

# .eu Illustrated

POWERED BY **EURid**

Fall Edition

## Strengthening Europe's Digital Foundations



In this edition of .eu Illustrated, we focus on EURid and its mission to support a healthy, trusted, and sustainable digital environment for Europe. Through a commitment to operational excellence, responsible growth, and strong partnerships, EURid works to strengthen the .eu domain and support the wider European digital ecosystem.

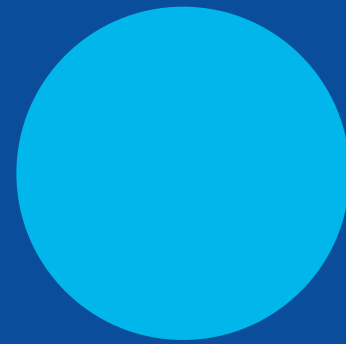
We explore how this vision translates into practice, from maintaining a resilient and secure infrastructure to working closely with partners who share the goal of keeping Europe's online space open and reliable. This edition also shines a spotlight on the five winners of the 2025 .eu Web Awards, celebrating the creativity and innovation that bring the .eu namespace to life.

Looking ahead, we examine domain name trends, risks, and opportunities for 2026, alongside simple and practical steps to help users stay safe online. Together, these stories reflect EURid's ongoing work to support trust, growth, and resilience across the .eu community.

Enjoy the read.

Reelika Kirna

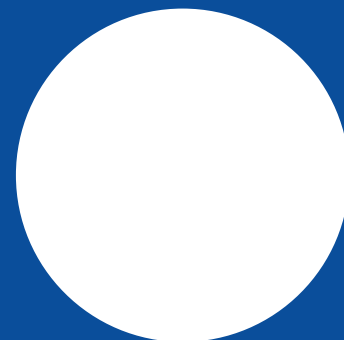
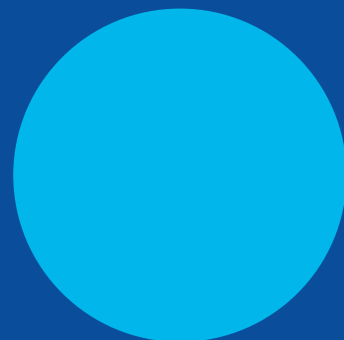
Communications Manager



New frontiers

# How EURid is keeping pace in a changing market

By Alastair Gill



In 2026, the .eu top-level domain operated by EURid will celebrate 20 years as a cornerstone of Europe's online identity. For two decades, .eu has championed openness, trustworthiness and inclusivity and provided European organisations, businesses and individuals with a secure online environment in which they can thrive.

Commercial, regulatory and technological changes are altering the TLD landscape. New generic TLDs have increased competition; registrars have merged, altering market dynamics; new technologies have created fresh opportunities for abuse. Meanwhile, social media and AI have had a profound impact on the way business is done.

Adapting to these developments has been central to EURid's strategic vision, which is built on three key pillars: operational excellence, healthy growth and EU values. These guiding principles will form the core of the company's strategy as it faces the challenges ahead.

## Building an architecture of excellence

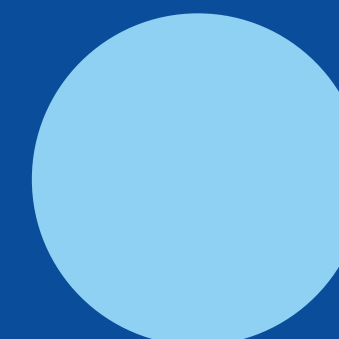
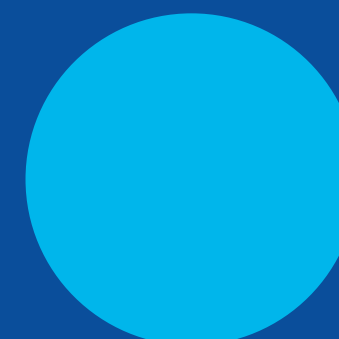
At the core of everything EURid does is its technological infrastructure: its servers, processes, applications and data are integral to the services it provides. So, it is vital that this infrastructure evolves in step with the organisation's business goals.

To this end, EURid is implementing an effective enterprise architecture practice. This ensures that business objectives are aligned with its technology infrastructure and tie in with ongoing efforts to modernise and maintain operational excellence.

**“Of course, there's a physical infrastructure: the machines themselves. But there's also the virtual infrastructure running on top of it. We're now introducing security within the technical department to ensure real integration into our everyday operations.”**



Nathan Meurens  
Technical Manager EURid



EURid is actively working to identify risks to its digital sovereignty and how to mitigate them to protect its infrastructure and ensure GDPR compliance.

“Digital sovereignty is a long-term initiative. We approach it not only from the perspective of our key services within Europe but also by considering the SME market. Supporting the European digital ecosystem means promoting European solutions to strengthen the broader EU market,” says Meurrens.

EURid is also exploring open-source solutions to support its infrastructure as a way of offsetting the rising costs of third-party enterprise software. “The geopolitical situation confirms how important it is to remain in full control of our infrastructure,” says Meurrens, explaining that EURid has made a conscious choice not to use public cloud solutions.

EURid is also in the process of refining its abuse management system and taking steps to share abuse data with other registries by developing a new version of its AI-based Abuse Prevention and Early Warning System (APEWS) as a distributed service.

“The idea is that we can extend it and share it with others”, explains Meurrens. “More data means more insights. By sharing it with other registries, we can gain more data from them, making the system smarter. We want to open it freely to the community so that everyone can benefit.”

To ensure projects can meet expectations, EURid began an internal restructuring in January 2025, since the existing setup was creating conflicts of interest between product owners, engineers and project managers. Functions in the tech department have been realigned, and a new Software Delivery Manager will now oversee all engineering teams. “We are now seeing the first results, and it’s a very promising transformation”, says Meurrens.

Finally, EURid is focusing on what he describes as “technical observability”, developing a centralised system for comprehensive monitoring, alerting and logging of all EURid services, which are currently siloed.

“The goal”, explains Meurrens, “is to have a single dashboard where we can see the health of all our services at a glance, supported by a 24/7 operations team to ensure everything runs smoothly”.



## Finding new ways to grow

According to CENTR's latest [TLD Market Report](#), while retention rates for European ccTLDs remain relatively stable, growth rates for domain name registrations are falling, pitting registries against each other.

In response to these trends, EURid has been implementing new metrics to increase its focus on efficiency and allow it to pursue growth and increase sales.

**“Double-digit growth isn’t a guarantee anymore, so we had to adopt a new mindset. It implies that we can expect stronger sales performance from the registrars if they want something in exchange from us”**



Hans Seeuws  
Business Operations Manager EURid

One aspect of EURid's tighter focus on efficiency is the meticulous approach to tracking and handling data. A good example is the awareness campaigns EURid runs around Europe to promote the .eu domain name and its other script variants (.eю (Cyrillic script) and .ευ (Greek script) across the EU, which is one of the Commission's requirements for operating the .eu TLD and shows EURid's support for universal acceptance.

In the past two years, Seeuws and his team have been tracking the effect of these campaigns, which has allowed them to make adjustments once the effect of a campaign has worn off. He gives the example of a giant EURid billboard at Brussels airport.

“It used to be just our logo and a slogan, but we didn't know how many passengers actually saw it. So, we asked the advertising agency for traffic statistics, then added a QR code with a call to action. That allowed us to measure how many passengers scanned the code, and, of those, how many performed a search on our website”.

When monthly figures showed that scans were decreasing, Seeuws and his team took action. “It meant that the saturation effect of that particular channel had been reached,” he explains. “So, it was no use using that same medium over and over again, and we moved it to somewhere else”.

“You start measuring what matters. Because if you don’t measure it, it doesn’t get tracked. To me, that’s the key element in determining healthy growth”.

Seeuws and his team are now taking a more targeted approach to everything from advertising strategy to customer acquisition, focusing on value for money. The goal is for the .eu extension to be in the top three TLDs throughout its market, i.e. in every EU member state—a goal it has already achieved in 16 member states.

But EURid needs to strike a balance between growing its customer portfolio and maintaining strict safeguards on .eu domain name registrations. After all, healthy growth is also contingent on continuing to successfully weed out abuse. Last year EURid deleted 15,000 domain names identified as fraudulent.

“We see the competitive landscape has changed. But we want healthy growth, not growth at any cost”, says Seeuws, referring to the CENTR report as proof that EURid’s efforts are bearing fruit. “It shows that the top 10 European ccTLDs have declined by 0.5%, whereas we’ve reversed the trend and grown by half of a percent”.

### Staying true to EU values

As part of its mandate, EURid promotes the EU’s internet governance (IG) objectives, including active participation in global and European IG fora and support for various activities. Partnerships across the continent and beyond are key in these efforts, as well as outreach, educational and awareness-building campaigns.

EURid is an active partner and funder of EuroDIG (European Dialogue on Internet Governance), making contributions to sessions at the annual conferences. It will host next year’s EuroDIG in Brussels in May.

**“We’ll be running a track focused on topics relevant for ccTLDs and address topics of importance for Europe’s digital future, in line with the International Digital Strategy for the European Union”**



**Regina Fuchsová**  
Industry Relations Manager at EURid

EURid representatives also regularly attend ICANN meetings, which are an opportunity to engage with stakeholders and partners. “At the last general annual meeting in Dublin (ICANN84) in October, we hosted a lunch for our registrars, held a capacity-building session with Smart Africa, shared our experience in preventing abuse of domain name registrations”, says Fuchsova.



A large part of EURid’s work involves supporting multi-stakeholder policy dialogue such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). This June in Oslo, the team coordinated a session of the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Data and Trust with the Dynamic Coalition on Internet Issues on Building Digital Trust, focusing on blockchain identifiers and DNS abuse, and presented the results of the 2025 IDN World Report at a lightning talk on universal acceptance.

EURid also upholds its commitment to EU values by funding an array of its own awareness-building initiatives aimed and training activities at promoting the .eu domain name and its role in connecting Europe’s online community. It runs two advisory bodies—one for registrars and our Youth Committee—involving important partners or stakeholder groups. Run on a voluntary basis, they meet twice a year.

EURid’s annual .eu Day event provides a platform for businesses, professionals, policymakers and citizens to share their expertise on internet governance and discuss the issues shaping Europe’s online future.

Hosted by Estonian MEP Marina Kaljurand in collaboration with the European Internet Forum, this year’s .eu Day welcomed over 80 guests to the European



Parliament on 3 December for a breakfast debate on the topic of digital sovereignty, featuring insights from EC representatives, academia and the European registrar and cloud computing company OVHcloud.

EURid also supports young Europeans by collaborating with youth internet governance initiatives such as Youth IGF, YouthDIG, and the SEEDIG Youth School. EURid's biannual SAFEonLINE Art Competition raises awareness of online risks among Europe's youngsters, while its CodeWeek initiative brings coding, robotics and digital skills closer to schoolchildren across Europe, with over 4,000 children benefitting in the last 10 years.

## A clear sense of purpose

Today's digital landscape is very different from when EURid first embarked on its mission, but the organisation has a clear sense of purpose as it moves forward. EURid will continue to build healthy growth, strive for operational excellence and uphold EU values, while expanding its strategic partnerships.

EURid is committing to promoting an inclusive multi-stakeholder governance model and supporting an open, secure, free and sustainable internet for all Europeans. This is the Commission's objective, and it is also EURid's objective.



.eu SAFE onLINE

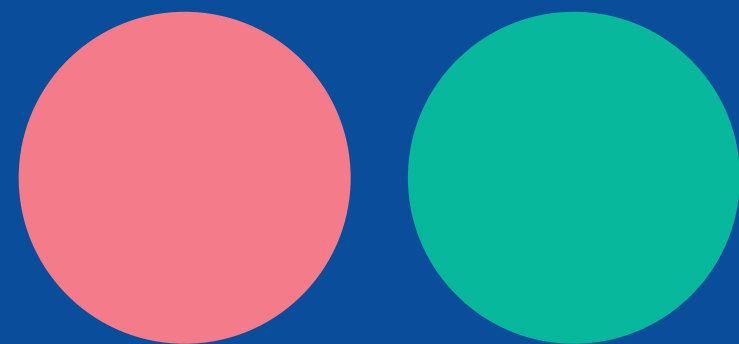
# Meet the 2025 .eu Web Awards winners



**.eu**  **Web  
Awards**



**Congratulations**



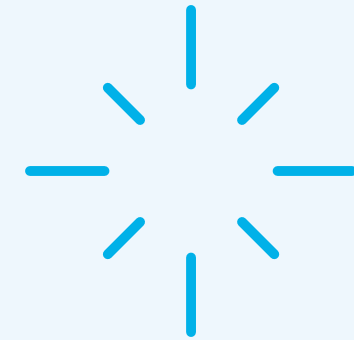
The .eu Web Awards is an annual initiative by EURid that highlights exceptional websites using the .eu, .europa and .europa.eu domain extensions. It celebrates innovation, quality and creativity across Europe, giving organisations, businesses and individuals a platform to showcase their digital achievements to a wider audience.

Participants benefit from increased recognition, exposure to the public and evaluation by an independent panel of experts. Winners receive promotional support to boost their online presence, engage new audiences and strengthen the reputation of their digital brand.

By shining a spotlight on outstanding web projects, the .eu Web Awards helps build a dynamic, trustworthy and inspiring European online community.

Meet the most impressive .eu websites of the year, the 2025 .eu Web Awards winners.





## Web Awards winners



### European Excellence



The NARRATE initiative aims to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of manufacturing and industrial processes across the European ecosystem. It promotes smart manufacturing networks that can self-adapt to external threats. At its core is the Intelligent Manufacturing Custodian, a system of advanced digital intelligence designed to improve resilience and production efficiency. By anticipating disruptions, learning from experience, and continuously self-calibrating, it enhances business continuity and enables the smart manufacturing ecosystem to adapt to unexpected events.

[project-narrate.eu](https://project-narrate.eu)



### Sustainability Champion

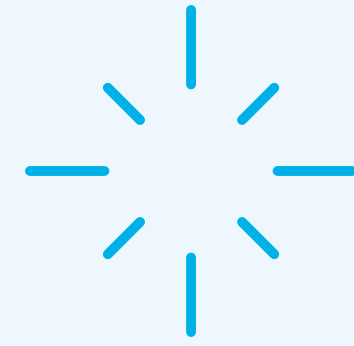


The Danube River has been vital for people and wildlife for centuries, but human activities since the late 1800s—such as straightening its course, building dams, extracting water, constructing nuclear plants, farming, and improving navigation—have altered its natural function. Combined with climate change, these changes have disrupted the river's balance, increasing flood risks, affecting energy production, reducing navigability, and impacting ecosystems along the Danube Basin. The SUNDANSE project will survey the river's configuration and dynamics using the state-of-the-art research vessel REXDAN, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the Danube from Vienna to the Black Sea.

[sundanseproject.eu](https://sundanseproject.eu)



**.eu**  **Web Awards**



## Web Awards winners



**SME Star**



Sustainable Innovations Europe (SIE) is a Madrid-based consultancy specialising in innovation management, public funding acquisition, and European project execution. The company excels in communicating, disseminating, and exploiting the results of European research and development projects, having managed over 35 projects funded by the European Commission. SIE is a trusted partner within the Horizon Europe ecosystem, committed to driving impact and supporting innovation across Europe.

[sustainableinnovations.eu](https://sustainableinnovations.eu)

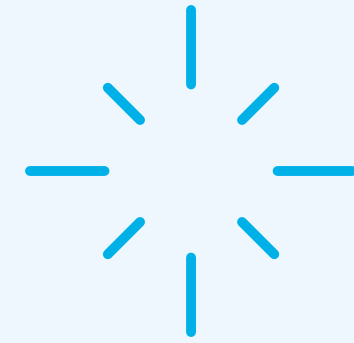


**Cultural Ambassador**



FAIRMUSE promotes fairness in the European music industry by examining how algorithms, data collection, and streaming models affect creators and audiences. The project aims to make the sector more efficient, competitive, and sustainable, and invites individuals to support its mission by donating their playlists through a dedicated portal to help research the impact of streaming habits on the music industry.

[fairmuse.eu](https://fairmuse.eu)



# Web Awards winners



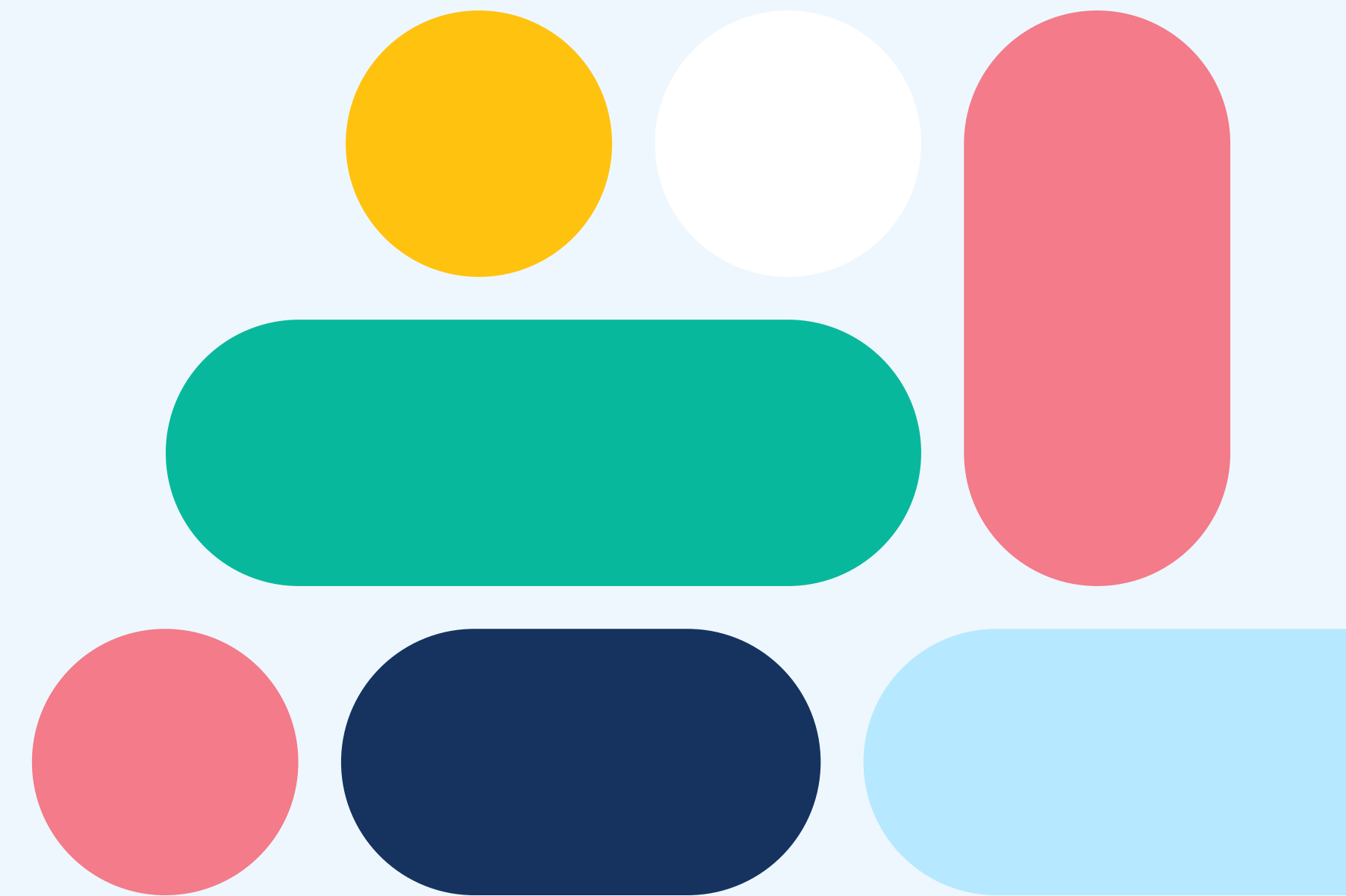
## People's Choice



**AU-EU  
Youth Voices Lab  
Power of the Collective**

AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective is a four-year initiative promoting youth engagement and inclusive decision-making across Africa and Europe. Implemented by an international consortium including Oxfam, Restless Development, Search for Common Ground, Youthmakers Hub, and ComDev Africa, the project empowers young people to influence policy, partnerships, and decision-making. Activities span all 54 African countries, with in-person interventions in 14 African countries and one in Europe.

[aueuyouthvoiceslab.eu](http://aueuyouthvoiceslab.eu)



# Making the most of your .eu domain name: **trends, risks and opportunities** for 2026

The online environment continues to evolve at remarkable speed, creating new opportunities and challenges for businesses, organisations and creators across Europe. As digital services grow more sophisticated and consumer expectations rise, having a strong online presence is no longer optional. It is a foundation for credibility, visibility and growth. A .eu domain name sits at the heart of this foundation, offering both stability and a clear European identity in an increasingly global digital landscape.

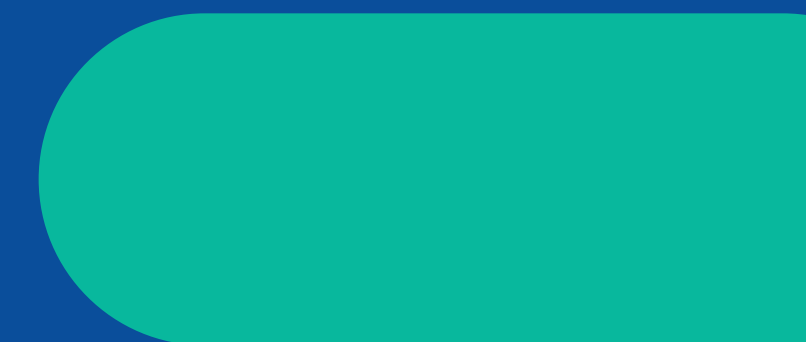
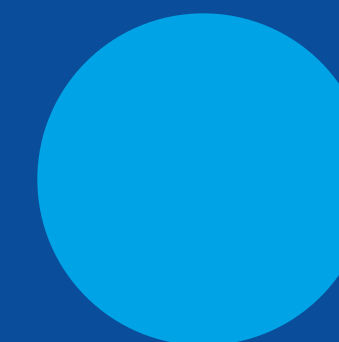
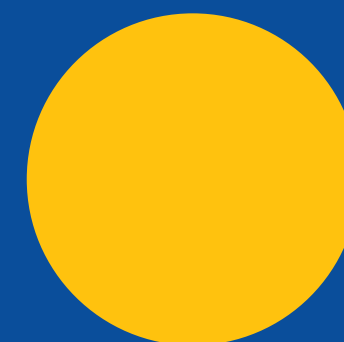
As we look ahead to 2026, several important trends are shaping how people and organisations build and use the online world. Understanding these developments can help .eu domain name holders position themselves for success in the coming year.

## Digital trends shaping 2026

Online behaviour in Europe continues to shift, influenced by advances in technology and rising consumer expectations. Cloud-based tools, automation and accessible AI applications are becoming standard features of everyday business operations. This creates new opportunities for smaller organisations by reducing the barriers to building professional digital services.

E-commerce continues to expand, supported by new approaches such as social commerce, voice search and visual search. Customers expect seamless experiences across devices and platforms, and they reward businesses that provide clarity, speed and convenience. Sustainability, transparency and responsible data practices are also becoming central to consumer trust. People want to understand who they are dealing with online and whether that organisation operates responsibly.

Together, these trends show that European website owners need to stay adaptable and invest in a digital presence that reflects modern user expectations.



## Risks that require attention

With these opportunities come meaningful risks that website owners should take seriously. Cybersecurity threats continue to grow in complexity as criminals adapt to new technologies. Phishing, domain abuse and fraudulent websites increasingly target both businesses and consumers, particularly during high activity periods such as sales seasons and public campaigns.

The rapid pace of technological change can also create issues.

Websites that do not keep up with modern standards may become slow, outdated or difficult to manage, affecting both credibility and search performance. Regulatory developments in Europe, especially those related to data and digital services, require ongoing awareness. Organisations that rely too heavily on external platforms, such as social media or marketplace services, may also find themselves vulnerable to changes in algorithms or policies that affect visibility and reach.

A secure and well managed domain name is the first line of defence against many of these risks.

## How a .eu domain name supports growth

A .eu domain name brings clear advantages in a crowded online environment. It signals to customers, partners and search engines that a business or organisation operates in or serves the European market. This fosters trust, especially at a time when users increasingly look for reliable and transparent online interactions.

Owning a .eu domain name also gives full control over your online presence. Unlike social media accounts or hosted platforms, your domain name and website remain your digital home. You decide how it looks, how it grows and how it supports your goals. The .eu registry works continuously to protect the namespace through security measures, monitoring and policies that reduce abuse and enhance trust for everyone who uses it.

For businesses expanding across Europe, a .eu website can also support multilingual content, localised marketing and clear audience targeting. It is a versatile tool for reaching diverse markets while presenting a unified brand.



## Practical steps for website owners in 2026

There are several actions that businesses and creators can take to make the most of their .eu domain name in the new year.

**1** Conduct a simple website check at the start of the year. Review performance, loading speed and mobile friendliness. Make sure your security settings are up to date and that your SSL certificate is active.

**2** Consider your audiences. If you reach multiple European markets, make sure your content, language versions and structure reflect this. Search engines and users value clarity.



**3** Review your domain name management. Ensure renewals are planned, your registrar account is secure and your contact data is correct. This reduces the risk of accidental expiry or unauthorised access.

**4** Explore how your site can support new user behaviours. This may include clearer navigation, improved product descriptions, updated images or new integration with tools your customers already use.



**5** Remain aware of cybersecurity risks. Use strong authentication where possible, keep your software updated and communicate transparently with your visitors about how their information is handled.

### Looking ahead

The digital landscape in Europe will continue to change throughout 2026. By staying informed about trends, managing risks, and making deliberate choices, .eu domain name holders can position themselves for sustained growth and visibility, while benefiting from the stability, trust, and European identity it provides.

# Simple steps to stay safe online

To keep you safe online during the busy holiday season, we would like to highlight four practical steps to protect yourself while shopping, browsing and managing your digital presence.



## Use strong passwords and a password manager

- **Strong passwords** are long, unique, and hard to guess. Avoid obvious choices like “123456” or “password.” Combine letters (uppercase and lowercase), numbers, and symbols.
- **Password managers** store and generate strong passwords for all your accounts, so you do not have to remember each one. They also help prevent reusing passwords across multiple sites, reducing the risk if one account is compromised.



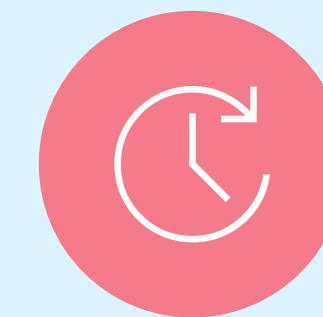
## Turn on multifactor authentication (MFA)

- MFA adds an extra layer of security to your accounts. Even if someone knows your password, they cannot log in without the second factor.
- Common MFA methods include a code sent to your phone, an authentication app (like Authenticator or Authy), or a physical security key.



## Recognize scams

- Scams can appear as phishing emails, fake websites, or suspicious messages asking for personal information or money.
- Look for red flags: poor spelling/grammar, urgent requests, unfamiliar links, or unexpected attachments.



## Keep software up to date

- Software updates often include security patches that fix vulnerabilities hackers could exploit.
- Regularly update your operating system, apps, browser, and antivirus programs. Enable automatic updates where possible to ensure you are always protected.

That's a wrap  
for this edition,  
thank you for reading!



**EURid vzw**

Telecomlaan 9, B-1831 Diegem (Belgium)

T +32 2 401 27 50 • [info@eurid.eu](mailto:info@eurid.eu)

RPR Brussel • VAT BE 0864.240.405