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## Intellectual Property - Russia

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### Domain name registrar yields to trademark owners' pressure

Contributed by **Baker & McKenzie - CIS Limited**

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Many users have reacted negatively to a rule change by RU-Center, which is the largest domain name registrar in the '.rf' domain and accounts for approximately half of all registered domains in Cyrillic. Its regulations and new client agreement, which came into force on May 16 2011, provide that the registrar can cancel ownership of a domain name at its own discretion, without a court order, if a registered owner of a trademark or company name in Russia submits a claim for the domain name. This change was introduced because owners of trademarks and company names that are similar to domains registered by third parties increasingly initiate litigation not only against domain owners, but also against the registrar.

Users that are opposed to the change maintain that RU-Center has put them at a disadvantage. They argue that the registrar has not documented clear criteria whereby such a decision would be taken, and that a court, not the registrar, should decide whether third parties' trademark or company name rights have been violated by the domain name registration.

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