**Possible next steps in the review of the GNSO Liaison to the GAC Role**

The GNSO Liaison to the GAC concept was piloted by the GAC-GNSO Consultation Group as one of the improvements to facilitate GAC early engagement in GNSO policy development activities. The review of the pilot in February 2016 (see <https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/filefield_48725/review-liaison-gac-pilot-29feb16-en.pdf>) found that the original objective was still highly relevant, namely:

*The GNSO liaison to the GAC (hereafter “the Liaison”) will be primarily responsible for providing timely updates to the GAC on GNSO policy development activities in order to complement the existing notification processes as well answering questions in relation to these (GNSO) activities that GAC members may have. Furthermore, the Liaison will be responsible for providing the GNSO Council with regular updates on progress, including on GAC activities, specifically in so far as these relate to issues of interest to the GNSO. The objective of the liaison mechanism, in combination with some of the other mechanisms that the CG is exploring, as well as existing early engagement tools, will be to facilitate effective early engagement of the GAC as well as generally assist with flow of information between the GAC and the GNSO.*

The 2016 review also confirmed that “the liaison is invited to attend GNSO Council meetings and is considered an observer to the GNSO Council”. However, it has been recognized that although the responsibilities of the Liaison towards the GAC have been clearly spelled out, the responsibilities related to the Liaison’s GNSO Council observer role have not been specifically called out in the role description.

It is also worth recognizing that a lot has changed since 2016 with regards to the GAC’s participation and engagement in policy development efforts. For example, the GAC appointed GAC representatives to the EPDP on the Temporary Specification for gTLD registration data and Chairs of certain PDPs have been invited to present directly to GAC. Similarly, the role of the Liaison has evolved, partly as a result of the appointment of a point of contact on the GAC side to facilitate the flow of information.

Recognizing this evolution, combined with the responsibility of the Council to review the Liaison’s appointment on a yearly basis as well as recent Council conversations on this topic during ICANN71, Council leadership would propose the following next steps:

1. The GNSO Chair to reach out to the GAC Chair to seek input from the GAC side on the role and function of the Liaison. In this context, further consideration needs to be given whether a formal review and/or update to the role description is necessary and helpful, and if so, how this could be achieved (for example, both leadership teams with input from the Liaison as well as the GAC point of contact, could take on this task). As part of this conversation, the GNSO Chair would also share the recommended improvements that have been recently put forward by the Liaison with the Council for consideration (see [slides](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/162890199/v2%20GNSO%20GAC%20Relations.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1623940556000&api=v2)), noting that at this point these are recommendations from the Liaison that have not been fully considered nor endorsed by the Council.
2. Council leadership to develop proposed guidelines in relation to the Liaison’s participation and expected role when engaging with the Council and/or related activities. As this aspect of the Liaison role is solely focused on the engagement of the Liaison with the Council, this is not expected to be part of a possible review as referenced in 1).
3. Council to consider whether to postpone reconfirmation of the Liaison role while 1. and 2. are ongoing. The current Liaison would remain in his post until 1 and 2 are complete so that both the Council and the Liaison can make an informed decision, based on an updated role description, about possible reappointment or whether it will be necessary to launch a new call for volunteers.