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EURO-AMERICAN LAWYERS GROUP

UK: ENGLAND

THE RUSH FOR NEW DOMAIN NAMES: ARE YOU READY FOR DOT EU?

*A EURO-AMERICAN LAWYERS GROUP BRIEFING ARTICLE
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December 2005 sees the beginning of the registration process for the new .eu domain names. The programme is operated under the auspices of the European Registry of Internet Domain Names, “EURid”, by means of locally accredited registrars in each member state. A priority “sunrise” period for applications commences on 7th December and closes on 6th April 2006 after which it will be a free for all.

Public bodies and owners of registered trade marks have first priority for registration from 7th December to 6th February 2006. Then, the owners of unregistered trademarks, brand names and company names have priority from 7th February to 6th April. During each of these periods domain names will be allocated strictly on a basis of first to apply even within those priority groups.

If you have registered your company name or any of your brands as a trade mark it is essential that you act as soon as possible to take advantage of the priority “sunrise” period. The majority of businesses may not own registered trade marks but it is equally important that they take advantage of the second stage of priority

This process of phased registration seeks to prevent cyber-squatting by people registering domain names corresponding to valuable brands and company names but there is still a risk that owners of UK or Community trade marks could be beaten to the punch by owners of the same trade mark, registered for different goods or services or registered in another member state. The risk of losing the race is even greater for owners of unregistered trade marks, brand names and company names.

It is, therefore, essential to make your application as soon as possible whichever class of applicant you may fall in. And don’t forget that it is just as important to register in order to prevent your company or brand name falling into the hands of someone else, even if you want to continue using your existing domain name for the foreseeable future and have no immediate plans to use a new one.



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Costs of application are modest and vary between accredited registrars depending on the services offered. Following registration, ownership can continue indefinitely and there is an annual renewal fee. In the event of an unsuccessful registration part of the application fee is returnable. remain in employment longer.

For additional details, please contact Robert Stoker, Partner, Ricksons Solicitors, Manchester, Preston, Leeds, England; robert.stoker@ricksons.co.uk; <http://www.ricksons.co.uk>.

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