

Brussels, 10 December 2009

".eu" internet domain now available in all EU languages

From today, European citizens, businesses and organisations can register .eu website names using characters from all 23 official languages of the European Union. This means that registrants, for example, can use Greek or Cyrillic names like www.διαδίκτυο.eu or www.поумиџ.eu. This was made possible thanks to new EU rules adopted by the Commission in June 2009 ([IP/09/1044](#)).

"Internationalised Domain Names under .eu, our European Top Level Domain, are a big step towards a truly global and at the same time local internet. Many internet users will come from countries where most languages are not based on the 'a to z' Latin script and they will naturally want to use their own scripts," said Viviane Reding, the EU's Information Society Commissioner. "The launch of international domain names under .eu will respond even better to the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe."

Internationalised Domain Names (IDN) are internet domain names that contain other characters in addition to the 26 characters of the Latin alphabet "a" to "z", digits "0" to "9" and "-". Until today, those registering domain names under .eu could only use this limited set of characters but now a whole range of different characters used in the various official languages of the EU can be registered.

The Commission decided that the European top level domain .eu should offer characters from all official EU languages ([IP/09/1044](#)). IDNs are a way to allow this. It will now be possible to register names using characters like "à", "ą", "ä", "ψ" or "д" under ".eu". EU citizens, businesses and organisations will be able to register domain names in non-Latin scripts, which is essential for languages such as Greek and Bulgarian. Also, Spanish and Basque speakers can register names with "ñ" while French, Portuguese and Catalan speakers can use "ç".

Multilingualism has been a very important aspect of .eu since registrations opened in 2006. The legal framework foresees for example that registration of .eu domain names and communication of decisions concerning registration should be possible in all official languages of the Community. It also provides for the registration of domain names in all the alphabetic characters of the official languages.

Next steps

From today onwards, names under the .eu Top Level Domain (TLD) will benefit from IDN. For example, in europa.eu ".eu" is the top level domain, whilst "europa" is the name registered under this TLD.

The Commission is also working towards introducing internationalised domain name variants at the top level for .eu (e.g. "eu" in Greek or Cyrillic characters) as soon as possible. Commissioner Reding informed the CEO of [ICANN](#) (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), Rod Beckstrom about the Commission's plans at the Internet Governance Forum in November ([IP/09/1717](#)). When ICANN approves international domain names at the Top Level for .eu, EU registrants will be able to register a whole web address in their own script (e.g. both "europa" and ".eu").

Background

.eu is Europe's top level domain, set up by the EU but operated by the private non-profit organisation, [EURid](#). This consortium of Belgium, Czech, Italian, Swedish and Slovenian registries has started .eu operations in 2005.

To date there are more than 3 million .eu domain names ([IP/09/536](#)).

For more information

[MEMO/08/218](#)

Annex

Ten largest top level domains by number of registered domain names (as of 30 September 2009)

| TLD | Number of registered domains |
|---------|------------------------------|
| .com | 82 467 859 |
| .de | 13 077 091 |
| .cn | 12 545 589 |
| .net | 12 477 730 |
| .org | 7 840 201 |
| .uk | 7 826 095 |
| .info | 5 282 857 |
| .nl | 3 523 290 |
| .eu (*) | 2 991 205 |
| .biz | 2 370 874 |

Source: EURid

Number of .eu domains by country (as of 30 September 2009)

| Country | Number of .eu domains |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Austria | 76 846 |
| Belgium | 91 334 |
| Bulgaria | 10 420 |
| Cyprus | 52 795 |
| Czech Republic | 87 382 |
| Denmark | 38 166 |
| Estonia | 8 146 |
| Finland | 15 389 |
| France | 267 678 |
| Germany | 922 344 |
| Greece | 26 231 |
| Hungary | 29 822 |
| Ireland | 50 311 |
| Italy | 164 049 |
| Latvia | 5 599 |
| Lithuania | 9 499 |
| Luxembourg | 26 929 |
| Malta | 3 759 |
| Netherlands | 417 892 |
| Poland | 163 465 |
| Portugal | 11 986 |
| Romania | 20 003 |
| Slovakia | 19 849 |
| Slovenia | 6 605 |
| Spain | 71 529 |
| Sweden | 75 452 |
| United Kingdom | 309 766 |

Source: EURid

Growth of .eu domains 2007-2009 by country of residence of registrants

| Country | Growth of .eu domains 2007-2009* |
|----------------|---|
| Austria | + 17 % |
| Belgium | + 9 % |
| Bulgaria | + 87 % |
| Cyprus | - 42 % |
| Czech Republic | + 49 % |
| Denmark | - 8 % |
| Estonia | + 35 % |
| Finland | + 20 % |
| France | + 39 % |
| Germany | + 7 % |
| Greece | + 28 % |
| Hungary | + 36 % |
| Ireland | + 82 % |
| Italy | + 20 % |
| Latvia | - 23 % |
| Lithuania | + 73 % |
| Luxembourg | + 87 % |
| Malta | - 81 % |
| Netherlands | + 15 % |
| Poland | + 60 % |
| Portugal | + 9 % |
| Romania | + 41% |
| Slovakia | + 56 % |
| Slovenia | + 44 % |
| Spain | + 17 % |
| Sweden | - 21 % |
| United Kingdom | - 18 % |
| EU | + 10 % |

*from 31.12.2007 to 30.09.2009.
Source: EURid