

SWITCH in management for '.ch' domain names Switzerland - Hogan Lovells LLP

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The SWITCH Foundation, the organisation responsible for operating the '.ch' country-code top-level domain for Switzerland, has announced that, as of January 1 2015, it will no longer be directly handling the registration and management of '.ch' domain names.

SWITCH will be handing over the role of '.ch' domain name registrations and management to accredited registrars. As a result, SWITCH will gradually ask registrants of the 1,200,000 registered '.ch' domain names to transfer their '.ch' domain names to a registrar of their choice.

In order to manage this transition smoothly, registrants of '.ch' domain names will receive letters from SWITCH three months before their domain name is due for renewal, prompting them to transfer their '.ch' domain name to a new registrar.

SWITCH has indicated that the first round of transfer letters will be sent to registrants in mid-January 2015 and these will be in relation to domain names due for renewal at the end of April 2015. The next round of transfer letters will be sent in mid-February 2015 to registrants of domain names due for renewal at the end of May 2015. There will be a total 12 rounds of letters to be sent out to registrants, with SWITCH anticipating that the final letters will be sent to registrants in mid-December 2015. Registrants do not need to take any action with regard to their '.ch' domain names until they are prompted to do so by SWITCH. However, registrants can decide to transfer their '.ch' domain name away from SWITCH and to a new registrar before receiving a letter from SWITCH.

As SWITCH relinquishes its registration and management role for '.ch' domains, it will instead focus on "regulated registry activities". This will, according to SWITCH, allow the organisation to concentrate on the management of the DNS (Domain Name System) infrastructure for the '.ch' domain name space, as well as continue its work for Swiss universities, which it has been doing for some 25 years.

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