years ICANN has been in existence, and how many years ALAC has been in existence, and we're still discussing what is the public interest, what is the consumer agenda.

I think if you look at the way ICANN itself has framed things, when they talk about consumer trust, they are talking about the consumers of their product. When you talk about consumers in the car industry, you talk about people that buy cars. You don't talk about pedestrians. When ICANN talks about consumers, they talk about the people that buy domains and the organizations that buy domains. That is the consumer in ICANN parlance.

If we're talking about the public interest, we're talking about the interests of people who do not buy domains. And I really, really, strongly urge you to be careful about the concept of what you're calling a consumer agenda. I would go as far as to say that the interests of consumers within ICANN are already represented by the people within the NCSG, who are involved in registrant issues, who are involved in those who purchase domains. And that is the non-contracted party part of NCSG, of GNSO.

So the people who buy domains, and the people who they sell domains to – that is, the purchasers of domains, the consumers of domains – are already very, very well, I believe, protecting their interests within ICANN already. The vacuum that we have been trying to grasp with forever – as long as I have been involved with ICANN, as long as you have, Wolf, and most of the other people on this call – as long as we've ever known, the problem has been trying to deal with the billions of users who have not bought a domain, who will likely never buy a domain, but have to make use of the DNS in order to get to their Internet information.

So they are impacted by the buying and selling and commoditizing of domains. So it is absolutely within our agreement to try and represent

those interests. But I would caution very strongly that if we try and talk about all consumers, and we expand this to the people that are also buying domains, who are not only overlapping with existing interests within ICANN, but we threaten to basically lose so much focus that we end up not being able to have a [clear job]. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Thanks a lot, Evan, for this very important comment and points you made, reflecting our referring back to previous debates we had in this direction about ten years ago. And I entirely agree with you, with your conclusion that we have not progressed very much in this direction. And we, in the course of our discussions, have to look very closely and carefully not to mix up our various particular interests, as you refer to some, and to come up with something more consistent.

Before you joined our call, Evan, I was already under our agenda item 3, talking about appointment of co-Chairs for this working group. And I invited you, in a direct mail last week. I would be happy if you would be interested to become one of the co-Chairs of this working group, because such substantial input as you just delivered now are very, very much needed for this working group. Therefore, I just would like to repeat my invitation and encouragement to you that exactly what is urgently needed is that clear points as you just raised now.

The next on my list is Olivier. Olivier, you have the floor.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks very much, Wolf. And the points which Evan has made are very valid, indeed. And to some extent, I guess that makes our own job a lot harder to deal with, because we're not just looking for one thing. We're not just looking for the public interest. We're actually looking for three different things, which I think are to be treated differently.

The first one, the consumer agenda, is covered by laws. There are consumer laws around the world for anybody that buys something, they enter into a contract. There are laws to protect them. I guess maybe not in our country, but in many countries there is that.

Then there is the users. And that then becomes something more difficult, because I think – and I'm not expert on this – but it looks as though the users are much less protected by this, the saying, "Anything free comes with no guarantee," the caveat emptor, this sort of thing. So there's quite a few of these on that side.

And then there's of course the public interest itself, which you mentioned, Wolf, as not being a legal thing, but something that is more of a – I wouldn't call it philosophical, but I think more of a cultural argument, or maybe from a different angle, a non-legal angle.

So we actually have three things on the table here, don't we?

WOLF LUDWIG: Can you just recapitulate the three points on the table, in your opinion?

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Point 1, the consumer agenda. Point 2, the protection of end users. Point 3, the public interest. It sounds like three of them cannot be addressed in the same way. And whilst there are overlaps between them, they are not the same thing. That seems to be what I've heard so far.

WOLF LUDWIG: Okay, this is very good, Olivier. Just put them in the chat again, that we can note them for the record of this call and for the action items to be followed up in our next calls.

I see Aida has raised her hand again. Aida, you have the floor, please.

AIDA NOBLIA: Thank you. I just wanted to say that I would like to verify these three items. And I believe that public interest, from ICANN's perspective, might not match with the general concept of public interest. We need to check ICANN's definition, and perhaps in global public interest, consumers, as well as end users, and some other groups may be involved. We also have to take into account security and what ICANN offers. And this is something that ICANN offers for everyone, for everybody, for end users, consumers. So that is what we have to take into account. We have to focus on public interest from ICANN's perspective, but also taking into account some other concepts. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay, thanks a lot, Aida. Good point, that we have to closely follow the link in the ICANN context and fear not to be too abstract in our discussions. And while I must admit, I haven't made up my mind, because there is some special focused understanding [restricted] on the ICANN sphere, for me this would be just my personal opinion, a very dangerous attempt to try to define the global public interest only under terms and understanding of the ICANN sphere. The public interest is something much broader. And I think sooner or later, we will enter into discussion with members of the GAC, etc. And this will be a challenge.

So far, I very much appreciated all the inputs we had during this call so far already. But reconfirms again the importance and relevance of our discussions. So it's only a starting point at the moment. And all of you are very much welcome and encouraged to post any arguments, any ideas on our working group mailing list, etc., to enrich our discussions for the next calls and meetings.

And it brings me now, keeping the time in consideration, to our next agenda item. I have the pleasure to welcome here at this call Ergys Ramaj – I hope I pronounced your name correctly – who is meanwhile in charge of this issue at ICANN as staff. And it's a great pleasure to have you here at our call. And I would always like to encourage you to participate at our calls regularly.

And as I discussed with Heidi Ullrich before this call, there is some sort of an idea to organize a meeting at the next Hyderabad ICANN meeting. And perhaps this could be a very good interim space, at least for those people who may attend the Hyderabad meeting. But I also think besides the working group calls, we should try to use any opportunity to

continue our discussions face-to-face and on spot during the next month.

So for the moment, I would just like – Heidi Ullrich has posted Ergys’s bio in the chat. You can have a closer look on it. And I would like now, at the moment, to give the floor to Ergys, please.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you, Wolf, and thank you for the opportunity to be on the call. I just wanted to quickly introduce myself to the group first, and then talk a little bit about all of the efforts that have taken place to advance our discussion on understanding the public interest, as it relates to ICANN and its mission.

So a little bit about myself, I am with the Development and Public Responsibility Department. And my role is to oversee our collaborations portfolio. I was also an early member of the transition team, IANA function stewardship transition team. And I also support the work of the ICG, and also around the same time part of the CCWG on IG, which Olivier was the co-Chair of.

I recently inherited the public interest work that is taking place throughout ICANN. As some of you may know, Nora Abusitta, who headed the department, has left ICANN, and Sally Costerton [of At-Large] has taken over. So Sally is the executive leader overseeing the staff [within support]. And Development of Public Responsibility Department is tasked with helping facilitate the discussion surrounding this term and how it is understood and applied throughout ICANN more broadly to the multistakeholder model.

So in terms of the work that has taken place on this topic, just a little bit of background, most of you probably recall when the strategy panels were put together back in 2013. One of them was tasked with exploring ICANN's public interest framework. And it looked into related, but I would say, separate topics. The first one was public interest, and the second one was public responsibility. The public responsibility part was the blueprint for creating the department for which I now work. And the [unique framework] was those efforts.

So that report proposed definitions of the public interest in relation to ICANN and its mission. However, that definition has not been adopted or, I would say, fully embraced. And there is a desire to revisit, especially in light of the transition, all the different changes that are taking place.

As far as what the staff has done, we have done a couple of things to help structure the process. The first thing that was did was to conduct some research on how the different ICANN departments understand the term and its application. And we found that there's a good understanding, although, as I am seeing from this call, different people understood it to mean different things. But all in all, almost everyone felt that everything that we do is the public interest.

The other thing that we did, that we put together an inventory of all ICANN documents that reference either the term "global public interest" or the term "public interest." We also put together a useful resource with links to sessions where this topic has recently been discussed, as well as relevant online articles. And on the practical side of it, there is a wiki space and a mailing list that have been created.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of traffic on that mailing list, as a lot of the different groups are taking conversations separately and having discussions similar to what this group is doing right now. And it's not necessarily being focused on that one, if I could call it, central repository.

And there was also a high-interest session at ICANN 55, which was very well attended. Both Wolf and Olivier were on the panel, if I recall correctly. That discussion was quite vibrant, actually. But there was a lack of consensus for next steps. So there was talk about a definition. Some noted the need for a detailed definition. So this is one school of thought. The other one was that an [ambivalent] one, definition, that is, a general one, would be better suited for this case. And then there was the third school of thought that said, "Well, there is no need to have a definition, but we should look more towards a set of principles that could give [inaudible] for operational work."

So the bottom line is that there seems to be some convergence on the notion that there is a need to get a shared understanding about what the concept of public interest means, or at least how to operationalize it, as a basis for decision-making in ICANN, which brings me to my last point. And, Wolf, you touched on this in your introduction. What is next? Where do we go from here? Is there an opportunity to tackle this issue at ICANN 57? And if that's the case, could we get the conversation started on the mailing list, so as to get as many members of the community engaged about this, and continue to build on previous discussions.

On a note, the deadline for high-interest session internal deadline at ICANN is the 19th of August. So unless there is some sort of a push in the next couple of days, that we will likely miss that boat. But there will still be time for other regular session, if that's our desire.

I will stop here. I'm happy to take any questions.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Okay, thanks a lot for your introduction and for your remarks. I've seen that Evan has raised his hand. Evan, you have the floor, please.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH:

Thanks a lot, Wolf. And thanks for this, Ergys. I guess my main consideration of this is separating the concept of the consumer agenda and the [separate] interest agenda, and make those very specifically and very clearly. And the reason being consumer affairs, almost by definition, are more [inaudible] kind of a financial transaction. If you are consuming something, you're purchasing it. You're [wrapping] it or whatever.

The end user interests, in fact, those are supposedly the ones that ICANN, as the ALAC, is bylaw-mandated to protect, are those people and those interests that do not necessarily buy anything from ICANN, and groups that are in fact comprised [inaudible] they already [inaudible] significant [inaudible] consumer [inaudible] within ICANN, consumer [inaudible] reports, the panel on consumer choice, trust, and so on. This is all occurring amongst the consumers within ICANN, which are people that are in organizations that are buying things.

I apologize for the background noise. Anyway, so I'll keep it short. But essentially, I'm just begging you to try and separate the public interest, which is everybody who uses the Internet and uses the domain name system has an interest and is affected by what ICANN does. The consumer component of this not only is a very small subset of it, but arguably is already addressed by other ICANN initiatives. Thank you.

WOLF LUDWIG:

Yes, thanks a lot, Evan. And as Evan said, there was some background noise. It's rather disturbing during Evan's intervention.

Well, for the moment, let me put it this way. I have personally some very strong doubts whether we will come up or end up with any kind of current or unique definition of the public interest or something like the global public interest, which may be even more diverse than just a common understanding of the public interest. And in my opinion, even if this may not be the case, coming up with a current definition, if this working group can contribute to make different understandings and different angles a bit clearer than it's now in the community, then such a working group has served already a sort of purpose.

So my aim is not to come up with something final or conclusive. But it should make it much clearer whenever we talk about such terms and definitions like the public interest, that we understand better what different people mean about it. And this can contribute to some clarification already. It will be a very challenge process, but I think it's worse to try it, it's worse to do it, etc. And we have really a challenging task in front of us.

So as we are running short of time, to conclude this call for today, if there are no other questions or comments from your side, let me go over to point 6, next steps for this working group. As we just mentioned, we will try to discuss and reflect, to organize a meeting at ICANN 57, in Hyderabad. We will follow up on this bilaterally with Heidi. And she just told me it's not the 19th August, the deadline. We still have a little bit more time, until 1st of September. So we will find out. And also, discuss with Ergys whether it makes sense to organize something for Hyderabad on spot.

And we can also try to send another Doodle again, to find out a more suitable time slot that may fit and work for the majority of members of this working group. As Evan mentioned, he has some constraints during working hours here. So I am rather flexible with my timing, because I'm independent or I'm a freelancer, and I can follow other preferences and availabilities. So this will be the next point, will be organized to find a suitable date. Perhaps we can come up with something fixed, a fixed day and timing for the working group calls per month would be ideal, in my opinion. We will try to find out, and then we will send an invite for our next September call.

If you have any ideas and suggestions, as I said at the end of our last call, please post anything that you think may contribute to this debate or may enhance our debate. Please post it on the mailing list, which was published in the chat again. And as I said, any inputs, any ideas from your side, are very much welcome and appreciated.

If there are not any further questions or comments from your side, as I see the time for our call is over by now. Further questions? Further

comments? If it is not the case, let me thank you all for your active and enriching participation. Thanks for all your comments and very good remarks. And I hope that we can continue our discussions in the time between our next call and September. And thanks for attending this call. And I wish all of you an excellent afternoon, evening, or whatever. Thanks for attending, and hope to have you at our next call again. Thanks, and bye.

YEŞİM NAZLAR:

The meeting is now adjourned. You will now be disconnected. Thank you very much for your participation. Have a lovely rest of the day. Bye-bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]