



European
Commission

START UP

Start up Strategy

SUPPORTIVE IPR FRAMEWORK FOR SMES AND START-UPS

Intellectual property rights (IPR) protect companies' intangible assets and allow them to profit from their creations and innovations. Today, only a small number of SMEs and Start-ups use IPRs, either because they lack the necessary knowledge and expertise, or they find procedures to protect their IPRs too costly. Helping small companies wishing to access and make use of the IP system can lead to **higher returns from their innovation efforts** and give them **easier access to finance**. That's why the Commission is putting forward a **package of actions to support startups and SMEs** with their intellectual property, especially when growing within the Single Market.

WHY ARE IPRS IMPORTANT TO SMALL BUSINESSES?

32%

higher revenue per employee than enterprises that don't use it. They also **expand their workforce faster** and **pay higher salaries**

42%

of EU GDP is generated by intellectual property intensive industries

9%

of EU SMEs use intellectual property, compared to **36% of large companies**.

28%

of jobs (60 million) in Europe are provided by intellectual property intensive industries

Knowing how to manage IP is essential for **increasing competitiveness and growing across borders**.

WHAT SOLUTIONS IS THE COMMISSION PROPOSING?

The Commission puts forward a **package of actions** to help SMEs/start-ups access use and manage IP rights, and help improve the overall performance of existing IP support measures:

- developing a tailored service matching the **individual business needs** of SMEs.
- working with Member States to **improve IP awareness actions and IP funding** for SMEs.
- co-financing through **COSME the access of SMEs to European patents** (including future unitary patents).
- developing **patent licensing information**.
- developing an **EU IP mediation and arbitration network for SMEs/start-ups** to solve disputes without the need to go to court.
- encouraging the creation of **European-level insurance schemes for litigation** so that SMEs/start-ups have the capability of defending, when necessary, their rights in court.

- encouraging the adoption of a **common method** for determining the financial value of IP assets to facilitate banks to better understand the value of these start-ups.



WHAT SUPPORT IS ALREADY AVAILABLE?



The **European IPR Helpdesk** offers **free of charge, first-line support on IP and IPR matters** to beneficiaries of EU funded research projects and EU SMEs involved in transnational partnership agreements.

Three specialised helpdesks support European SMEs in **China, South-East Asia and Latin America**.

These multilingual helpdesks offer **free services** including confidential first-line advice on registering formal IPRs (such as patents, trademarks or design rights), managing intellectual property as a business asset, dealing with intellectual property rights infringements, and the provision of information and training on related topics.