Open for Business 7 December 2005: yourname.eu!

The ".eu" top-level domain opens for business on 7 December 2005, bringing the benefits of the European single market into the age of eBusiness, providing new Internet space to European companies and citizens and promoting an EU internet identity.

What is a top-level domain name?

A domain name is a simple way for a computer or network to be identified on the Internet. Rather than having numerical addresses that are difficult to remember, Internet users prefer domain names.

Examples include 'europa.eu.int' (the home page of the European institutions' website) and the part following the '@' in any email address.

Top Level Domains (TLDs) are at the heart of the international Internet domain name system – they are the 'suffix' at the end of the domain name, and come in two basic categories:

- generic TLDs (gTLDs): not tied to any country, these include "**.com", ".org", ".net"** and **".int";**
- country code TLDs (ccTLDs) such as the German **".de"**, the French **".fr"** and the British **".uk"**.

What is .eu ?

The ".eu" TLD is a new Top Level Domain. It will not replace the existing national country code TLDs in the EU, but will complement them and give users the option of having a pan-European Internet identity for their 'internet presence' – generally web sites and e-mail addresses.

Any individual resident in the EU or any organization or company established in the EU will be able to register a name under the .eu TLD. European law and the jurisdiction of European courts will apply.

Why .eu?

The advantages of the .eu TLD are numerous for both industries and citizens.

European industries will ensure their visibility both within the competitive single market and beyond. They will also profit from greater certainty as to the law.

The .eu TLD will be particularly useful for organizations operating at a European level, such as companies taking advantage of the EU single market. Until now such companies either based their internet presence in one country or created web sites in each of the EU countries they operated in. The ".eu" TLD means one internet identity for the entire EU and one single set of rules.

European citizens will not only enjoy a special identity in cyberspace but will get the protection of European laws for their rights as consumers and individuals.

Can I pre-register for a .eu domain name ?

Names cannot be registered until the Registry has started to work, so pre-registration of names is not possible in the .eu Top Level Domain.

The Commission knows that some companies are already offering to "pre-register" or "reserve" domain names by offering to make registration applications to one of the accredited registrars as soon as the registration process formally begins.

These services are not illegal but cannot be considered exactly as "pre-registrations" since they do not grant any rights to the applicants.

Given a risk of confusion and even fraud, consumers and companies are encouraged to check exactly what is and what is not being offered.

How has .eu been created?

The first element of the necessary regulatory framework for the creation of the .eu TLD was the adoption of a Regulation on the implementation of the .eu Top Level domain (EC Regulation 733/2002, 22 April 2002). **This Regulation established that the new TLD should be managed and operated by a private, non-profit organization known as the .eu Registry.**

Following a call for expressions of interest, in May 2003 the Commission chose EURid - http://www.eurid.org, a consortium of Belgian, Italian and Swedish organizations, to be the .eu **Registry**.

This was followed by EC Regulation 874/2004 (28 April, 2004), which provides the public policy rules to deal with issues like speculative and abusive registrations of domain names, intellectual property and other rights, issues of language and geographical concepts, and the extra-judicial settlement of conflicts.

ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, responsible for managing the domain name system worldwide) and the Commission agreed on the creation of the .eu TLD prior to the Regulation being adopted. On 21 March 2005 ICANN officially recognized EURid, the body selected by the Commission, as the body appointed by the European Union to run the .eu TLD for the next five years and the .eu TLD was put in the root on 2 May 2005.

During the last few months further preparations have been done to allow the registration of .eu domain names. The Registry has accredited a number of **Registrars** – companies which have access to the automated systems of EURid and can register domains.

The Registry has also adopted a registration policy which provides all the administrative rules on how to register domain names. The registration policy, rules, terms and conditions and guidelines can all be found on the website of the Registry - http://www.eurid.eu/en/launch/index_html.

7 December 2005: Sunrise for .eu

The Registry has announced the launch of the Sunrise on 7 December 2005.

The so-called "sunrise period" will allow owners of "prior rights" (e.g. trademark holders and public bodies) to register their names as domain names before other eligible parties. To ensure that applications filed during the sunrise period are indeed supported by a prior right, a validation procedure has been established. The validation agent will check all the applications filed during this period to ensure their compliance with the sunrise rules.

The purpose of the "sunrise period" is to avoid so-called "cybersquatting" – where an organisation or individual finds that someone else has registered their trademark, company, personal or other name as a domain name, and then tries to sell it to the rightholder for a profit.

In phase 1 (starting Wednesday 7 December 2005 until Monday 6 February 2006) only public bodies and the holders of registered trademarks can apply for registration.

In phase 2 (7 February until 6 April 2006) claims may also come from the holders of other prior rights, such as company names and artistic names.

In phase 3 (starting 7 April 2006) registration will be open to all, and requests for an .eu domain name no longer need the backup of a legal right.

How to apply for a .eu domain name!

Applications, during sunrise and after, have to be made through one of the accredited registrars. The list can be found in the web site of the Registry - http://list.eurid.eu/registrars/ListRegistrars.htm?lang=en .

Further Information

- **Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal**
  http://europa.eu.int/information_society/
- **Information Society and Media Directorate-General:**
  Av. de Beaulieu 24, 1160 Brussels
  infso-desk@cec.eu.int
  http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/information_society/index_en.htm