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Slow take up for new Registrar Accreditation Agreement International - Hogan Lovells LLP

gTLDs

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Since the new [Registrar Accreditation Agreement](#) (RAA) was approved by ICANN on June 27 2013, there has been [resistance from registrars](#) to signing up to it. A small group of registrars initially signed up to the RAA at the ICANN meeting in Durban in July but, since then, uptake has been slow, with only around 20 registrars in total signing up so far. As signing the new RAA is obligatory for registrars dealing with new gTLDs, it is becoming increasingly urgent for ICANN to bring the registrar community on board and it has been attempting to do so recently by holding outreach sessions.

The two-year negotiations process for the new RAA was fraught with tension, notably in the run up to approval of the agreement in June 2013 when the race was on for ICANN to get it approved so as not to delay the release of the first new gTLDs.

Registrar concerns about the new RAA have centered on obligations to retain registrant data (including such things as credit card details) for a period of up to two years after the termination of a contract with a domain name holder as well as new duties relating to the verification of registrant contact data. These concerns have notably been voiced by European groups such as the [Article 29 Working Party](#), a body made up of privacy regulators from the 27 EU nations, and arise from requirements under European data protection law that are at odds with some of the new requirements.

Now that the RAA has been approved, ICANN has been busily trying to allay registrar concerns as well as persuade more registrars to sign up by holding [outreach sessions](#) in Los Angeles, United States, and Xiamen, China. These sessions are designed to "help registrars understand their new obligations and discuss needs required for compliance with the new agreement" and they are the first of four such rounds to be held worldwide.

With the first new gTLDs expected to be delegated in late 2013, it remains to be seen whether ICANN is doing enough to both raise awareness among registrars worldwide about the new RAA and the obligations it entails as well as to alleviate the concerns of registrars regarding these obligations. The situation will no doubt come to a head as the first new gTLDs are launched later this year.

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