

.EU Domain Names

Pre-registration for the <.EU> top level domain name for those with European Country or Community Trademark Registrations began December 7, 2005. The European Union now comprises 25 countries in both Western and Eastern Europe. The <.EU> domain is expected to have the most significant commercial impact of any new domain name since <.COM> became popular in the late 1990s.

Trademark owners having their registered office, central administration or principal place of business, and organizations established in, or individuals residing in, one of the European Union countries, are able to pre-register <.EU> domain names beginning December 7, 2005. It is important to note that companies having an EU community trademark but where the company is based outside of the EU, cannot register a <.EU> domain name, according to EC Regulation No. 733/2002. Nevertheless, non-European owners of European registered trademarks may license to European entities or individuals the right to register a .EU domain name on their behalf.

Eligible companies doing or planning to do business in Europe should give serious consideration to registering at least the company name as a <.EU> domain name. Important brands should also be considered for registration.

The first pre-registration stage, consisting of two months, is reserved for European owners or licensees of trademarks which are registered in either a European individual country or Benelux, or as a Community trademark. The second two-month phase of the pre-registration process is to begin in February 2006, and broadens the category of those who may register to European owners of unregistered European trademarks and company names.

The Sunrise process itself is first-come, first-served. Therefore, the order in which the applications are received will be taken into account in cases where more than one business or individual claims the same domain name. A trademark owner has 40 days after submitting its .EU domain name application in which to document proof of prior rights. The technical requirements for the initial submissions, as well as for the supporting documentation, are stringent.

EURid offers FAQs and other background information on its website at www.eurid.eu. Numerous accredited domain name registrars are able offering to process these registrations.