

# World Trademark Review *Daily*

**'.it' registry launches IDNs and extends eligibility zone  
Italy - Hogan Lovells International LLP**

**Domain names**

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The Italian registry, [Registro.it](http://Registro.it), has announced two forthcoming changes to the registration rules as of July 11 2012 - namely, the extension of the eligibility zone for '.it' domain names to six new European countries, and the introduction of internationalised domain names (IDNs).

Under the current registration rules, in order to be eligible to register a '.it' domain name, applicants must be based in one of the 27 member states of the European Union. From July 11 2012, the eligibility zone will be expanded to the European Economic Area, enabling entities based in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to apply for '.it' domain names. In addition to this, entities based in the Vatican, the Republic of San Marino and Switzerland will also be allowed to register '.it' domain names.

Registro.it will also allow the registration of Italian IDNs on this date. IDNs are domain names that contain characters with diacritics, such as accents (eg, 'é'), cedillas (eg, 'ç') and ogoneks (eg, 'ą'). IDNs are already available under a growing number of top-level domains, such as '.com', '.de' (Germany), '.es' (Spain), '.eu' (European Union), '.co' (Colombia) and, [more recently](#), '.fr'.

On July 11 Registro.it will introduce the following 21 additional characters:

- à, â, ä, æ
- ç
- è, é, ê, ë
- ì, î, ï
- ò, ô, ö, oe
- ù, ú, ü
- ÿ
- ß

Information is limited on the organisation of the IDN launch, but it appears that there will not be a sunrise period for trademark holders to protect their marks. Neither does it appear that there will be a grandfathering period to enable registrants of existing '.it' domain names to register corresponding IDNs, as is currently the case for French IDNs (the grandfathering period for French IDNs has been running since May 3 and the general opening will begin on July 3).

It therefore seems that Italian IDNs will be available for registration to all entities based in the eligibility zone on a first-come, first-served basis. This will most likely lead to cases where the registrant of a '.it' domain name does not hold the corresponding '.it' IDN due to a third party registering it first. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that brand owners secure the Italian IDNs corresponding to their brands as soon as possible.

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