

## WATCH OUT: FEE TO BE INTRODUCED FOR THE REGISTRATION AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE OF ".RO" DOMAINS

In December 2016, the Board of Directors of the National Institute for Research and Development in Informatics ("ICI") issued a decision for the introduction, (as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017), of a fee for registering ".ro" domains and for the annual maintenance of such domains (the "**Decision**"). The Decision was in line with the general approach of the European Member States, where such fees have already been implemented.

According to the Decision's provisions, ".ro" domains can only be obtained for a limited period of time (*i.e.* 1 year or 5 years), and not for an undetermined term, (as is currently the case). At the expiry of such periods, the owner must again pay the applicable fee, should it desire to maintain its ownership of the ".ro" domain. The Decision also provides a series of transitory guidelines for adopting the new rules.

The limitation introduced by the Decision could be seen as a measure to end the current practice that allows for indefinite terms of registration for ".ro" domains, which situation has resulted in many such domain names, (despite being "dormant" or inactive), not being available for newly interested parties to register or use.

Currently, the provisions of the Decision are not applicable, since it was cancelled in January 2017 by the ICI Board of Directors, as the result of a letter received from a series of contractual partners of Romania Top Level Domain, requesting public consultations on this matter prior to final adoption of any new rules.

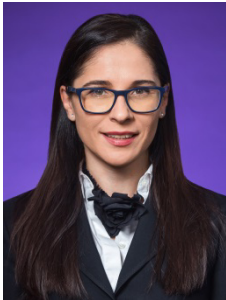
Such requested consultations took place at the headquarters of the Ministry of Communications and the Informational Society in January and again in April 2017.

It appears from publicly available sources that the next step is to prepare a draft law for publication and public debate in July 2017. The aim is for this draft law to be finalized and presented to the Government for approval in September 2017.

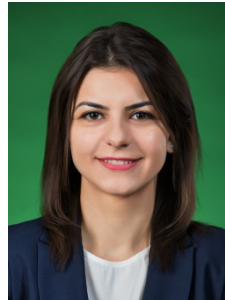
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