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## Business registers in EU countries

International

The Business Register information is also available for the European Economic Area countries that are not EU Member States.

**Norway**

**Iceland**

**Liechtenstein**

### Norway

The Brønnøysund Register Centre is a government body under Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries. The Register of Business Enterprise is one of the 14 national registers managed by the Brønnøysund Register Centre.

The business register is responsible for registering all Norwegian and foreign business enterprises in Norway. The register shall ensure legal protection and financial overview, and it is an important source for anyone who needs accurate information about the participants in Norwegian industry.

#### What does the Norwegian business register offer?

The Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises provides information on registered businesses. At the Brønnøysund Register Centre website you can access key information through our search engine. Information from the business register can be found in announcements, and you can order additional information and transcripts from the web shop and through European Business Register (EBR).

#### Key information:

Company organisation number  
Company name, business address and other addresses  
Company formation date  
Company articles of associations and type of activity  
Roles in the company  
Bankruptcy information

#### Announcements:

The business register announces all major events for a company. It announces when a new company is registered, when important changes in a company have been registered, and the dissolution or striking off of a company. In the searchable database for announcements data is stored from November 1st 1999 and onwards. The [English-language version of announcements](#) is available from August 2006.

#### Additional information that can be ordered for a fee is transcripts and certificates such as:

Certificate of registration  
Annual accounts

#### Is access to the business register free of charge?

All key information that is accessible from our search engine and the information from the announcement database is free of charge. Some services as transcripts and certificates are subject to a fee.

#### How to search the Norwegian business register?

Basic information about the business enterprises registered in the business register is available at the Brønnøysund Register Centre [web site](#) Searches can be done either on company name or organization number in the [Announcements database](#).

#### To which extent can the documents in the register be relied upon?

Third parties can rely on the information in the Register of business Enterprises being the legally valid information about a company. The information registered is considered to have come to the attention of third parties. This applies both to the information itself and to the documents that are the grounds for registration. In practice this means that a third party should check the registered information about a company before doing business with it.

The rules regarding to which extent a third party can rely on information registered in the Register of Business Enterprises in Norway can be found in the Business Enterprises Registration Act section 10-1. A quick summary of the rules is that information registered is considered to have come to the attention of third parties.

A more detailed explanation is that for cases where a rule of law determines the legal position of a third party as to whether they were aware or not aware of a particular matter, the information registered in the Register of Business Enterprises is considered to have come to the attention of the third party.

For matters where notification of registration should have been sent to register (but has not been sent), and these matters are in contradiction to the information registered, then these matters cannot be brought to bear against a third party. An exception to this rule is the situation where the third party was aware of or should have been aware of the matter. In this situation the third party cannot justifiably claim that they could rely on the registered information.

#### History of the Norwegian business register

The Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises was established in 1988 and has carried on the functions of the nearly 100 former local trade registers.

#### Related links

[The Business Enterprises Registration Act in Norwegian](#)

### Iceland

#### What does the Icelandic business register offer?

The Register of Enterprises is a division within the Directorate of Internal Revenue since 2003 and operates a public file containing information about following entities:

individuals, companies and other entities engaged in business  
institutions and state-owned companies  
institutions and companies owned by municipalities  
associations, organisations and entities, other than individuals, responsible for asset management or carry any tax obligations  
other activities the Internal Revenue/Register of Enterprises sees any reason to register in official file.  
The register shall contain the following information about above-mentioned entities as applicable:

Name  
Identification number, address  
Legal form  
The date of establishment  
Name, address and identification number of the executives  
Activity code (ISAT-nr.)  
Liquidation  
Other items which according to laws is necessary to register.

Upon registration the Register issues a unique identification number for the entity.

The Register of Enterprises provides public bodies, companies and individuals information from the register according to regulation set by the Minister regarding the scope of information and fees.

#### **Is access to the business register free of charge?**

Information about the name, address, legal form, ISAT code and VAT number are publicly available on the website of The Internal Revenue/Register of Enterprises free of charge.

Further information must be paid for and hopefully will be available from our web-store in the year 2016.

#### **How to search the business register in Iceland?**

On the web site of the [Directorate of Internal Revenue](#) it is possible to search for information which is free of charge. Unfortunately it is only in Icelandic yet. For further information it is necessary to contact the office by phone or e-mail until the web store opens next year.

#### **History of the Icelandic business registers.**

Until 1980 companies were registered with the local commissioners throughout Iceland. In 1980 a special register for limited companies was set up but Statistics Iceland issued identification numbers for these companies. From 1997 all business companies other than unlimited partnerships were registered at The Register of Enterprises and from 2014 registration of partnerships is also takes place there so now we have only one official business register in Iceland, The Register of Enterprises.

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## **Liechtenstein**

A business register (*Handelsregister*) is held for the entire country of Liechtenstein. The business register is maintained by the Department of Justice (*Amt für Justiz*) in Vaduz.

The business register is a public register and is presumed to be accurate. Its principal objective is to ensure the legal certainty of commerce by disclosing legal relationships governed by private law, in particular the situations of natural and legal persons engaging in business when it comes to liability and authority to act.

#### **What does the business register offer?**

The business register contains information about all registered legal entities with their registered office in the Principality of Liechtenstein and about Liechtenstein trusts (*Treuhänderschaften*). The information covers facts and relationships some of which must be entered in the register by law and some of which are entered voluntarily, along with the relevant supporting documents.

Documents in respect of unregistered trusts are also lodged with the business register, as are data related to foundations (*Stiftungen*) that are not registered.

#### **Is access to the business registers free of charge?**

Access to the business register is subject to the payment of a fee.

Partial information on any of the legal entities registered in the business register and other legal information can be found free of charge in the register's business index (*Firmenindex*) via the link [http://www.oera.li/hrweb/ger/firmensuche\\_afj.htm](http://www.oera.li/hrweb/ger/firmensuche_afj.htm), and a certified full statement can be ordered for a fee via the same link.

#### **How to search the business register in Liechtenstein?**

The business register, including notifications and supporting documents, is public.

The business index (*Firmenindex*) can be used to search for a registered legal entity using its name or commercial name or its register number.

#### **To which extent can the information in the registers be relied upon?**

Article 3a of Directive 2009/101/EC, as amended by Directive 2012/17/EU, requires Member States to give information explaining the provisions of national law according to which third parties can rely on the company documents and particulars referred to in Article 2. The Decision of the EEA Joint Committee of 8 October 2013 states that Directive 2012/17/EU is to be incorporated into the EEA Agreement.

Except where the legislation provides that only partial publication or publication of extracts is required, entries in the business register are published by the Department of Justice in the official gazette in full and without delay (Article 956(1) of the Persons and Companies Act (*Personen- und Gesellschaftsrecht*, PGR)). The official publication of the Principality of Liechtenstein is the electronic official gazette (*Amtsblatt*) (Article 16 of the Publication Act (*Kundmachungsgesetz*)).

Entries, amendments and deletions in the business register may be relied upon by any person acting in good faith. The content of the entry, amendment or deletion may be relied upon against the party registered provided it was submitted at that party's wish (Article 948(1) and (2) PGR).

With regard to third parties, an entry in the business register is effective on the day after the day on which the entry is published, always provided that there is a legal requirement for publication (Article 947(2) PGR).

Under Article 949 PGR, entry in the business register has the effect of disclosure, and once registration has taken effect with respect to third parties a person is no longer entitled to object that they were unaware of the entry. However, if there was a requirement that a particular fact must be registered, and that fact was not registered, it can be relied upon against a third party only if it can be proven that the third party was aware of it.

#### **History of the business register**

The data in the Liechtenstein business register were originally recorded on index cards. All the current data, as well as a large proportion of the historical data, are now available electronically.

## Additional information

Entries in the business register are published in the legally required format in the electronic gazette, and may be relied upon by third parties only with effect from the day after the day on which they are published. In the event of any discrepancy between the entry in the register and the information published, the entry in the register takes precedence.

## Publication and effect of entries in the business register

### Public nature of the business register

The business register, including notifications and supporting documents, is public. Entries can be accessed by anyone. Documents in the register concerning public limited companies (*Aktiengesellschaften*), limited partnerships (*Kommanditaktiengesellschaften*) and private limited companies (*Gesellschaften mit beschränkter Haftung*) can be accessed without restriction; for bodies with other legal forms, the inquirer must prove a legitimate interest (Article 953 PGR).

### Publication of entries

Except where the legislation provides that only partial publication or publication of extracts is required, entries in the business register are published by the Department of Justice in the official gazette in full and without delay. All documents and particulars that must by law be lodged and published are published in the same way (Article 956 et seq. PGR). The information published can be relied upon directly against anyone from the end of the day on which it is published.

Notices concerning public limited companies (*Aktiengesellschaften*), limited partnerships (*Kommanditaktiengesellschaften*) and private limited companies (*Gesellschaften mit beschränkter Haftung*) take the form of a reference published in the official gazette to the entry and to the supporting documents and particulars. The same applies in the case of any legal person carrying on a trade in a commercial fashion. In other cases notices take the form of a reference to the entry in the register (Article 957 PGR).

### Effectiveness of entries in dealings with third parties

**With regard to third parties, an entry in the business register is effective** on the day after the day on which the entry was published, always provided there is a legal requirement for publication (Article 947(2) PGR).

In the case of public limited companies (*Aktiengesellschaften*), limited partnerships (*Kommanditaktiengesellschaften*) and private limited companies (*Gesellschaften mit beschränkter Haftung*) a fact that has been registered and published cannot be relied upon against a third party if it relates to a legal transaction that is carried out within fifteen days after the date on which the entry becomes effective and the third party can prove that they were not aware of it and could not have been expected to be aware of it (Article 949(1a) PGR).

**Once registration has taken effect** with respect to third parties, a person is no longer entitled to object that they were unaware of the entry (Article 949(1) PGR).

Entries in the business register constitute **full evidence** of the facts they attest unless it is shown that they are incorrect (Article 949(3) PGR).

### Discrepancies between entry as submitted and as published

If there is a **discrepancy** between the entry in the register and the information published, the entry in the register takes precedence, and then the information published, and finally the content of the supporting documents. In the event of a discrepancy between an entry in the register and the information published, third parties acting in good faith can also rely on the information published against the party for whom the entry was made (Article 959(2) and (3) PGR).

### Related links

[Persons and Companies Act \(\*Personen- und Gesellschaftsrecht\*, PGR\) of 20 January 1926 \(published LGBl. 1926 No 4\)](#)

[Publication Act \(\*Kundmachungsgesetz\*\) of 17 April 1985 \(published LGBl. 1985 No 41\)](#)

[Official Gazette Regulation \(\*Amtsblattverordnung\*\) of 4 September 2012 \(published LGBl. 2012 No 284\)](#)

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