CUCACIÓN OF THE OF THE

Front Page

2023: upward growth trend for .it names

.it News

News, events, projects and numbers about the Registro .it

From the World

News from the world of ccTLD and the Network







04. Editorial Quarter in short





10. Statistics The statistics of Registro .it



18. .it News

News, events, projects and numbers about the Registro .it



26. From the World

News from the world of ccTLD and the Network



34. Events

Upcoming events from the digital world



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HEAD OF REGISTRO .IT

Marco Conti

Quarter in short

Welcome 2023: will this be the year of the 3.5 million .it names?

by Francesca Nicolini

We do not know for sure when it will happen, but 2023 could lead us toward an important goal: 3.5 million .it names.

A story coming from afar that of .it, from 23 December 1987 (the date of registration of the first domain name, cnuce.cnr.it), until today: an unstoppable growth, marked by "accelerations" at the time of the .it name boom - on the threshold of the 2000s - and by "slowdowns" due to the economic crisis over the years, which has united many country code Top Level Domains and, recently, the flick of the tail of the pandemic.

Enjoy the reading!

Registro .it concluded the cycle of the new edition of What a Digital World with an episode on neuromorphic computing, hardware and software attempting to duplicate the human brain and the network of neurons that characterize our brain area. All episodes, from the first and second editions are available on the Registro .it website.

The Ludoteca project by Registro .it continues promoting the Internet culture among the younger generation, participating in events such as Didacta and Earth Italy; and moving down the road of digital education with the "Super Cyber Kids" project, funded by the Erasmus+ program, which aims to design new teaching methods and tools to teach cybersecurity in schools.

Lots of news coming from the world of the Net, and in particular from the ICANN and CENTR: from the former, new insights come on the Report of Internationalized Domain Names (IDN) 2022 and on "Infermal", ICANN's new project that aims to identify, right from the request of applicants, malicious domain names and counter them with possible measures to mitigate the damage in TLDs (Top Level Domain); from the latter, insights on the protection of Geographical Indication (GI) trademarks in the food sector, a topic that affects, consequently, domain names as well.

In this first four-month period of the year, numbers in hand, the trend of registration of new .it domains (0.71%) turns out to be slightly more than double, compared to the same examination period last year (0.34%), and still greater than the increase recorded in the whole of 2022, which ended with a growth rate of 0.50%. The increase in new registrations at the beginning of the year positively marks this first four-month period and bodes well for the numbers in the coming months and the achievement of the coveted goal of 3million and 500 thousand .it names.

2023: upward growth trend for .it names

by Stefania Fabbri and Maurizio Martinelli



The first four months of 2023 saw the number of registered .it names increase by 0.71 percent, a slightly upward trend from the last year, which ended with an increase of 0.50 percent.

Reviewing data and analysis carried out by industry experts (Global Domain Report 2023, CENTRstats Global TLD Report 2022/4), the domain market in 2022 was affected, at the European level and, to a lesser extent at the global level, by various factors that negatively marked its performance: the exit from the pandemic period, the war in Ukraine, and, the consequent increase in energy prices and inflation in several countries, certainly resulted in fewer investments in digital spending.

At the end of 2022, there were 349.9 million registered domains globally, down 4 percent from 2021, a figure that confirms the end of the digital boom that occurred during the pandemic period due to the increased use of online services. European country code Top Level Domains (CCTLDs) have experienced lower growth rates than in the past, an average of only 1.4 percent more, the lowest in the past 10 years, although for most of them the level of renewals (average rate 84.3 percent) still remained very high, thus preserving their domestic market shares.



Top 20 ccTLDs change YoY in % 10

Source: Global Domain Report 2023

By examining the ranking of the 20 most popular CCTLDs worldwide, the .it one ranks 16th, while in the Top 10 by registered domain names, Italian domains take the 6th place, preceded by Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France and the European Union. In addition, .it domains also appear in the 10th place in the "Majestic Million" list, a metric used to assess the popularity and, consequently, also the value of domain names, confirming the notoriety of the Italian Internet extension in search engines.

Top 10 ccTLDs

	TLD	Country	Registered domains in M	Changes to 2021	Registered domains per 100.000 inhabitants
1	.de		17.42*	+ 1.2% 20,939	
2	.uk		9.72*	+ 0.2%	14,442
3	.nl		6.28*	+ 0.6%	35,846
4	.fr		4.00*	+ 4.0%	5,904
5	.eu		3.70*	- 0.9%	828
6	.it		3.46*	+ 0.5%	5,867
7	.ch	+	2.52*	+ 1.8%	28,981
8	.pl		2.50*	- 1.2%	6,646
9	.es		2.00*	+ 0.8%	4,222
10	.be		1.74*	+ 0.3%	15,039
		Sou	rce: CENTRstats G	lobal TI D Pape	ort 2022/1

Source: CENTRstats Global TLD Report 2022/4

Top 10 ccTLDs count in Majestic Million



Source: Global Domain Report 2023

Finally, according to some studies and market analyses, 2023 is expected to be the year when the "domain market" will confirm a return to pre-pandemic values. What is certain is that the future will still see domain names as protagonists: in an increasingly digital world, the choice of a domain name that is easily traceable, intuitive, appealing from a marketing point of view and that identifies the company or product, represents a "must" for anyone who has a business, wants to grow and expand their market on the Web, contributing to the Internet economy, the growth of Made in Italy and the economic development of Italy.

Statistics

89.090

70.501

Yearly growth 12.678

89.090

70.501

Monthly Trend of the Oppositions

Growth of the New Registrations

Authinfo requests

Reserved names

Reasons for oppositions Top Regions Entity Types

Oppositions - Reassignements relationship

Yearly trend of the Oppositions - Reassignements

Requests from competent authorities

Verification of domains by The Registro



Yearly growth

Growth of the New Registrations

The analysis of .it name registration trends shows, overall, that new registrations (over 176,000) are higher in number, compared to the same four-month period last year.

The total difference between the number of new registrations and cancellations, during the first four months of 2023, is almost 25,000 domains, compared to almost 12,000 in the same four months of 2022.

This comparison is useful in defining the registration trend, which shows that we are seeing an increase in new domains and a decrease in cancellations.



Top Regions

In the first four months, Lombardy's share of new registrations increased by one point to 21%, compared to the same period last year. Lazio, although confirmed in second place, lost two percentage points to 11%. Campania also loses a percentage point, gaining 8%, while the percentages of Piedmont, Veneto, and Emilia Romagna remain unchanged, compared to early 2022



Entity Types

Compared to the first four months of 2022, the percentage of new .it domains related to individuals increases by three points to 51%. The percentage relating to freelancers also increased by as much as four points, to the detriment, however, of businesses, which lost five percentage points, settling at 31%



At the end of the first four months of 2023, the total number of .it domains amounted to

(0.34%, compared to the end of 2021), is slightly more than double that of 2022

3,492,434 with growth of only 0.71% (+24,741 domains), compared to the end of 2022. This

growth rate, however, when compared with that of the first four months of the previous year



					33080	
17683						
1/003						
000	21000	24000	27000	30000	33000	



Natural persons Companies Freelancers Others

Reasons for oppositions

In this first four-month period of 2023, the grounds on which opposition procedures were initiated mainly related to infringement of the company's distinctive signs, and the figure stood at 87%. The remaining 13% is distributed as follows: 5% was requested for the purpose of name/surname protection, while 8% falls under "miscellaneous" reasons. The trend follows what already happened in 2022, when oppositions activated as a result of infringement of the company's distinctive signs totaled 86%, compared to 87% in the current year



Oppositions - Reassignements relationship

At the beginning of the year, there are 87 oppositions and 9 reassignments. Of the 87 opposition procedures, as many as 59 involved Italian subjects, in the dual capacity of assignee and opponent. In 21 cases, Italian parties followed the opposition procedure against foreign assignees.

There are 4 procedures in which the facing parties, assignee/opponent, are foreigners.

Finally, there are 3 foreign parties that have submitted to opposition as many domain names assigned to Italian parties. Of the 9 reassignment procedures, 4 are those involving Italian subjects, either as respondent/assignee or complainant/ opponent, and in one of these cases the reassignment procedure relates to 3 domain names. There are 2, on the other hand, reassignments where both parties facing each other are foreigners, and again one procedure is about whether or not to reassign three domain names. Finally, there are 2 reassignment procedures related to domain names that have a foreign party and an Italian complainant/opponent as assignee/respondent. Only one case involved a foreign subject as complainant and an Italian party as respondent



Monthly Trend of the Oppositions

The number of oppositions during the period examined is 87, for a monthly average of 22 activation procedures. January saw the lowest number of activated oppositions (17), below average, while the highest number of activation procedures (28) occurred in March. It can be seen, therefore, that the trend over the period is nonlinear, and a steady increase in activation procedures until March is then followed by a decline in April



Yearly trend of the Oppositions - Reassignements

In the observation period from 2016 to the first quarter of 2023, 2 periods can be observed. A first period, from 2016 to 2018, where the opposition procedures activated in the first four months of the year exceeded one hundred, namely 114 in 2016, 125 in 2017, and 127 in 2018. A second period, from 2019 to 2023, where, again in the first four months of the year, activated opposition procedures decreased, but have a rather constant trend and amounted to 88 in 2019, 86 in 2020, 91 in 2021, 72 in 2022, the lowest figure in the period, and 87 in this year. In contrast, there are 9 reassignment procedures activated in this quarter of 2023.

Specifically, the College, in 5 cases, upheld the appeal filed by the opponent/complainant, 350 ruling in its favour the 300 transfer of the domain name. In addition, the Board 250 decreed the termination of the procedure in one case. 200 Finally, there are 3 procedures 150 pending the ruling by the College 100 50



Authinfo requests

In the first four months of 2023, 26 authinfo codes were issued for domain names under the no-registrar status due to the termination of 4 Registrar contracts

Verification of domains by Registro

97 verifications were conducted involving 108 domain names. These led to the revocation of 92 domain names



Requests from competent authorities

The requests by Competent Authorities (13) concerned 13 domain names



Reserved names

31 domain names of Italian municipalities have been registered





it News

Neuromorphic computing: is it the future of artificial intelligence?

Ludoteca by Registro .it guest at Didacta and Earth Day

The Erasmus+ Super Cyber Kids project

Pseudonymisation and anonymisation: the rapprochement of the dichotomy after the European Court ruling issued on 26 April 2023



Neuromorphic computing: is it the future of artificial intelligence?

by Stefania Fabbri



What a Digital World was created to explain complex issues animating the Net world in a simple and entertaining way. In the second series, we took a journey into the digital world to understand what 5G, smartphone security, the Dark Web, Big Data and quantum computers are and how they work, and the series concludes by devoting the last episode to neuromorphic computing, or neuromorphic computation, a challenge that focuses on the development of hardware and software duplicating the structure and functions of the human brain and its network of neurons.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is a topical issue, at the centre of a debate that stems from an assessment of the risk-benefit ratio it can bring to our society, but what does the future hold? Will we really have machines reasoning more and more like our brains?



Big Data, Deep Learning, and ever-expanding neural networks emphasise the limitations of current standards, and to overcome them researchers are following different paths, such as quantum computers or the creation of another type of framework, combining computer science and neuroscience: neuromorphic computing.

It all begins with the so-called von Neumann machine architecture, a structure consisting of a memory that stores information, a processing unit that processes it, and a control unit with instructions for the other two. The operation of these elements produces the outputs of the AI. The natural evolution of this functioning is the development of hardware and software imitating the structures and functions of the human brain and its network of neurons.

The main advantage would be to enable machines to create associative networks among information to respond to unknown situations, e.g., in the future AI could use imagination to learn and solve problems. Image recognition, autonomous driving, and natural language processing are just some of the areas explored, giant leaps forward that will propel us into an undiscovered and increasingly technological future.

The digital series "What a Digital World", in competition at the International Festival of Social Cinema "Black Silk Tulips", scheduled 4-7 May at The Space "Cinema Moderno" in Rome and organised by the "L'Università Cerca Lavoro" Association, was a finalist in the "Digital Series" category.

All episodes are available on the website and on the social channels of Registro .it

Quarter



Ludoteca by Registro .it guest at Didacta and Earth Day

by Giorgia Bassi

Innovation in the world of education and training is once again the protagonist at Didacta this year. The fair, scheduled to be held in Florence from 8 to 10 March, is designed as a space for organisations, associations and companies in the field to discuss multiple issues related to education.

In this context, wide space was also given to digital education and, therefore, Ludoteca could not be absent, participating with two seminars for teachers (scheduled for 10 March), entitled "Digital Education and Cybersecurity for Primary Schools" and "Ludoteca by Registro .it: cybersecurity workshops for secondary schools".

The first meeting focused on the presentation of the "At School for Cybersecurity" manifesto, a decalogue on cybersecurity for use in the classroom. The meeting for secondary school teachers, on the other hand, was an opportunity to show them the training offerings dedicated to cybersecurity, with a focus on some of the tools and educational content used to convey specific skills and best practices to children.

Ludoteca of the Registro .it also took part in the sixth edition of "Il Villaggio per la Terra" (The Village for Earth) event (Rome, 21-25 April), a format created by Earth Day Italia, whose purpose is to promote environmental and civic awareness based above all on sustainable development, with reference also to the responsible use of all digital resources and opportunities. Ludoteca, one of the CNR projects at the event, which has been designing activities related to digital education for more than a decade, offered an educational workshop to introduce visitors, aged between 8 to12, to some computer basics, and pass on to them rules of behaviour for safe browsing.

The Erasmus + Super Cyber Kids project

by Giorgia Bassi

European project "Super Cyber Kids", funded by the Erasmus+ programme and aimed at creating teaching tools and methodologies to teach cybersecurity in the classroom, has kicked off. Officially marking the start of the working group's activities was a kick-off meeting held in Palermo last February and organised by the CNR Institute for Educational Technology (CNR-ITD) in the Sicilian administrative centre.

CNR is leading the project, with the Institute of Informatics and Telematics of Pisa (CNR-IIT), represented by the Ludoteca of the Registro .it team, which has many years of experience in the field of cybersecurity education, and with the Institute for Educational Technology of Genoa and Palermo in the role of coordinator. "Super Cyber Kids" also sees the involvement of various public and private entities: Grifo Multimedia (Italy), Universität Mannheim (Germany), Tallinn University (Estonia), ECSO - European Cyber Security Organisation (Belgium), ESHA - European School Heads Association (Netherlands), CGI Eesti AS (Estonia) and Avanzi srl (Italy). The participation of Ludoteca will be crucial as early as the first work packages (the project will have a total duration of 36 months), dedicated to the exploration of other international cybersecurity education initiatives, and will then continue with a phase of analysis of the skills detected, also applied to the video game "Nabbovaldo e il ricatto dal cyberspazio" (Nabbovaldo and the cyber blackmail) created by Ludoteca, with which it has contributed, in the past years, to spread cybersecurity in schools.



Pseudonymisation and anonymisation: the rapprochement of the dichotomy after the European Court ruling issued on 26 April 2023

by Valentina Amenta, Rosaria Deluca, Luca Albertario, Sonia Sbrana and Daniele Pancrazi

Ever since the European Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force, the debate of the difference between anonymisation and pseudonymisation has become - gradually - more and more heated, given the thin line between these two terms. The discussion revolves around a complicated question: when and under what conditions can pseudonymised data be considered anonymised data?

From a first reading of Article 4 of the GDPR, it is clear that pseudonymisation is a security technique that makes it possible to identify the person by associating the identifier (e.g., an alphanumeric code) with the original identifier, and that original data must be kept in a separate database. It is, therefore, a protective measure that reduces the risk of direct identification of the persons concerned, without, however, being able to eliminate it: it is true, in fact, that Recital 26 does not exclude the possibility of applying additional security measures.

If, however, from a legal point of view the answer seems to be quite clear, from a purely technical point of view, the situation is much more complex since, according to experts, in the absence of the information to be associated with the identifier, identification would not appear to be conceptually possible.

Dispelling any doubts, the European Court recently intervened with a ruling issued on 26 April. The ruling states that personal data, which are properly pseudonymised before being transmitted, may be considered anonymous to the recipient under two conditions: the first is that the recipient does not have the necessary information to re-identify individuals; the second is that such re-identification is not reasonably possible. Thus, the meaning of irreversible de-identification inherent in the definition of anonymisation disappears.

We do not know - to date - the scope of this ruling and the actual impact this decision may have on data transfer issues. Therefore, one is left waiting for the new Pseudonymisation Guidelines that the EDPB has on its agenda for 2023/2024.



From the World

Domain name protection for Geographical Indications (GIs): opportunity or risk for the "Made in Italy"?

by Gino Silvatici

ICANN's 2022 Report on IDNs has been published

by Arianna Del Soldato and Adriana Lazzaroni

"INFERMAL": ICANN against malicious domain name choices

by Arianna Del Soldato and Adriana Lazzaroni



Domain name protection for Geographical Indications (GIs): opportunity or risk for the "Made in Italy"?

by Gino Silvatici

European institutions have begun a process of legislation for the protection of Geographical Indication (GI) marks in the agri-food sector, that also covers domain names.

On 31 March 2022, the European Commission published two proposals aimed at reforming the EU's regulatory framework for geographical indications (GIs): the first concerns a regulation that could protect GI-related domain name registrations for wines, spirits, and agricultural products; and the second, the possibility for EUIPO (the European Union Office for Intellectual Property) to set up an alert system for applicants to inform them about the hypothetical registration of a domain name in conflict with their geographical indication. Both proposals emphasise, first, that people with legitimate interests in registered GIs should have the right to request revocation or transfer of the domain name if it was registered without rights, in bad faith, or without a legitimate interest; and, second, that competent authorities can issue enforcement orders to take action against illegal content.

On 29 September 2022, the rapporteur in charge of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) was appointed to lead the negotiations in the European Parliament: a dossier has been published, where the role of the EUIPO as a provider of technical assistance for the application review with respect to their publication and the related management of oppositions is formalised, and where, in addition, it is taken into account that domain names that unfairly exploit a Geographical Indication should be immediately closed or assigned to the group of producers concerned upon request, or to a competent national authority, including also new translations and transcriptions of Geographical Indications (GIs), being developed, both offline and online in order to strengthen international protection.





On 18 October 2022, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) published its draft proposal on geographical indications for wine, spirits and agricultural products for protection on the Web against bad faith registrations and illicit uses in the domain name system, as is already the case for the same products of the EU industry within the EU. In the proposal, AGRI suggests that the obligation to revoke or transfer domain names should not be reserved for CCTLDs, but should cover all TLDs operating in the Union.

After several parliamentary interlocutions in the committees in early 2023, on 22 March, the Council of the European Union published a document in preparation for interinstitutional negotiations on this issue. The Swedish European Council Presidency, according to AGRI, has proposed changes to domain name provisions that include extending their scope to all TLD registries established in the EU, which will recognise GIs as a right that can be invoked in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) procedures. In addition, the EUIPO will need to establish and develop a so-called information and alert system to provide GI applicants with information on the availability of the GI as a domain name when a specific request is submitted. EU TLD registries will cooperate with the EUIPO in order to provide relevant information and data.

In this context, the CENTR (Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries), in order to oppose the European Commission's choices, has published further analysis on the implications of the EU's GI reform, on the digital infrastructure and global Internet governance, pointing out that domain name protection does not promote the market, but would block its dynamism and growth, in order to protect a few dozen domain names. In the dossier published by CENTR, however, the vast majority of the proposed examples concern domain names of Italian sounding agri-food products registered by non-entitled holders, such as Parmigiano Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma, Spumante di Asti and other famous products of the Belpaese. With this in mind, the protection of GI domain names could be important for Italian exports in order to stop the sale of counterfeit products on the Internet and damaging the economic interests of the entire Italian agribusiness sector.



ICANN's 2022 Report on IDNs has been published

by Arianna Del Soldato and Adriana Lazzaroni

ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) recently released the 2022 Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) Annual Report. The report provides an overview of the status of IDNs at the first and second levels of the Domain Name System (DNS), and highlights the work done by ICANN, and the community within it, to make the DNS accessible in different local languages while maintaining its stability and security. IDNs, which allow users around the world to use domain names in local languages and non-Latin scripts such as Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic, Hebrew, Devanagari and others, not only help build a multilingual Internet, but also enable organisations, governments and businesses to reach more citizens and consumers in their preferred language or script.

The Report covers four main areas: statistics related to IDN delegation and registration, public policies on IDNs developed by the ICANN community, IDN-related projects developed within ICANN, and ICANN's implementation and operations on IDNs.

Among 2022 dedicated projects the following should be mentioned: Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR), Second-Level Reference Label Generation Rules, LGR Tool, IDN Implementation Guidelines. In particular, the knowledge gained from the RZ-LGR project pave the way for the development of policies on IDNs by improving their security and stability to the point that the ICANN Board issued a resolution asking the CCNSO and GNSO to take into account the recommendations developed by the dedicated "RZ-LGR Study Group", to prepare policies to define and manage IDN variants of TLDs and their future applications.

Data from the 2022 Report reveal that there are 1,481 delegated TLDs in the Root Zone, of which 309 are CCTLDS (including 61 CCTLD IDNs) and 1,172 are GTLDS (of which 91 are GTLD IDNs), and that the Root Zone already supports 26 unique scripts, used to write in hundreds of languages around the world: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Chinese (Han), Cyrillic, Devanagari, Ethiopic, Georgian, Greek, Gujarati, Gurmukhi, Hebrew, Japanese (hiragana, katakana, and kanji [Han]), Kannada, Khmer, Korean (Hangul and Hanja [Han]), Laotian, Latin, Malayalam, Burmese, Oriya, Sinhalese, Tamil, Telugu, and Thai.



The secure and stable use of IDNs is fundamental to the realisation of greater digital inclusion and is currently one of the priorities for ICANN (for CCTLD IDNs, few days ago the first IDN Country Code, that of Egypt, entered the CCNSO: " $\sigma \omega c$ "). As specified in its mission ICANN works "to adopt or put in place policies or procedures that take into account the use of domain names as natural language identifiers." In order to fulfil this mission, IDNs and Universal Acceptance (UA) have been included in ICANN's Strategic Plan for FY21-25, and will also be supported in the next round of generic top-level domain names (GTLDS).



"INFERMAL": ICANN against malicious domain name choices

by Arianna Del Soldato and Adriana Lazzaroni



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is funding a new project, called Inferential Analysis of Maliciously Registered Domains (INFERMAL), which aims to systematically analyse cyber attackers' preferences in registering domains and, consequently, possible measures to mitigate malicious activity in top-level domains (TLDs).

When it comes to DNS security threats, in fact, one method used by cybercriminals is to register domains that will then be used to launch attacks on the Internet, such as phishing, malware, and spam campaigns. Scientific studies conducted in this field suggest that there may be various reasons why malicious registrants prefer certain registrars, to register their domain names, over others, such as those that provide low registration prices or accept specific payment methods. A preference may be given to registrars offering free APIs (Application Programming Interface) that allow bulk registrations and may avoid registrars that require certain information during the purchase process. However, no study has systematically examined aggressor preferences.

ICANN is certainly in a unique position to explore this topic, which, moreover, has been examined before, and the new "INFERMAL" project aims precisely to expand knowledge in this area. The results may make it easier for registrars and registries to identify best practices to counter DNS Abuse, strengthen self-regulation of the entire domain name industry, and reduce costs associated with domain regulations. But most importantly, the project will be able to help increase the security levels of domain names and, consequently, the trust of end users. Reducing DNS abuse through the use of domain names is, in fact, good for both the DNS industry and all Internet users.

How will the project work? The project involves the collection and analysis of a comprehensive list of criteria for registering domain names for malicious purposes. These include the possibility of bulk registration, the use of APIs for registration, accepted payment methods (credit card, Bitcoin, or WebMoney), and retail prices. Then, with the use of statistical models, the attackers' preferred registration factors will be identified.

The project and its results will be the subject of scientific publications and high-impact industry presentations at major conferences on security, Internet stability, and policies hosted by both ICANN, the DNS Operations, Analysis and Research Centre and CENTR (Council of European National Top Level Domain Registries). Meanwhile, the detailed timeline of the project, as well as the results obtained, will be posted on ICANN's blog and the project website.

From the World



International appointments from the digital world

IETF

RIPE

22-28 July 2023 IETF 117 San Francisco, San Francisco (USA) **22-26 May 2023** RIPE 86, Rotterdam (Holland)

CENTR (for members only)

31 May - 2 June 2023 CENTR Jamboree 2023 Belgrade (Serbia)

25-26 September 2023 69th CENTR Legal & Regulatory workshop Oslo (Norway)

28-29 September 2023 57th CENTR Admin workshop Bratislava (Slovakia)

ICANN

12-15 June 2023 ICANN77, Washington (USA)

Quarter



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