

March 31, 2020

Dear Chair Maarten Botterman and Members of the ICANN Board:

We, the undersigned and long-standing members of the ICANN and Internet Community, wish to share with you that the Ethos Capital “engagement process” fell far short of anything resembling a genuine exchange or multistakeholder process.

- 1) Ethos Capital held several meetings on the web, largely one-way and largely non-interactive. They used much of the time to make statements of their good intent, leaving little time for answering questions. They were not open to active dialog in the meeting, but confined themselves to addressing a limited subset of the questions raised and which had been prescreened. The selection of questions addressed was not representative of the overall questions, but was clearly designed to reflect Ethos’ talking points and avoid substantive issues for which they did not have a pre-prepared response.

The webinars left concerned members of the .ORG community frustrated. They had, in good faith, prepared detailed and thoughtful questions and awaited real interaction. They spent their time in an effort to engage, but found that virtually none of their questions were read in a full way they had been written, nor were the answers clear or forthcoming. There was great frustration after these so-called interactive sessions.

- 2) Ethos then held an “engagement process” which bypasses any understanding we have of the term. First, the timing came at the most inconvenient time. Running from March 3 to 13, the short period ran in parallel with the ICANN67 virtual meeting. This meant that concerned members of the .ORG community were already engaged in double-duty: preparing/participating in the panoply of ICANN meetings and (being based at home) many continuing to be involved with daily work and families. Furthermore, this time period constitutes barely 8 working days. This is an absurdly short time to allow for a substantive response from the community concerned. That this time was insufficient is demonstrated by the remarkably low number of responses gathered in that time.

In the midst of this remarkably short “engagement process,” as you know, countries, cities, universities, schools, and many other facilities shut down at an increasing pace. Not to be deterred, Ethos Capital still ended its “engagement agreement” on time, Friday, March 13th – with barely 27 comments filed. In fact, what the deadline showed is that Ethos Capital does not understand that it is .ORG registrants who are the NGOs, non-profits and other organizations who are on the front lines of their community responses in times of crisis. Ethos does not seem to understand or care about the .ORG community.

Collectively, we have participated in over 90 years of ICANN and Internet multistakeholder processes. Ethos ran an “engagement process” that was poorly handled and not designed for real critique and interaction, but rather to “check a box.”

As Board members, you promised a real engagement; this one did not pass muster.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brandt Dainow, Chair ISOC Ireland

Kathryn A. Kleiman, American University Washington College of Law

Evan Leibovitch, Co-Founder, Internet Society Canada Chapter

George Sadowsky, Longstanding ICANN and ISOC Board member