

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000298/25
to the Commission
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(23 January 2025)

Subject: Boosting innovation: the impact of intellectual property rights on business growth and employee benefits

As outlined in a report released on 9 January 2025 by the European Patent Office (EPO) and the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), businesses that hold intellectual property rights tend to generate between 28% and 41% higher revenues than those that do not.

Using data collected between 2013 and 2022, the report analysed over 119 000 companies across EU Member States and revealed a strong correlation between company performance and the ownership of patents, trademarks and designs. This connection is particularly significant for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Employees also benefit from this dynamic: companies that hold intellectual property rights provide salaries that are, on average, 22% higher than those offered by companies without such rights.

What steps is the Commission taking to encourage and support the growth of businesses that own intellectual property rights?

Submitted: 23.1.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(2 May 2025)

The Commission shares the views of the Honourable Member and recognises the importance of efficient and accessible intellectual property (IP) systems in today's knowledge economy.

With support from the Draghi report ⁽¹⁾, the Commission is working to strengthen the EU's IP system. The nine Member States, which have not yet joined the Unitary Patent system ⁽²⁾, will be encouraged to do so.

In 2023 the Commission adopted proposals ⁽³⁾ for a unitary supplementary protection certificate (SPC) that would complement the unitary patent, and for a recast of the national SPC regulations.

It is essential that EU small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can easily obtain and enforce IP rights. The SME Fund ⁽⁴⁾ and the IP Helpdesks ⁽⁵⁾ play key roles in this respect:

The SME Fund partially reimburses registration costs for several types of IP rights, and the costs of initial IP advice on their protection and enforcement. More than 30 800 SMEs benefited from these services in 2024.

In order to provide a level playing field for EU companies exporting to or operating in third countries, the Commission continues — through bilateral trade agreements, IP dialogues and IP cooperation projects, as well as action in relevant multilateral fora — its efforts to ensure effective protection and enforcement of EU IP in third countries.

In addition, the costs for protection of IP generated during research projects funded under Horizon Europe ⁽⁶⁾ are eligible for reimbursement.

Finally, IP rights must be effectively enforced. In 2019, counterfeit products made up nearly 6% of all EU imports (EUR 119 billion). That is why enforcement remains a priority.

The Commission aims to implement its Recommendation to combat counterfeiting, and to introduce new measures and tools to strengthen IP enforcement ⁽⁷⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report_en

⁽²⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/intellectual-property/patent-protection-eu/unitary-patent-system_en

⁽³⁾ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposals-regulations-supplementary-protection-certificates_en

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.euiipo.europa.eu/en/sme-corner/sme-fund/2025>

⁽⁵⁾ https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/index_en

⁽⁶⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁽⁷⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202400915