

**Candidate Statement GNSO Chair
20 September 2020**

Candidate: Philippe Fouquart (ISPs and Connectivity Providers Constituency - ISPCP, Europe)

Citizenship / Country of Residence: France

Dear GNSO fellow Councilors,

I would like to thank the Non-Contracted Parties House for their nomination for the Council Chair election. I gratefully accept this nomination and would be honoured to serve the whole Community as GNSO Council chair from the ICANN AGM 2020 to ICANN AGM 2021. I confirm that my SOI is accurate; you may find it here <https://community.icann.org/display/gnsosoi/Philippe+Fouquart+SOI>

The following is my statement for this election. It provides an outline of the tasks that we have before us, some of the challenges that we will need to overcome, what I would like to bring to Council if elected and a few words about my background. The on-going pandemic and the absence of in-person meetings make this year quite unusual for standing for Council chair. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or items of importance I would have overlooked, or elements you would disagree with – especially things you would disagree with – not only would I welcome your feedback, I am asking for it.

The GNSO Council chair is a truly humbling position and no one in their right mind would pretend to have a complete mastery of each and every on-going topic in the GNSO or claim they had never been taken by surprise by the turn of events at some point – I will not with the following, I know that none of those who served on the position would, with their experience. Although proficiency is important, it may not be what makes the ‘job’ so unique. What I think is required and have seen exercised by Keith Drazek and Heather Forrest, for the three years I served as a counselor is a combination of:

- 1) Awareness on the need to preserve the authority of Council and that of the GNSO on the stewardship of gTLD policy-making;
- 2) Neutrality and collegiality when it comes to decision-making;
- 3) Effectivity to ensure Council remains functional in terms of delivering policies, both in terms of facilitating the dialogue before and during the PDPs but also ultimately an ability to articulate the problem that befalls before Council for our SGs/Cs to position themselves; and
- 4) Trustworthiness and transparency when representing the GNSO with other SOs/ACs or the Board whenever required.

I fully endorse these principles as a Council Chair candidate. I would also like to acknowledge more broadly the incredible amount of work that has been achieved on crucial items by our leadership, Keith with our Vice Chairs, Pam Little and Rafik Dammak over two years, and this despite the strenuous circumstances we have known during the last few months. We have a strong leadership; a large part of Council’s achievements is on Keith’s credits, Rafik did a tremendous job with the EPDP, especially in its last mile for phase 2; Pam was instrumental in progressing PDP3.0; and they also made Council a very pleasant team to be in and this is no small feat. I am confident I can pick up the baton and carry it along the next 12 months with your support.

Outstanding work items for 2020-2021

All GNSO chair terms are critical, 2020-2021 is no exception, and I will just briefly review some of the major work items that we can anticipate for the next 12 months.

At the time of writing, with the exception of the RPM - IGO Curative Rights Work Track for which we have a call for volunteer pending, we have two active working groups, and one in-the making:

- New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP
- Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs PDP WG
- Internationalized Domain Names

The much-awaited SubPro Final Report is scheduled for Council to consider by the end of the year. No need to stress what a major milestone this would be for the Community given the expectation for a new round. With the help of the PDP co-chairs, Council has already started allowing bandwidth for discussion for councilors to get a grip on this 5 year worth and 300+ pages long piece of hard work, and we will continue so that our SG/Cs be well informed when the time comes to voting.

Beyond these, the impact of data protection regulation on whois/RDS will remain high on our agenda next year. At the time of writing, the EPDP phase 2 report is presented before Council, and I am hopeful the tremendous amount of effort that all the EPDP participants put into this will be rewarded by ‘some success’, they deserve it, and by this I mean that a large part of the recommendations can be put to the Board for consideration and all concerns that have been voiced can be met with the assurance that they will be timely addressed in a follow-up to phase 2. Some of our work will depend on the result of this vote, but nonetheless Council has started considering next steps to see whether EPDP Phase 1 recommendations need to be updated to distinguish legal and natural person in whois data and the feasibility and necessity of unique contacts, along with a scoping team on data accuracy. Just as we did in phase 1 and 2, GNSO councilors, Council leadership and Chair will stand by the PDP team to make sure the charter questions are addressed and doing so in the agreed timeline.

DNS Abuse is a topic that has been lingering on for some months and Council will engage as deemed necessary by our SG/Cs with the Special Working Group or task force that will be tasked with this and approach the issue collegially with other SOs/ACs. If this were to call for changes to gTLD policies it will be obviously be up to Council to drive the work on this.

The PDP stewardship also requires that whenever necessary Council ensures the backend of the Policy Development Process and assists in the implementation phase (eg the EPDP Phase 1 Recommendation 7 implementation and Thick WHOIS Transition Policy or the implementation of the EPDP Rec 27). The nature of our short-lived deadline-driven EPDP is still uncharted territory in terms of leaving some of its policy-related items open-ended until implementation and how much feedback the implementation of the associated recommendations will be required to remove the unknowns or ambiguities; Council should be prepared to engage in these clarifications.

Challenges of Council work during the Covid-19 pandemic

It is clear that limited travelling and virtual meetings will be our “new normality” for a significant part of the term of the next Council chair. Council and more generally the GNSO are well equipped for the challenge since a large part of our work has been carried out virtually already. Nonetheless the absence of in-person meetings on one hand and pressure on the Community to focus on ‘home business’ on the other are things we will have to make do with for some time, which we all hope should be as short as possible.

This absence of “corridor discussions”, limited cross-community exchanges and the need to resort to emails and video calls in different time zones may lead to entrenched positions and difficulty to compromise. Whilst the workload remains a problem (I don’t think any Chair candidate has ever failed to mention burnout as an issue), thanks to the hard work and talent of the current and previous leadership teams, our GNSO council has remained extremely effective. The pandemic is

nonetheless a bit of a stress test, and the goal of Council and its future Chair is obviously to stay just as effective in these trying times.

These issues are not specific to Council or even the GNSO, but within Council and building up from our leadership's example, there are actions we may take to make sure our work remains "effective and efficient" in these challenging times such as:

- Focusing our tasks: complete Council's work on prioritization and more effective project management,
- Empowerment and work methods: keep our councilors as involved as they would be in 'normal circumstances' by relying Council small teams, in addition/coordination to/with our liaisons/standing committees
- Improvement of our tools beyond project management: for example engage with staff's continuing initiatives to improve ICANN's website.
- Continuity of our mission: make sure that any limitation in cross-community communications does not lead to gTLD policy-like work being undertaken outside of our SO.

Team work & leadership team

During these three years at council, albeit from the outside, needless to say I have appreciated the importance of teamwork among Council leadership and how much this collaborative spirit eventually helps us councilors exert our responsibilities towards our respective SG/Cs. Beyond the leadership team, the involvement of our councilors in PDPs and regular updates to council is a 'must have' for other councilors and their respective SG/Cs to be up to date with their progress –an ill-informed council cannot be expected to be fully engaged when it comes to voting. Keith, Pam and Rafik, and before them Heather Forrest, Donna Austin and Rafik again set incredibly high standards that I will strive to live up to, and I can only commit to continuing this long tradition of having an empowered Council leadership to serve the community, not only within but also outside Council. Engaging with other parts of the community on behalf of the GSNO is a responsibility that will be common to the three of us, and I intend to rely heavily on the Council Vice-Chairs.

If elected, and on behalf of us all, I will represent the consensus of the GNSO agreed at Council, remain neutral and engage with other SOs/ACs or the Board to express our common view whenever possible or when no such common view exists, reflect the diversity of those of our community in the most faithful manner possible.

2021 GNSO Strategic Planning Session

Since 2018 and instilled under Heather's chairing, Council has had the opportunity to meet in-person for a 3-day retreat not only to step back and approach our work in a more holistic way, but also to consider the decisions ahead of us through an extensive review of on-going / in-coming projects. This yearly "Strategic Planning Session" has laid the foundations for a number of critical initiatives of the Council's term such as PDP 3.0 or our project management improvement and prioritisation.

Despite the impossibility of meeting in-person for this SPS, Council has just started to consider how it can be organised, and I just wanted here to embrace the idea of making the most of the current situation by anticipating our retreat sometime later in this year if we can, possibly adapt the "format" but essentially approach the substance of the SPS in the same spirit, as much as I think this can help the newly elected councilors to "get on board" as quickly as possible.

As a counselor, I know that the first few monthly meetings/calls and the limited time allotted to each topic can be frustrating, if not daunting, and the SPS is an incredible opportunity for each councilor to

devote more time to each topic and foster discussion in an environment where no-one would hesitate asking questions - and benefit from answers that would not be recorded.

The topics will obviously consider how our remote work can be improved during (hopefully) the first few months, how to complete or complement the work prioritization initiated in 2020 and I would personally also see this as a good opportunity to form the topic-related small teams that I referred to earlier as well as a review of the findings of ATRT3 as they may relate to our work, or the role of GNSO Representative to the Empowered Community. The latter is unfortunately difficult to fit in the agenda of our Council calls and the SPS is a unique opportunity for us to recall our responsibilities in the EC escalation process.

Personal wish

On a more personal note, or wish rather, the observation has sometimes been made that non-native English speakers may struggle in the GNSO, its WGs or other activities. A non-English speaker myself, it is somewhat of a personal frustration that members of the community may have felt kept away from the work of Council (although a third of current council members could perfectly hold – possibly enjoyed - a meeting in my mother tongue). There is obviously no straightforward solution, but at a moment when virtual/remote participation is the norm, language is more important than ever and there may be ways of improving our work methods or communication in that respect by capitalizing on the experience from other parts of the Community.

Day job, background and commitment

I am an engineer at Orange Labs, in charge of Naming, Numbering and Addressing. I have been involved in policy-making and regulatory work with several international bodies and national or regional regulatory authorities for 18 years and held several leadership positions in various international organizations. In addition to my policy-related activities, I provide technical support to various divisions and country affiliates of Orange in DNS engineering, both for cache/resolvers, authoritative servers or whois as well as expertise to our domain name portfolio management, be it for day-to-day arbitration, brand protection or TLD application for all the use cases ISPs need domain names, not only for the Web, but also for Voice over IP, IoT and mobile networks.

As far as ICANN is concerned, I am immensely privileged at Orange to have benefited from the involvement of some of my colleagues in ICANN's "first steps". The 1999 "Shared registry System trial" may still ring a bell to some of you, and Orange Business Services, or "France Telecom/Oléane" as it was called back then, was one of the five registrars involved. I am deeply grateful to the colleagues who took part in this as well as those involved in the preliminary work of the IANA Stewardship Transition and were keen on sharing their experience of crucial moments in ICANN's history. Over these years I have been very lucky to benefit from the insights and passion of more experienced and knowledgeable than I was in this respect. As many telecoms operators and ISPs, we have been a long-term supporter of the multi-stakeholder model and DNSO/GNSO's bottom-up, consensus-based policy development process, and I would be proud to put the Council chairmanship under such auspices. I am glad I can rely on the support of my affiliation for the position and the involvement and commitment that the responsibilities a Council Chair requires.

My first personal ICANN meeting was in Paris in June 2008, and I have attended ICANN meetings since ICANN 58. I have been a councilor since the 2017 AGM and was re-elected in May 2020 for a full 2-year term. I have been involved in several council lead initiatives such as PDP3.0 or the IDN scoping team, was a liaison to the CCNSO, and have lead a number of thematic teams within the ISPCP.

Finally I appreciate that our current environment is not ideal for building up relationships that go along with standing for a position such as Council Chair, and as much as everyone else, I hope we can meet again in-person very soon. Before then, our work will carry on, I am hopeful that by continuing to adapt our work methods, streamlining our project management, strengthening our communication inside and outside the GNSO we can overcome these difficulties and, I am sure, learn something out of the experience.

I respectfully ask for your support for the next AGM Council Chair election.

Merci.
Regards,

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