

**‘.ch’ leads the way in the battle against fraud
International - Hogan Lovells**

**Counterfeiting
Domain names**

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- **SWITCH recently published article on counterfeit goods and fraudulent websites hosted under ‘.ch’ ccTLD**
- **SWITCH has intensified its cooperation with fedpol**
- **If a domain name owner does not provide valid contact details within 30 days of request, SWITCH deletes domain name**

In Switzerland, SWITCH Information Technology Services is the registry responsible for the ‘.ch’ country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD). It recently published an article on counterfeit goods and fraudulent websites hosted under the ‘.ch’ ccTLD and the measures being implemented to bring a halt to such practices.

When shopping online, if a price seems too good to be true, then it almost always is. However, there are many online consumers who let temptation get the better of them resulting in the purchase of counterfeit goods, goods of inferior quality, or no goods at all. Fraudulent websites also expose consumers to credit card fraud, the theft of personal information and damage the reputation of brand owners by providing inferior, and sometimes dangerous, counterfeit goods.

In order to better protect Internet users against threats when visiting ‘.ch’ websites, SWITCH has intensified its cooperation with the Federal Office of Police (fedpol) and other Swiss authorities and has automated the procedures for assisting these authorities. As part of the domain name registration procedure, registrants are usually required to provide accurate contact information. However, this is not always the case and with fraudulent websites the contact information is rarely accurate. Moreover, owners of such domain names are often located abroad, resulting in long and complicated legal procedures if action is taken against them.

When the Swiss authorities suspect criminal activity they instruct SWITCH to act in accordance with Article 16 of the *Ordonnance sur les Domaines Internet*, whereby SWITCH requests that the domain name owner provide valid contact details within 30 days. If a registrant does not comply, SWITCH will delete the domain name making the website inaccessible. In 2016, the Swiss authorities requested that SWITCH contact 737 domain name owners to provide valid contact address information – only 37 complied, resulting in 700 domain names being deleted. By August 2017, SWITCH had sent more than 5,000 validation requests.

Michael Hausding, a domain name security expert and member of the 14-person SWITCH-CERT team of security experts stated that:

“Thanks to close cooperation with the authorities and improved processes, our targeted campaign allowed us to remove 4,500 fraudulent .ch online shops in August 2017 alone.”

He went on to add that:

“The fraudsters running these shops were attempting to steal money from internet users or gain access to their credit card information. By taking this approach, we are one step ahead of other domain endings, such as .com. We want internet users in Switzerland to continue to rely on a high level of security and trustworthiness of .ch web addresses.”

David Taylor and Sean Kelly, Hogan Lovells, Paris

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