

## 93 % of SMEs with registered IP rights see a positive impact on their business, new EUIPO survey finds

- **Just 1 in 10 small businesses in the EU own intellectual property rights**
- **Difficulties when registering and lack of knowledge, among the main barriers**

The 2022 edition of the [Intellectual Property SME Scoreboard](#), a major EU-wide survey released today by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) through the European Observatory on Infringements of IP rights, shows that only **10 % of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the EU own registered intellectual property (IP) rights such as national and European trade marks, designs and patents.**

The new survey shows that a large majority of EU SMEs may not know how to best profit from their intellectual assets or where to find help to develop their IP strategies.

Nevertheless, the 2022 SME Scoreboard also shows that nearly all (93 %) **SMEs with registered IP rights experienced a positive impact on their business.**

SMEs cited **improved reputation** or image of the company (60 %), **better IP protection** (58 %), and **better long-term business prospects** (48 %) due to registering their IP rights.

### Why IP registration matters

Economic studies show a positive relationship between ownership of IP rights and economic performance, which is particularly strong for SMEs. Those that own IP rights **obtain 68 % more revenue** per employee than SMEs that do not.

The data from the SME Scoreboard confirms the positive impact of registration. Moreover, **a third of SMEs (36 %) that own IP rights say that they have achieved financial gain** from their registered IP rights.

Looking at the **reasons for not registering**, SMEs stated that the primary reason was that they did not see additional benefits from registering IP rights (35 %). Other reasons mentioned include: thinking their intellectual asset was not innovative enough for registration (20 %); insufficient knowledge (19 %); or registration requirements not being met (19 %).



Regarding the most popular **reasons to register**, SMEs believe that IP rights help prevent from being copied (66 %), closely followed by increasing the value and image of their company (65 %) and guaranteeing better legal certainty for them (63 %). Half of the SMEs also consider effective enforcement as a reason to register.

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, **Christian Archambeau**, said:

*Together with both the EU and the IP community, we can continue to act as a lighthouse to SMEs as they steadily navigate the world of intellectual property. One way to do so is ensuring that SMEs are aware of the benefits of protecting their innovation and creativity. We are also working closely with our partners to provide financial support and guidance so that every SME which creates IP that needs to be protected from infringement should be able to do so as easily and cost-effectively as possible.*

## **IP rights infringement**

The study also looks at infringement and how SMEs cope with this problem. Among the SMEs that own a registered IP right, **15 % have suffered from infringement of their IP rights**, most often regarding their trade marks, resulting in a loss of turnover and reputation. 9 out of 10 of those SMEs have taken measures to enforce their IP rights, notably via direct negotiations.

In general, 85 % of the SMEs that owned registered IP rights rely on specific measures to identify potential infringements of their IP rights. They mostly rely on customer feedback, incidental information, or use systematic monitoring.

## **Support for SMEs**

[SMEs](#) represent 99 % of all businesses in the EU. They employ around 100 million people, and account for more than half of Europe's GDP. Despite being heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, they play a key role in every sector of the economy and are vital in driving innovation.

The EUIPO, together with the European Commission and the national and regional IP offices of the EU, has launched a [set of initiatives](#) to support EU SMEs in the field of intellectual property.

The [SME Fund](#), which was set up in the wake of the pandemic and is still running, is a grant scheme that provides financial aid to SMEs for trade mark, design and patent applications as well as for personalised IP support ('IP Scan'). Almost **30 000 businesses** in the EU have benefitted from this initiative since it began in January 2021.



## NOTE TO EDITORS

The [2022 IP SME Scoreboard](#) is one of the EUIPO's flagship studies, developed through the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights, which celebrates its [10th anniversary](#) at the EUIPO this year.

In 2016 and 2019, the Observatory issued the first two editions of the IP SME Scoreboard to cast light on how and why SMEs do, or do not, use IP rights. Between March and May 2022, the collection of data for the SME Scoreboard took place with data from 8 372 SMEs in the 27 EU Member States. The new study provides information that supports the implementation of the European Commission's [SME strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe](#) and the [IP action plan](#).

Over the past 10 years, the Observatory has provided evidence of the impact of IP and has become a reference point as regards the understanding of IP. It has published over [110 studies](#), covering a wide range of IP-related subjects, such as the economic contribution and value of IP rights, the damage caused by infringements, and the attitudes towards and perception of IP among EU citizens and SMEs.

## ABOUT THE EUIPO

The [EUIPO](#) is one of the largest decentralised agencies of the EU, based in Alicante, Spain. Ranked as the [most innovative IP office in the world](#) in 4 out of the last 5 years, the EUIPO manages the registration of the [European Union trade mark \(EUTM\)](#) and the [registered Community design \(RCD\)](#), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all EU Member States. It also cooperates with the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU and hosts the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights. The EUIPO also runs the [Ideas Powered for Business website](#) and the [SME Fund](#), to support European SMEs in the field of IP.

The [European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights](#) was established in 2009 to support the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights and to help combat the growing threat of intellectual property infringement in Europe. It was transferred to the EUIPO on 5 June 2012 by [Regulation \(EU\) No 386/2012](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council.

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