

Dr. Steve Crocker,  
Chairman, ICANN Board  
By email [steve.crocker@icann.org](mailto:steve.crocker@icann.org)

18 July 2013

Dear Dr. Crocker,

**Letter to the ICANN Board on recent GAC advice**

The Brand Registry Group (BRG), which represents many new gTLD applicants, appreciates the key role governments play in the Community multi-stakeholder model, particularly in matters where ICANN's policies may interact with laws or international agreements.

However, we are concerned with the recent GAC advice around the issue of sovereign rights and geographic sensitivities. We believe that this advice exceeds what governments have chosen to do under international treaties covering trademarks and international trade.

GAC advice needs to be consistent with existing law and not create new rights, or take away existing rights, through ICANN. In this particular case, it is inconsistent to stand in the way of applications for top level domains that correspond to trademarked terms that consist of geographic terms, especially where the terms are well-established trademarks with numerous trademark registrations, many issued by GAC member countries.

If this advice is accepted by the Board it would set a precedent, allowing some countries to achieve limitations repeatedly rejected in major treaty and trade negotiations. We urge the Board to reject the GAC advice on geographic names that have not been granted protection under international treaty.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Sutton  
Interim President  
Brand Registry Group aisbl

The Brand Registry Group (BRG) is an independent membership organisation of future owners of a top-level domain name that matches their brand, a product or service. The BRG is registered as an international not-for-profit under Belgian law. It represents the members' common interests and offers a set of agreed services paid for from membership fees.