

# World Trademark Review Daily

Norwegians say yes to '.no'

Domain names

Norway - Hogan Lovells International LLP

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Norid, the Norwegian registry for '.no' domain names, the country-code top-level domain (ccTLD) for Norway, has announced that Norwegian individuals will be able to register '.no' domain names.

In 2013 Norpol (the policy advisory board for '.no' domains) recommended that '.no' should be available to everyone in Norway. Historically, only Norwegian-registered businesses and organisations were eligible to register '.no' domain names, while private individuals were restricted to registering domain names under the '.priv.no' domain name extension. So, for example, an individual named Emma Hansen was able to register 'emmahansen.priv.no', but not 'emmahansen.no' directly under '.no'. Thus the primary question posed by Norid was whether private individuals should continue to be restricted to registering only under '.priv.no' or whether the '.no' ccTLD should also be open and made available to individuals. According to Norid, approximately 500 individuals and organisations provided their opinions on the question of making '.no' available to individuals, with a "clear majority" supporting Norpol's view. Norid has in turn taken this mandate on board and will make '.no' domain names available to individuals from June 17 2014.

There will be no priority period for '.no' domain name registrations when they are made available to individuals, so simply any Norwegian individual will be able to submit an application for a '.no' domain name. However, where Norid receives more than one application for the same domain name it will 'draw lots' to decide which applicant will be granted the domain name. Norid has, understandably, stipulated that the '.no' domain name being registered must not contravene Norwegian law or be in violation of any third party's rights. Any aggrieved parties will be able to file a complaint with the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee for domain names, although successful complaints will need to prove that they have rights, and, as underlined on Norid's website, it is "not obvious" who has the strongest right to a personal name. Thus 'emmahansen.no' will likely just be granted to the first individual of that name to apply, and any further Emma Hansens will simply be disappointed.

Hege Ossletten, the acting managing director of Norid, has been quoted as saying: "A Norwegian domain name is stable and among the most secure in the world. We are very pleased to extend this service to private individuals."

This latest decision to allow Norwegian individuals to register '.no' domain names seems to be another step by Norid to make '.no' domains more widely available. Up to November 2011, for example, an organisation could register and hold only a maximum of 20 '.no' domain names. This restriction was then changed, allowing one entity to register a maximum of 100 '.no' domain names. Similarly, whilst individuals registering domain names under '.priv.no' had to be resident in Norway, this requirement has been dropped for individual registrants of '.no' domain names, although they still have to supply a Norwegian postal address and be registered in the National Registry (*Folkeregisteret*) with a Norwegian national identity number (*fødselsnummer*). Presumably, this change will allow Norwegian nationals living outside of Norway to obtain a domain name directly under '.no'.

Only time will tell whether the recent decision to allow individuals to register '.no' domains will eventually lead to the restrictions for '.no' domain names being further relaxed so that they are available to any individuals, regardless of nationality.

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