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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALAC Statement on the Final Report Recommendations of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group

Introduction

Tijani Ben Jemaa, ALAC member of the African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO) and the ALAC Vice Chair, developed an initial draft of the ALAC Statement with assistance from Jean-Jacques Subrenat, member of the European Regional At-Large Organization (EURALO) and Narine Khachatryan, member of the Asian, Australian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO).

On 09 April 2016, the first draft of the Statement was posted on the [At-Large Final Report Recommendations of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group Workspace](#).

On 11 April 2016, Alan Greenberg, Chair of the ALAC, requested ICANN Policy Staff in support of the ALAC to send a Call for Comments on the Statement to all At-Large members via the [ALAC-Announce Mailing List](#).

On 18 April 2016, a version incorporating the comments received was posted on the aforementioned workspace and the Chair requested that Staff open an ALAC ratification vote on the proposed Statement.

On 23 April 2016, Staff confirmed that the online vote resulted in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 11 votes in favor, 0 vote against, and 0 abstention. You may view the result independently under: <https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=5526aJqMXfKKE9cdPXTW29LA>.

ALAC Statement on the Final Report Recommendations of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) appreciates the excellent work done by the Geographic Regions Review Working Group. The improvement this final report brings is appreciated.

The origin of the ICANN Geographic Regions was the need to ensure a geographic diversity within the ICANN Board. We strongly believe that the Geographic Regions review should address that very aspect to preserve and improve the geographic diversity in the ICANN Board composition.

The ALAC agrees that the general principle of geographic diversity is valuable and should be preserved and that its application must be more rigorous, clear and consistent.

One aspect of the rigorousness, the clarity and the consistency should be to define one single criterion for the identification of a person's region. Today, for the ICANN Board of Directors, it is a choice between citizenship (or origin) and residency. This non-rigorous approach may result in having a large number of the Board Directors residing and working for long time in the same region, thus having the same spirit and the same interests.

The ALAC supports ICANN formally adopting and maintaining its own record of the assignment of countries and territories to ICANN's Geographic Regions.

Nevertheless, the ALAC does not think that it is appropriate to approach the adjustment of the number of the ICANN Geographic Regions from the side of organizational or financial consequences since the mission of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group is to find the best arrangement that may lead to more diversity as per the ICANN bylaws. The number of regions should not curb the improvement when necessary.

While we recognize that reducing the current number of the ICANN Geographic Regions is neither a desired nor a viable option, we find that adding new regions may address some of the concerns raised by parts of the community regarding their representation (the Arab and small islands communities for example).

However, the ALAC agrees for the time being to leave the structure "as is", with countries and territories having the right to "opt in" for a change in Region if they so wish. The request should be initiated or supported by the local government of the relevant country or territory, taking into account the views of the local Internet community.

We also agree that in the sake of avoiding any interference in the relationship between the dependent countries or territories and their "mother countries", ICANN should give the opportunity to the dependent counties/territories to petition to move to a different ICANN Geographic Region. However, no territory re-assignment should be made if objections are raised by the Government of the "mother country".

The ALAC believes that no country/territory should be able to seek reassignment more frequently than once every 5 years, using the same cycle of the ICANN Geographic Regions Review.

We do not believe that the reassignment to a region that is not geographically adjacent to the existing region should be restricted. For example if a dependent country/territory wishes to be reassigned to the

region where it is physically situated but the region is not adjacent to the mother country's one, we do not understand why this kind of reassignment is not permitted.

The ALAC is in full support of recognizing and accommodating "Special Interest Groups" based on common specificities such as culture, language, etc., assuming that those "Special Interest Groups" do not replace the adopted geographic regions.

As for the implementation mechanisms, and in order to ensure a smooth 5 year review and a high quality of the process by which re-assignments are considered, the ALAC suggests that ICANN set up an Ombudsman for Global Issues (OGI), assisted by a handful of experts from various parts of the community. This small group would receive requests from governments, associations, groups or individuals wishing to avail themselves of the "opt in" or "opt out" scheme being considered. This OGI would report to the Board, bringing to their attention specific cases and proposing solutions. This would not, or very marginally, impact the role of the existing Ombudsman.

Finally, the ALAC believes that the Board should have the ultimate oversight over the ICANN Geographic Regions' framework including the 5 years review and reassignment process.