GAC Liaison Reports

On 24 July 2018, the ALAC unanimously voted to re-appoint Yrjö Länsipuro to serve as the ALAC Liaison to the GAC between the end of the 2018 AGM to the end of the 2019 AGM.

Yrjö Länsipuro was re-appointed by the ALAC to serve as the ALAC Liaison to the GAC between the end of the 2017 AGM to the end of the 2018 AGM.

On 24 June 2016, the ALAC appointed Yrjö Länsipuro to serve as the ALAC Liaison to the GAC for the interim period until the end of ICANN57. Yrjö is the first ALAC Liaison to the GAC.

Yrjö was previously a GAC member representing Finland, and a member of the ICANN President’s Strategy Committee and has been active in At-Large since 2009. He is currently a delegate to the Nominating Committee.

GAC Liaison’s Report on ICANN 67 Virtual Community Forum

Like other ICANN constituencies, the GAC managed to adapt smoothly to the virtual format of ICANN67, gathering a number of online participants (61 Members, 6 Observers) comparable to face-to-face meetings in recent years, conducting its core business and drafting a communiqué, however without any formal Consensus Advice, which would have required a face-to-face meeting. The focus of the meeting was clearly on the issue of Subsequent rounds of new gTLD’s, which was dealt with both at GAC meetings proper and at its sessions with the Board, the SubPro PDP WG and the ALAC/At Large. In addition, GAC capacity building sessions were devoted to this topic in their entirety. This emphasis is understandable in view of the rapid turnout of national representatives to the GAC. There are not so many left from the days of the lively discussions 2008-2012, when the GAC played an important role in shaping the modalities of the 2012 round, as it itself was transformed by the process into an operative component of the new gTLD-generating mechanism. Recent capacity building efforts seem to have borne fruit, and the GAC is now coming up to speed on this issue, something of great importance also for ALAC/At-Large (see below).

The other two topics mentioned in the communiqué as “issues of importance to the GAC” were Acquisition of PIR (.org) and Domain name registration directory service and data protection (EPDP).

Unlike a normal face-to-face meeting, where the GAC (or its WGs) may have a dozen bilateral meetings with other ICANN bodies, the online GAC at ICANN67 had to cut down on dialogue sessions, including an informal meeting that its Public Safety Working Group wanted to have with interested ALAC/At-Large participants on DNS Abuse. However, as its only bilateral meeting with another SO/AC at “virtual Cancun”, the GAC met with ALAC/At-Large, as it had at every ICANN meeting since the summer 2016.

ALAC-GAC meeting at ICANN67, Wednesday March 11

When a planned face-to-face meeting had to turned into an online one at a couple weeks’ notice, just the absolutely necessary could fit in. In keeping with this constraint, the joint ALAC-GAC meeting focused on just the two issues high on the agenda of both - SubPro and EPDP – and on the search of possible common ground within them.

SubPro

On the SubPro, intersessional dialogue between the GAC SubPro Focus Group with ALAC/At-Large was suggested by the GAC side already at ICANN64 (Marrakech, June 2019). However, the GAC group had first to focus on capacity building activities. The first intersessional meeting on the topic was held in February 2020, as an “appendix” to the GAC/ALAC leadership call, with Luisa Paez, the Chair of the GAC Focus Group, and Justine Chew, the Chair of the ALAC/At-Large Small Team on SubPro, as the main speakers. Both sides also exchanged the draft score cards on various aspects of SubPro.

At the joint meeting at ICANN67, Justine Chew presented a chart showing the ALAC/At-Large high level process of producing scorecards which ultimately will form its position, with cooperation with the GAC built in.
She then presented the list of SubPro topics of interest to ALAC/At-Large and asked for the GAC perspective and inputs on them and whether consensus has been reached within the GAC on them.

**New gTLD Subsequent Procedures**

**GAC-ALAC Intersessional**

- GAC-ALAC Leadership Call, 18 Feb
- Exchanges of DRAFT scorecards between GAC Focus Group and At-Large CPWG SubPro
- Small Team: practice expected to continue as each AC builds consensus, respectively
- Capacity Building needs
- Proposed SubPro Topics for further discussion (in no particular order of priority):
  - Impact of CCT-RT recommendations as prerequisite to next round, selected or in totality?
  - Public Interest Commitments & Registry Voluntary Commitments – incl. “public interest goals”
  - GAC Advice / GAC Early Warning
  - Objectives & Appeals
  - Closed Generic TLDs
  - DNS Abuse mitigation - changes to Base Registry Agreement and Contractual Compliance
  - Applicant Support
  - Community Based Applications & Community Priority Evaluation (CFE)
  - Mechanism of Last Resort for String Contention Resolution – Auctions etc.
  - Geonomics as TLDs

**Next steps**

Replying to Justine, GAC Chair Manal Ismael said GAC had prioritized five SubPro topics, namely: 1) closed generics TLDs, 2) public interest commitments, 3) GAC early warnings and GAC advice, 4) applicant support program and underserved regions, and 5) community-based applications.

Jorge Cancio added that GAC discussions have gone to the substance on public interest commitment, GAC early warnings, applicant support programs and closed generics. The work of finding possible new consensus positions on the specifics of the of the recommendations being elaborated by the PDP working group will take place intersessionally. GAC is basing its discussions on consensus positions dating back the GAC principles on new gTLDs dating back to 2007 so that it is not starting from scratch.

Luisa Paez noted that GAC has still a lot of internal work to do intersessionally, but that it is encouraging that ALAC has a dedicated group looking at their priorities, and that there is an alignment on a few items. GAG is open to have further intersessional calls with ALAC and noted that it is helpful to get a sense again of where the ALAC is moving, and those exchanges will help also to build the GAC capacity as well.

**EPDP**

Hadja El-Miniawi presented possible EPDP topics that might be of mutual interest for both the ALAC and the GAC:
Commenting on Hadia’s presentation, Giorgios Tselentsis said that the ALAC and the GAC, in his view, have a quite good collaboration in the EPDP. He not only agreed that the points presented by Hadia were of mutual interest, but also, on most of them, the GAC and the ALAC are practically aligned. This was also confirmed by Alan Greenberg and Laureen Kapin in their comments.

The transcript of the meeting can be found at https://67.schedule.icann.org/meetings/1152550

Yrjö Länsipuro  
ALAC Liaison to the GAC

**ALAC-GAC meeting at ICANN66, Montreal, 5 November, 2019**

Continuing a practice that started at ICANN56 (Helsinki, June 2016), the ALAC/At-Large and the GAC had a joint meeting at ICANN66 in Montreal 5 November, 2019.

The agenda covered topics of joint interest that have been discussed at many previous meetings: capacity building, EPDP and SubPro. Willingness to move forward from “comparing notes” to more concrete cooperation could be sensed from both sides.

Under AOB, a suggestion was made to develop contacts and cooperation between At Large elements and relevant governmental entities, represented on the GAC, also on country level.

**Capacity building**

Joanna Kulesza, Co-chair ALAC Capacity Building Working Group confirmed the readiness to cooperate with the GAC on capacity building by having At-Large members participate in the capacity building pre-events of the GAC in Cancun and Kuala Lumpur. Details will be worked on intersessionally.

There is interest in the GAC to learn about the capacity building, practices and working methods of At-Large. Joanna replied to the question by GAC Vice-Chair Luisa Paez by pointing to ICANN Learn, to online resources developed by At-Large and to the At Large Policy Platform that is under development. She also welcomed the Information Transparency Initiative that will make information about ICANN better organized and more accessible.
EPDP

Hadia El-Miniawi, one of the two ALAC representatives in the EPDP, presented an overview of points of common interest between the ALAC and the GAC with regard to the expedited process for gTLD registration data: first and foremost, complying with GDPR and other relevant data protection laws; having a standardized system for access/disclosure automation; accuracy of registration data; and distinction between natural and legal persons. On the last point, a study is going to be launched, something that arose from EPDP meeting in Montreal.

(Reference is also made to the joint GAC – ALAC statement on Phase I of the EPDP at ICANN64, Kobe, 13 March 2019, and subsequent discussions on a follow-up to it concerning Phase II)

SubPro

Justine Chew, the ALAC Liaison for SubPro, listed SubPro issues that are important to At-Large and that ALAC has commented on in the process, such as global public interest, safeguards including verified TLD’s and registration restrictions for highly regulated sectors, CCT review recommendations, closed generics, new appeals mechanism, applicant support, community priority evaluation and possible enabling of change requests. She confirmed that ALAC is open to working with the GAC in a way that GAC is comfortable with to see if there is common ground on some of these topics or topics that the GAC wants to put forward.

Replying to Justine, Jorge Cancio (Switzerland) noted that already at the previous ICANN meeting (ICANN65, Marrakech, June 2019) the GAC and ALAC had more or less agreed to try to find synergies between the ALAC and GAC SubPro groups. He hoped this can still be done, and pointed out that at least some in the GAC had called for some urgency in tackling the issues that are crystallizing in the PDP working group. He said he hoped that the GAC could share with ALAC its scorecard of SubPro issues which covers 95% of the issues that Justine listed. “So it would be a shame if we didn’t work together on this because our resources, yours and ours, are very limited”, he said,

Luisa Paez, the Chair of the GAC Focus Group on Subsequent Rounds of New TLD’s, agreed that the GAC and the ALAC have a lot of synergies, and that an intersessional call between the GAC Focal Group and ALAC will be planned. She also welcomed sharing the scorecard or parts of it, after it has been updated and reviewed by GAC members.

Contacts and cooperation “on the ground”

Under AOB, Ricardo Holmquist (ALAC-LAC) suggested preparing a joint GAC-ALAC statement encouraging At Large elements and relevant governmental entities to talk to each other at country level. This would facilitate capacity building, help developing policies related to ICANN and building a better internet in our countries, he said.

Next steps

Moving on to next steps, Ana Neves, the GAC Liaison to ALAC, noted the difficulties of getting the policy dialogue going between bodies that represent governments, on one hand, and consumers and users, on the other. Nevertheless, she insisted on a more active and energized partnership to get the most out of it.

Yrjö Länsipuro, the ALAC Liaison to the GAC, said he realized the ALAC and GAC are “very different animals” but they nevertheless represent the same people whom the GAC calls citizens and ALAC calls individual end users of the Internet. He also thanked Luisa in inviting At Large participation in the GAC Focus Group.

Concluding the meeting, both Chairs, Manal Ismail and Maureen Hillyard, agreed that the GAC and the ALAC should get intersessional cooperation up and running, looking forward to having active engagement between now and the next ICANN meeting in Cancun.
Two other events with ALAC-GAC engagement at ICANN66 need to be noted:

1) At the joint ALAC-GAC-NPOC Communications and Capacity Building Session (2 November), Bob Hoggarth, Vice President, Policy Development & GAC Relations, explained the special capacity building needs of the GAC, taking into account the high turnover rate of GAC representatives that 178 governments send to meetings. Over 12 months, the committee has seen 99 new participants, and 62 have departed.

2) Joanna Kulesza and Yrjö Länsipuro participated at the session of the GAC Human Rights and International Law working group (6 November) which discussed the new draft template for human rights impact assessments.
As a follow-up to the ALAC-GAC joint statement[1] on EPDP, issued at ICANN64 in Kobe, Hadia Elminawi reviewed developments on issues of common concern for both ALAC and GAC, including the distinction between natural and legal persons, accuracy of the data in relation to the purposes they are collected for, and the necessity of including the field for technical contact. In the joint statement, the two bodies had also called for exploring the need of having an ICANN purpose that addresses related DNS research requirements pertaining to the security and stability of the internet. Hadia noted that this Purpose 2 had not been adopted by the Board, so that it needs to be rephrased so the it reflects ICANN’s public interest role.

From the GAC side, Ashley Heineman (US) observed that GAC and ALAC seem to be aligned on many issues pertaining to the EPDP. On Purpose 2, we still need to wait for there to be some sort of Board – GNSO Council consultation, but perhaps leading up to that and afterward, GAC and ALAC can regroup together and maybe chart a path forward on how best to handle that particular purpose.

**Cooperation on capacity building**

Joanna Kulesza reported from the joint small group meeting on Monday on how to facilitate especially newcomers to both ALAC and GAC in adapting in the complex ICANN environment. The objective is to have joint capacity building events both at and between ICANN meetings. In addition, all At-Large capacity building events and online resources are open and GAC members are welcome to use them. In the ensuing discussion, Kavouss Arasteh (Iran) expressed support for this cooperation and suggested leveraging also resources of other international organizations.

**Intersessional dialogue on policy matters**

GAC Liaison to the ALAC Ana Neves (Portugal) presented the idea of expanding the intersessional cooperation of the two bodies to policy matters, in particular to discussing the possible new gTLD round. She proposed a small joint group of 4-5 people from each side to start the work. Jorge Cancio (Switzerland) suggested that instead of setting up a joint group, a newly constituted GAC focal group on new gTLD’s could be used for the purpose. The Chair of that group, Luisa Paez (Canada) confirmed that GAC is open for a dialogue with ALAC on new gTLD, something she sees as important. The focus group is going to discuss the modalities after the summer holiday period and come back with its invitation. (On our side, we should identify a few people who would like to participate in this dialogue.)

At the conclusion of the meeting, the ALAC Chair Maureen Hilyard welcomed the willingness of the GAC for a policy dialogue, noting that we have a lot of commonalities and that ALAC is very willing to participate in discussions with GAC, on terms they find appropriate, and that GAC members are always welcome to the capacity building sessions organized by ALAC. The GAC Chair Manal Ismail agreed that multiple working groups would not be needed and that the GAC focus group will invite ALAC colleagues to join.

[1] https://atlarge.icann.org/advice_statements/13255

June 2018

The GAC appointed Ana Neves as the first GAC Liaison to the ALAC during ICANN 62.

ALAC-GAC meeting at ICANN 62; annotated agenda

23 August, 2016
On 19 August, 2016, there was a call where the Chairs of the GAC and the ALAC, Thomas Schneider and Alan Greenberg, together with the interim ALAC liaison to the GAC, Yrjö Länsipuro, and staff of both advisory committee, discussed the rationale and objectives of the newly created ALAC-GAC Liaison post.

It was agreed that the purpose is to keep the ALAC and the GAC – the two bodies of ICANN community that share a concern for public interest – mutually informed on a general level about what they are doing and planning to do, and to explore issues where the two committees could find enough common ground for cooperation. In the short run, expectations are modest, and the main objective is to build solid foundations for cooperation, whenever there's a need for it.

A call with participation from both sides will be held in September to discuss issues of mutual interest. The ALAC Liaison volunteered to present the first draft for the agenda of the call, and welcomes ALAC input to it.

Yrjö Länsipuro