**Notes from GAC meetings at ICANN57, Friday 4 November 2016**

What follows are notes from the GAC meetings on Friday, 4 November, on issues that might interest the ALAC, also in view of the joint ALAC-GAC meeting on Sunday, 6 November.

Much of GAC’s time was spent on post-transition reorientation, ie. discussion on its new role as per new ICANN Bylaws and changes that follow from it – not only in its operating procedures but also in its self-perception as part of the ICANN setup.

There will be three major changes: 1) GAC Advice now comes either based on full consensus, or as a non-consensus advice if at least one member puts in a Formal Objection. According to the Bylaws, both need the taken into account, with subsequent consultations if necessary, but full consensus advice now takes a 60% Board vote to override. 2) GAC is going to appoint a number of people to “external” positions and 3) GAC will be a Decisional Participant of the Empowered Community (EC) , “under conditions to be determined internally”. All three novelties lead GAC into an unfamiliar terrain dotted with a lot of question marks. For some governments, leaving the traditional, purely advisory role is more difficult than for others; some, on the other hand, are looking forward to new opportunities for expanding the role of the governments.

Just appointing members to other ICANN bodies to “represent” the GAC is problematic. “It’s a major leap from representing your government to representing the GAC”, in the words of one member. Long discussions on “who” and “how” can be expected. However, the decision concerning GAC’s interim representative in the EC was made: the GAC Chair will have that role at least until ICANN 58.

Discussion to reconcile GAC’s advisory and decisional roles in the EC will probably take some time, too. It was pointed out that the GAC can abstain from decisions it feels it has no business participating in, and that it can tailor its own role, however within framework of the new Bylaws.

The GAC Chair noted that it would be useful to know, how other AC’s see their role in the EC and specifically mentioned ALAC, so that this topic should be an interesting one at the ALAC-GAC meeting.

From advising the Board only, after the PDP process has run its course, the GAC is turning into an early interlocutor with the GNSO. This was discussed in a positive light in the GAC-GNSO meeting. It was stressed from both sides that even though such a role is not foreseen for the GAC in ICANN Bylaws, they certainly don’t prohibit it either. Work for enabling an early GAC input continues.

IGO/Red Cross protections (that have recently been discussed again also on At Large mailing lists) on the GAC-GNSO agenda provided a counter-point to the visions of smooth cooperation and served as an illustration of what happens in the absence of inter-silo communication. Earlier, many GAC members had expressed satisfaction with the proposal to solve the long-standing problem of second-level protection of IGO names coming from a Board-GAC-NGPC “small group”. Apparently the GAC had been under the impression that it also included input from the GNSO, which was denied. Discussion turned into looking for a “trigger” that could somehow break the deadlock, and ended in promises to continue the search. Background: <https://gnso.icann.org/mailing-lists/archives/council/msg19230.html>