



The CENTRstats Global TLD Report is CENTR’s quarterly publication covering status and trends in global top-level domains with a focus on European ccTLDs (country code top-level domains).

CENTR is the association of European country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries, such as .de for Germany or .si for Slovenia. CENTR currently counts 51 full and 9 associate members – together, they are responsible for over 70% of all registered country code domain names worldwide. The objectives of CENTR are to promote and participate in the development of high standards and best practices among ccTLD registries.

CENTRstats Global TLD Report

Edition 2_2024



This report offers in-depth statistics, trends, and analysis on the global domain name market, with a particular emphasis on European country-code domains (ccTLDs). It aims to serve as a reliable public resource for understanding the latest developments in domain name registrations across top-level domains (TLDs). Prepared by the Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries (CENTR), the report provides valuable insights for industry professionals, policymakers, and anyone interested in the evolving domain landscape. Edition 2024_2. | Published: December 2024

GLOBAL DOMAIN MARKET

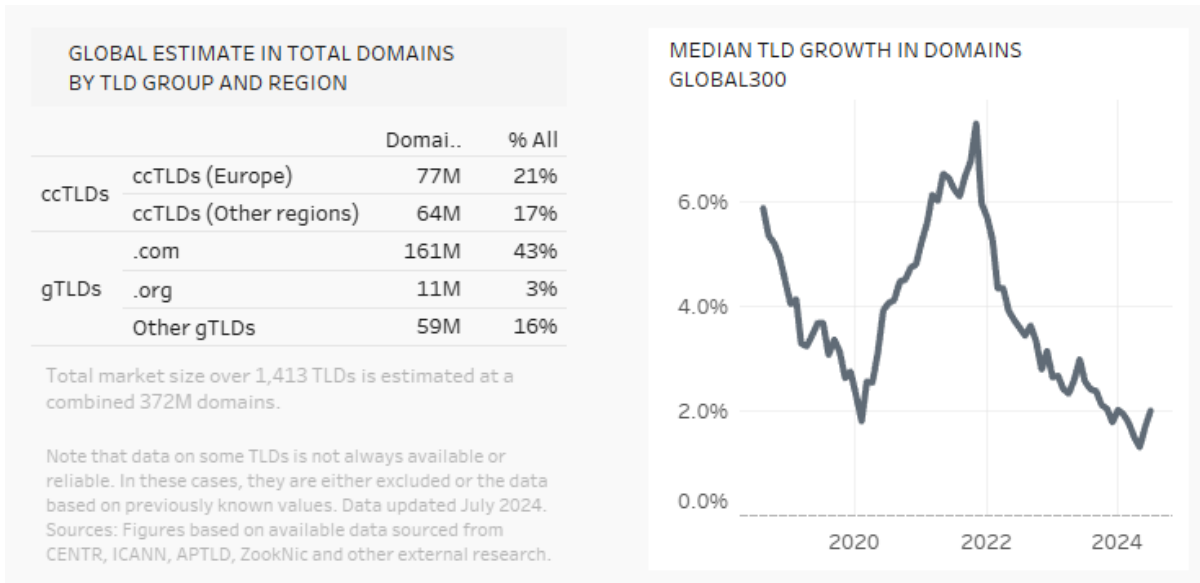
- The total registered domains across all known TLDs is estimated to be 372 million ¹
- Over the past few years, median 12-month growth (top 300 TLDs) peaked at 7.5% in late 2021, followed by a steady decline to 1.3% by May 2024. The past couple of months show early signs of a rebound with 2.0% in July 2024.
- In the 12 months to July 2024, TLDs with the highest growth in absolute numbers were .shop, .in, .online, .top, .ru. ²
- Total .com domains have steadily declined since late 2023 with -2.3% recorded at July 2024. With 161 million domains, it accounts for approximately 43% of the global domain market.

EUROPEAN ccTLDs

- The median growth rate (CENTR30) shows a long-term decline, peaking during the pandemic in early 2021 and steadily falling to 0.35% by October 2024, reflecting market saturation and post-pandemic slowdown.
- The median renewal rate for CENTR30 steadily increased from 84.6% in early 2018 to a peak of 87.4% in mid-2022, but has since gradually declined to 85.9% as of October 2024.
- Driving the slowing renewal rate are deletions, which had remained stable until early 2023 but have shown an upward trend since then.
- Retail (registrar) prices have remained stable in recent years, averaging just under €10 for initial registration, however, renewal prices have shown a consistent upward trend, increasing from €13 (Apr 2021) to almost €17 (Oct 2024).
- The proportion of domains classified as high-content (have active websites) has declined from 45% in 2021 to 42% in 2024, while low-content and no-content domains have steadily increased, with no-content domains nearing 30% by late 2024 ³.

Notes: Data updated to July 2024. Median European ccTLD rates generally based on a subset of European ccTLDs (e.g. top 30 largest ccTLDs). More detail in the notes section at the bottom of this page.

¹ Figure is estimate based on available data. Data on some TLDs is not always available or reliable. In these cases, they are either excluded or the data based on previously known values. ² Excludes TLDs with less than 10,000 domains under management at July 2023. ³ Based on data from the CENTR Signs-of-Life domain crawler which scans and classifies domain samples from 18 ccTLDs monthly.

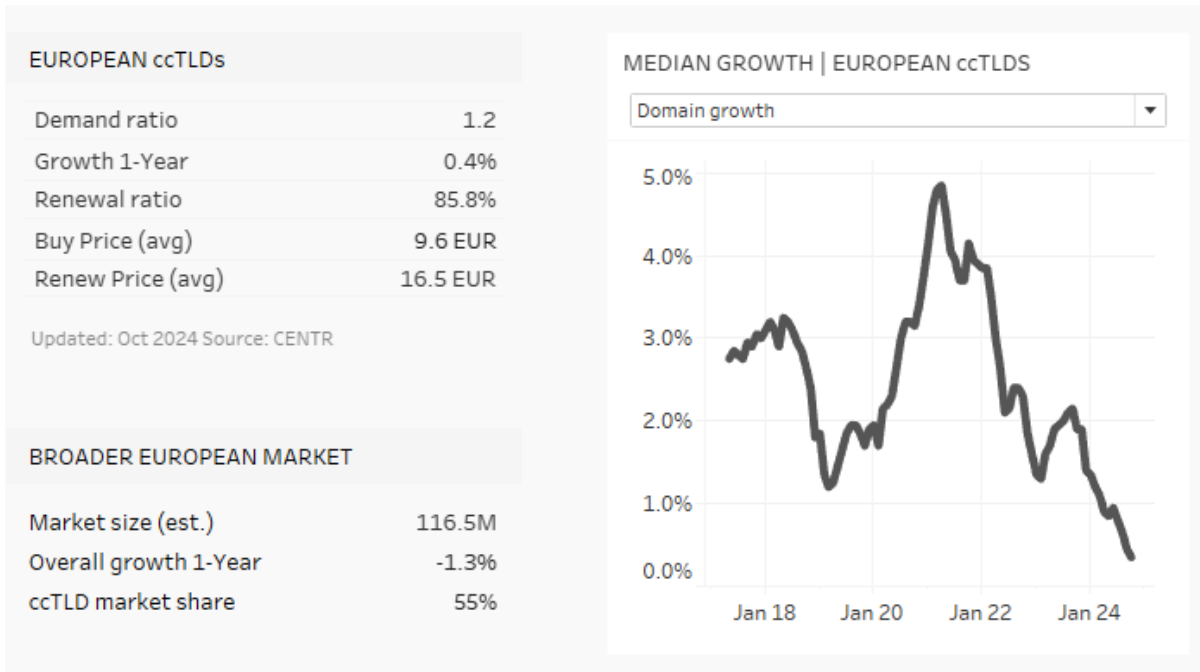


EUROPEAN ccTLDs

European ccTLDs have experienced notable shifts in recent years. Increasing deletion rates, particularly from early 2023, appear to be tied to the surge in new registrations during the COVID-19 pandemic, as many of these domains are now being abandoned. At the same time, domain creations have steadily declined from their pandemic peak. This combination of fewer new registrations, rising deletions, and increasing renewal prices among registrars has placed significant downward pressure on ccTLD renewal rates and growth.

The median growth rate for the CENTR30 group of ccTLDs shows a long-term decline, peaking during the pandemic in early 2021 and steadily falling to just 0.35% by October 2024. This trend reflects market saturation and a broader post-pandemic slowdown. While the median renewal rate for CENTR30 rose from 84.6% in early 2018 to a peak of 87.4% in mid-2022, it has since declined to 85.9%, largely driven by an upward trend in deletions.

Adding to these pressures are shifting pricing dynamics. Retail (registrar) prices for initial domain registrations have remained relatively stable, averaging just under €10. However, renewal prices have seen consistent increases, rising from €13 in April 2021 to nearly €17 by October 2024. Additionally, changes in domain usage patterns underscore evolving challenges. The proportion of domains classified as high-content (i.e., domains with active websites) has declined from 45% in 2021 to 42% in 2024, while low-content and no-content domains have steadily increased. Notably, no-content domains are nearing 30% as of late 2024, further signalling shifts in how domains are being utilized and valued.



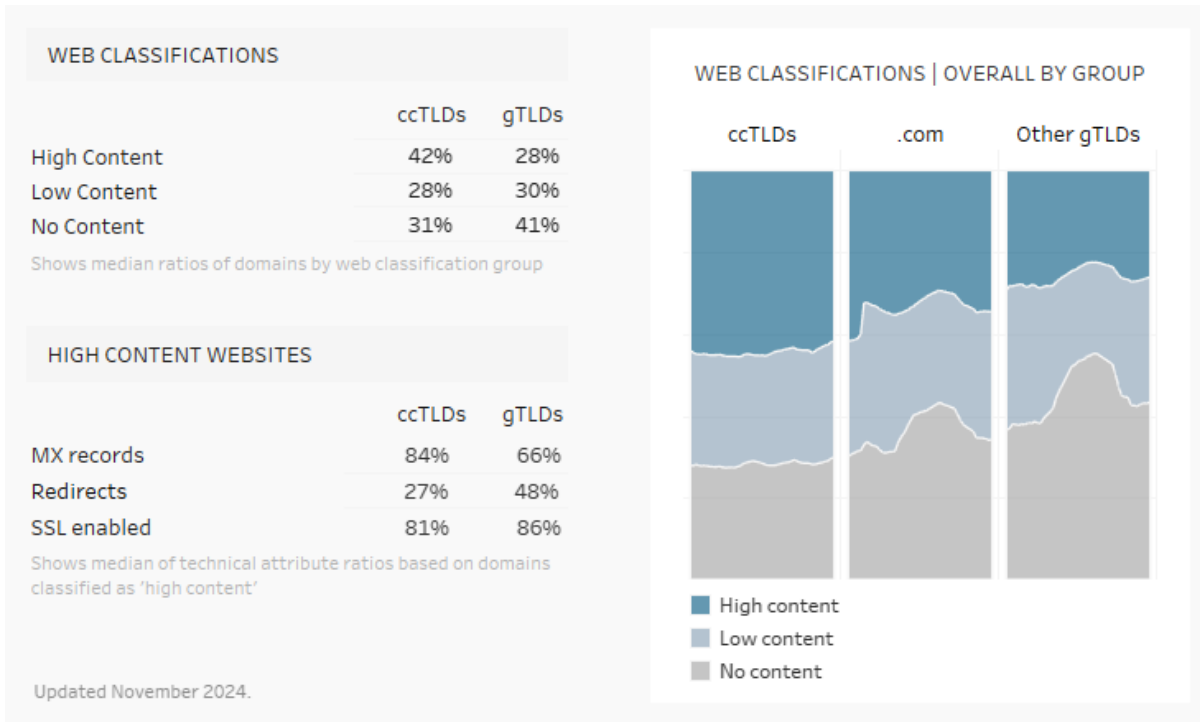
DOMAIN USAGE

The dashboard below, shows data on domains classified into high content, low content, and no content categories. High-content domains represent actively functioning websites, low-content domains are typically parked or minimally developed, and no-content domains lack visible or accessible content. This classification helps analyse domain activity and usage trends.

OBSERVATIONS

ccTLDs: The ccTLD data highlights a consistent dominance of high-content domains, maintaining a share of over 40% throughout the observed period, signalling a strong association with actively managed and meaningful web content. However, the proportion of no-content domains has steadily increased, particularly in the latter months which validates theories on the rising deletion rate discussed earlier in this report.

gTLDs: Analysis of gTLD usage over the past 12 months highlights distinct patterns in domain content classifications. Overall, the ratio of domains classified a High-content has gradually declined, suggesting a decrease in actively managed web content across gTLDs, while the proportion of errors has risen. TLDs like .berlin and .london consistently show strong high-content usage, underscoring their adoption for meaningful web presence. Notably, .com retains an even distribution between high, low and no-content domain ratios but shows a gradual rise in low and no-content classifications which again is reflected in their registration growth statistics. Meanwhile, .org, traditionally associated with nonprofits, maintains a relatively higher share of high-content domains but faces a modest increase in errors, indicating challenges in keeping all domains actively managed.



INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

While there are many important aspects to maintaining a Top Level Domain, renewals of domains are arguably one of the more important. Without healthy renewal rates, registries may struggle to cover operational costs, invest in infrastructure, or support initiatives that enhance the domain space's stability and security.

A [recent study](#) by CENTR into domain renewals revealed that domains with developed or rich web content are significantly more likely to renew than those with low (parked) or no content. The results were compelling, showing that domains with high-content websites renew on average 15% more frequently than low- and no-content domains. Given the challenges of low growth or contraction faced by many European ccTLDs, these findings present an opportunity for registries to reflect on their strategies for domain growth and consider taking a more proactive approach to supporting meaningful domain usage.

Note that in this study, analysis of domains used for email was not included the difficulty in understand whether or not a domain is activity used for email. For the purposes of this article, we are instead focusing on domains by their web content.

| Web Classification | Domains | Renewal rate |
|--------------------|---------|--------------|
| No Content | 280,216 | 70% |
| Low Content | 261,155 | 79% |
| High Content | 406,222 | 90% |

In recent months, an increasing number of European ccTLDs have reported negative net growth in domain registrations. While this trend might appear to result from a decline in new domain registrations, analysis across the region suggests that the slowdown is actually driven by a rise in deletions. So, what's behind this exodus? Perhaps the Renewal Study provides a clue: it's likely that the domains being deleted are predominantly those without developed websites, highlighting the critical role that meaningful content plays in a domain's renewal prospects.

But still doesn't answer the question on why people are abandoning these domains. The following are several possibilities which may explain it.

Pandemic Surge Fallout: The surge in domain registrations during the COVID-19 pandemic is now having a notable aftereffect on the market. During the early stages of the pandemic, there was a significant increase in domain registrations as businesses moved online rapidly and individuals sought to create digital ventures or capitalize on pandemic-related trends. However, many of these domains were registered with short-term intentions or speculative purposes and are now reaching their renewal periods. Without meaningful development or sustained value, many of these domains are being abandoned, contributing to the current rise in deletions.

Rising Costs and Widening Price Gap: Since late 2022, renewal prices for ccTLD domains in Europe have risen around 18% (around 2.5 EUR), while the average price to buy a new domain has decreased by 14% (around 1.5 EUR). This growing gap between renewal and buy prices may be influencing the decision of registrants to drop domains, particularly for those managing larger portfolios. From a speculator's perspective, renewing the "long tail" of a portfolio becomes increasingly hard to justify if the domains are not generating revenue or attracting purchase inquiries. While previous pricing studies suggest domain pricing is generally elastic, registrants may be less willing to absorb higher costs in light of the vast number of TLDs now available, which has likely encouraged portfolio expansion. The result is a market where the rising renewal costs are pushing some to consolidate their holdings, letting go of domains with little to no immediate value.

Changing value in domain parking: For domains intended for pay-per-click revenue, declining ad revenue or reduced traffic to parked domains due to AI-driven tools may make them less profitable, leading owners to drop them.

Natural Exposure: A TLD's Secret Weapon

Domains can be broadly classified by their web content into categories such as high content (functioning websites with meaningful content), low content (parked or minimally developed sites), and no content (inactive or error pages). These classifications are crucial in understanding the renewal likelihood and overall value a domain brings to its TLD.

TLDs with a high proportion of developed, high-quality websites benefit from a unique advantage that can significantly enhance their longevity and market stability: organic visibility. Every time a website, email address, or physical business sign showcases a domain, it naturally promotes the associated TLD. This ongoing exposure acts as free advertising, reinforcing the TLD's credibility and popularity as a preferred choice for businesses. In contrast, domains registered solely for brand protection or speculation offer no such visibility, remaining largely

hidden from public view. As a result, these domains fail to contribute to the TLD's broader recognition and reputation, highlighting the importance of meaningful web content in driving a TLD's success.

How can a registry improve its renewal rate?

The CENTR Renewal Study shows that improving domain renewal rates can be tied to increasing the number of domains with meaningful web content. However, this isn't an easy task for registries, as they usually don't have direct contact with domain holders—that's typically managed by registrars or resellers. Even so, registries have some ways to influence domain usage and renewals over time, with one of the most important being their choice of registrar partnerships.

By analysing domain usage classifications and renewal rates at the registrar level, registries can identify which registrars are delivering domains with higher renewal potential and developed web content. Registrars demonstrating stronger performance in these areas could be incentivized through targeted programs. Such initiatives might include discounts, marketing support, or other benefits, encouraging the promotion of domains with long-term value. Over time, this strategy could increase the overall proportion of high-content domains within a TLD, ultimately boosting the TLD's renewal rate and long-term success.

Report by Patrick Myles (Data Analyst | CENTR).

If you have questions or comments, please contact secretariat@centr.org

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides statistics, trends and analysis on the global domain name market with focus on European country-code domains (ccTLDs). Our objective with this report is to provide a consistent public resource for anyone interested in understanding current trends in domain name registrations under top level domains (TLDs). The report is prepared by the Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries (CENTR).

SOURCES

Data used in this report sourced from the following: CENTR Members, Net Knowledge, APTLD, ICANN, Zooknic. References were also taken from the CENTR Renewal Study (2024) .

NOTES AND METHODOLOGIES

Pricing data: CENTR collects registrar pricing based on the largest registrars of a sample of member ccTLDs. Prices are collected manually every quarter. Prices collected are the buy (including any promotion), renewal, and transfer prices (if available), noting the currency and whether tax is included or not.

Market share: Market share based on local registrations – To calculate market share based on local registrations, CENTR analyses the total local registrations made in most member countries. For ccTLD registrations in each country, the data comes from CENTR members directly. gTLD data is sourced from Zooknic, which uses sampling techniques to assess the number of gTLD registrations in each country using the country of residence field in the Whois.

Domain usage: Data is gathered using the CENTR Signs-of-Life crawler. CENTR members provide monthly random samples of up to 50K active ccTLD domain names. CENTR also samples relevant gTLDs for equivalent samples. The Signs-of-Life Crawler is an open-source tool managed by CENTR. Its function is to analyze and classify domain usage as well as some DNS parameters. The crawler scans domain names to determine if they exhibit "signs of life" by categorizing them into the following high-level categories (along with several subcategories): No content (domains with no web content), Low content (domains showing placeholder pages or parking services), and High content (domains hosting live, functional content). TLDs in sample: .at, .be, .ca, .ch, .de, .dk, .ee, .fr, .ge, .lu, .me, .nl, .pl, .pt, .se, .si, .sk, .uk, .amsterdam, .asia, .berlin, .biz, .brussels, .cat, .com, .info, .kiwi, .london, .melbourne, .net, .nyc, .online, .org, .paris, .shop, .site, .swiss, .sydney, .top, .vlaanderen, .wales, .wien, .xyz.

Renewal ratio: Total domains minus the sum of all creates over the previous 12 months, divided by total domains 12 months prior.

Demand ratio: Total creates divided by total deletes

TERMINOLOGY

ccTLD: A Country Code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) is a two-character top-level domain used and reserved for a country or independent territory. Examples include .uk for the United Kingdom or .de for Germany. **gTLD:** A Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) is a 3-or-more-character string. Examples include .com, .org, .club, .london. **IDN:** An Internationalised Domain Name is a domain that contains at least one label displayed in software applications in a language-specific script or alphabet, such as Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic, Tamil, Hebrew, or the Latin alphabet-based characters with diacritics or ligatures (e.g., French). A ccTLD IDN is an IDN at the top level – e.g., the ccTLD IDN for the Russian Federation is .PФ, which is the Cyrillic script version of .ru. **Registrant:** The individual or organization that registers a specific domain name. A registrant holds the right to use that domain name for a specified period. **Registry:** An internet domain name registry receives domain name information into a centralized database and transmits the information in internet zone files so that domain names can be found by users around the world via the web and email.

ABOUT CENTR

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