

Intellectual property (IP) is the backbone of a competitive European economy, creating jobs and bringing innovative products and services to consumers and companies



Economic progress depends on new ideas and new knowledge. Companies and entrepreneurs will invest in innovation and creation if they can reap the fruits of their endeavours.

At the same time, innovation and creativity must be accessible to as many people as possible so that dynamic businesses can thrive, consumers can benefit from innovative products and services, and cultural diversity can flourish.

For these reasons, the Commission aims to promote balanced IP rules, by continuing to build an IP infrastructure that works for European citizens and Europe's competitiveness.

Michel Barnier
Member of the European Commission
in charge of Internal Market and Services

For further information, please visit:

Commission:

> ec.europa.eu/internal_market/top_layer/intellectual-property/index_en.htm

Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM):

> www.oami.europa.eu

European Patent Office:

> www.epo.org/

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Intellectual Property Rights

Europe's asset,
Europe's priority



Internal Market
and Services

What are intellectual property rights?

Intellectual property rights enable authors, artists, designers, inventors and other IPR users to decide how their creations and inventions are used.

These rights, most of which are time-limited, are a key incentive to creativity and innovation, and thus improve consumer choice and job creation in Europe's economy.

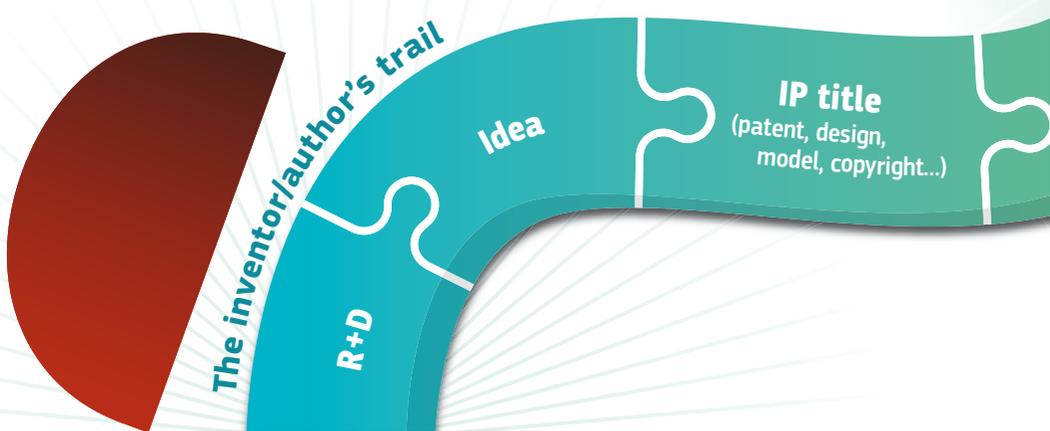
Intellectual property rights fall into two categories:

1. **Industrial property**, which principally comprises:

- **patents**, meaning new technical inventions;
- **trademarks**, which can be a word, logo or symbol that competitor companies may not use once it has been protected;
- **designs**, meaning the outward appearance of a product;
- **geographical indications**, meaning locally produced products.

2. **Copyright**, covering literary and artistic works such as books, articles, plays, films, musical works, paintings, photographs, sculptures and maps. Rights related to copyright include those of performers and producers of films and rights in sound recordings and broadcasts.

In addition to the rights themselves, ensuring awareness of and respect for intellectual property, alongside appropriate mechanisms for enforcement, are essential links in the invention chain.



“For 30 years now we have proposed new and innovative products to European consumers. But in order to be able to continue to innovate and create, we have to be able to protect our designs as a Registered Community Design, a Community Trade mark or as a patent to avoid being copied by cheap, poor-quality products. Without this it is also the quality of our brand, our jobs and our investments that are undermined.”

Koziol, German company producing design items for the home

Did you know that?

- The production of sports goods, games, toys and computer software uses several different types of intellectual property in the same product.
- **39% of total economic activity** in the EU (some €4.7bn annually) is generated by IPR intensive sectors.
- **25% of all employment in the EU** (56 million jobs) is provided by IPR intensive sectors; 10% of all other jobs in the EU indirectly stems from these sectors.
- **40% higher remuneration** on average is paid by IPR intensive sectors than by other sectors.

Source: "Intellectual Property Rights intensive industries: contribution to economic performance and employment in Europe" (September 2013), joint study from the European Patent Office and the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market

What is the EU doing?

Since 2011, the EU has made significant progress to promote intellectual property rights which are fit for purpose in the 21st century:

- a **unitary patent** allowing companies to have a single and affordable patent giving them protection in the EU;
- updated rules on **tackling fake products** at our borders;
- empowering museums and libraries to **digitise Europe's cultural heritage**;
- setting up a **platform for stakeholders** to discuss and help address IPR Infringements, in particular by collecting reliable data.

Discussions are currently underway on

- rules to **increase consumer choice in accessing music online**;
- improving EU rules on **trademarks**.

Upcoming actions will include

- a review of EU **copyright** law in the digital age;
- proposals on preventing the misappropriation of **confidential business information**;
- an **action plan** to promote awareness of and respect for IP rights.

“Our innovation policy induces us to apply for at least two patents or trade mark registrations per year in Europe. We want to reach the future through innovation. It is important to bring innovation to the market. New solutions for new problems – responding to new needs of the market.”

João Pedro Santos, Coordinator - Research, Development and Innovation, Villafelpos, Portuguese textile manufacturer