

Strategic Plan
2030
The EUIPO's DNA

*A robust, inclusive, diverse and
sustainable IP ecosystem that works for all.*

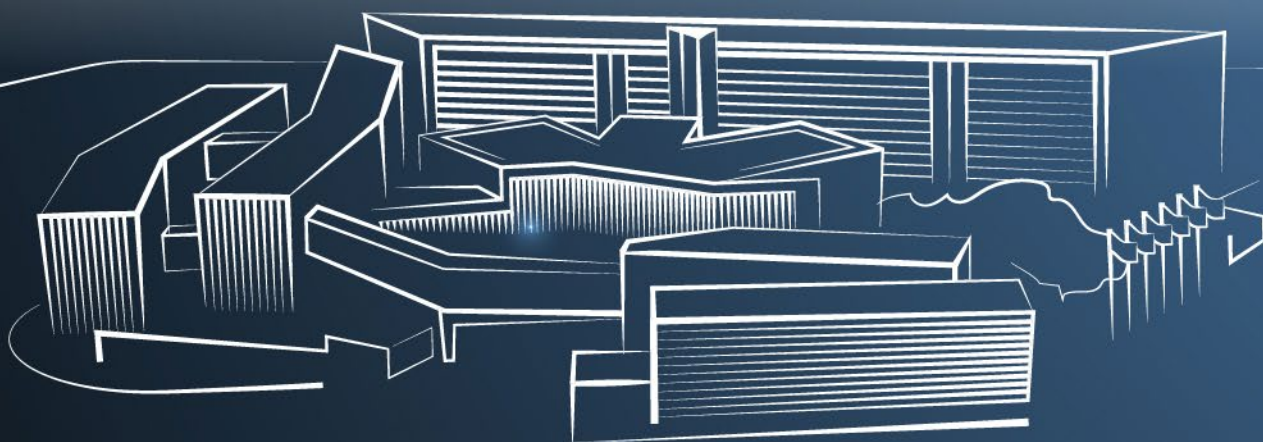


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Executive Summary - EUIPO Strategy 2030

The **mission** of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) is to deliver, together with national and regional intellectual property (IP) offices of the European Union (EU), high-value IP services to citizens and businesses in an efficient and effective manner, contributing to fostering innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth in Europe.

The EUIPO has binding decision-making powers and delivers services directly to industry. The agency works within the unique context of the IP system in the EU where it co-exists with the national and regional IP offices in a two-tier protection system. Taken together, these factors are the justification behind the two **Strategic Drivers** in which the Office has developed its work: (1) an internal driver, focused on improving the way we work; and (2) an external driver, focused on establishing effective cooperation with external stakeholders. These two drivers are the '**enduring constants**' of the functioning of the EUIPO and they will continue to be the basis for attaining our strategic goals in the future. They provide the structural framework that supports the development and implementation of the overall strategy.

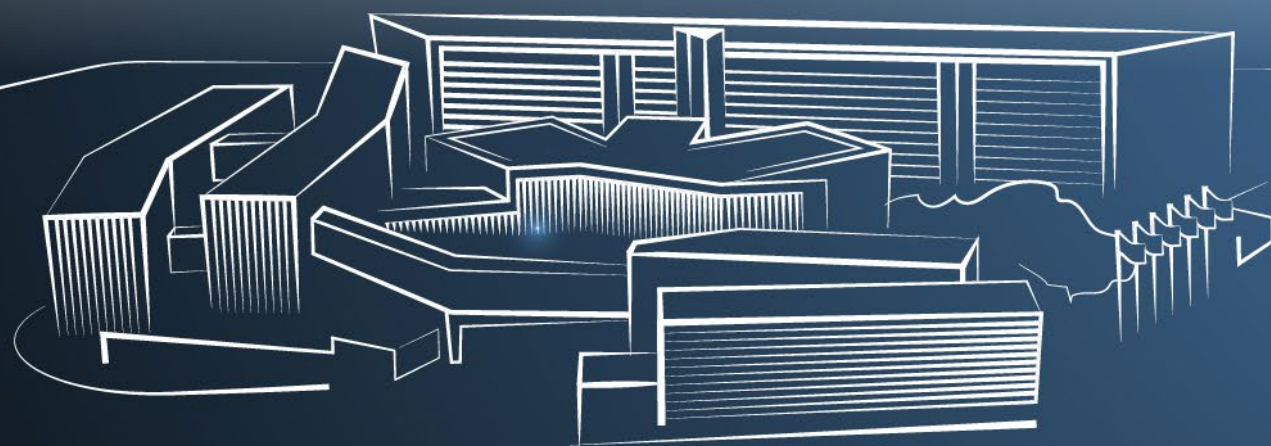
In the coming years we will pursue five **Goals**: (1) optimise operational efficiency and effectiveness towards long-term sustainable excellence; (2) enhance the value of IP products and services by expanding quality, consistency, and legal certainty; (3) improve the access to the IP system and the use of IP rights in support of innovation-driven economic growth in Europe; (4) build trust and respect for IP; and (5) ensure long-term sustainability of the European Union Intellectual Property Network (EUIPN).

In order to accomplish our mission and attain our Goals, it is essential that our two drivers are further reinforced. For that purpose, we will strengthen our main Organisational Enablers: (1) People, technology and work environment; (2) Financial and administrative sustainability; and (3) Network engagement.

Sustained by our two strategic drivers and building upon our Organisational Enablers, we will work in six **Priority Impact Areas**. These are groups of activities that have a direct impact on the outside world: customers, entrepreneurs and innovators, the general public, national and regional IP offices in the EU and beyond. They are interlinked and will contribute to the attainment of all five Goals.

The priority impact areas are the following: (1) Customer and Quality – aiming to enhance the customer experience by delivering innovative IP products and services, as well as consistent, legally sound, predictable, and high value IP rights, delivered in a timely fashion; (2) Awareness and Education – aiming to support a greater understanding of IP matters in Europe and beyond; (3) Promotion of Innovation – aiming to improve access to the IP system, make IP a matter of business priority, and enhance IP as a tool for growth and sustainable development; (4) Inclusive IP Landscape – aiming to reinforce the EU IP system and ensure that it serves everyone; (5) Enforcement of IP – aiming to ensure trust and respect for IP rights; and (6) IP Alliances – aiming to transform our collaboration network to a true community.

While pursuing our strategy, we will progress towards our **Vision: A robust, inclusive, diverse and sustainable IP ecosystem that works for all.**



Strategic Drivers

Strategic Driver 1

Modern, high performing and resilient organisation

Strategic Driver 2

Cooperation for high-value IP services to citizens and businesses

Strategic Plan 2030

The EUIPO's DNA

Organisational Enablers

People, technology and work environment

Financial and administrative sustainability

Network engagement

Priority Impact Areas

Customer and Quality

Awareness and Education

Promotion of innovation

Inclusive IP landscape in Europe

Enforcement

IP Alliances

Goals

Optimise operational efficiency and effectiveness

Enhance the value of IP products and services

Improve access to the IP system and promote the use of IP rights

Build trust and respect for IP

Ensure long-term sustainability of the EUIPN

Mission

Our mission is to deliver, together with national and regional IP offices of the EU, high-value IP services to citizens and businesses in an efficient and effective manner, contributing to fostering innovation, competitiveness and economic growth in Europe.

Vision

Our vision is to ensure a robust, inclusive, diverse and sustainable IP ecosystem that works for all.



Introduction

The establishment of the EUIPO, in 1994, is a remarkable achievement in the history of IP. Thirty years after its creation its validity remains undiminished.

The EUIPO is at once an expression and a facilitator of the internal market on which citizens and businesses alike rely to provide timely and effective protection for their intangible assets. The unitary IP rights it grants – EU trade marks, designs and geographical indications (GIs) for craft and industrial products – are of immense value for businesses operating in the EU marketplace, of all sizes and in all sectors.

Throughout these last three decades, as an active part of the European public service, the EUIPO has contributed to a stronger and more competitive European economy which depends more and more on sectors and companies that make intensive use of IP.

From a small registration office, receiving little more than 40 000 trade mark applications annually, the EUIPO has evolved into a major EU agency with global reach, contributing actively to fostering innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth, and strengthening the IP system at European and international level. It now deals with around 300 000 trade mark and design applications annually. During the last three decades, the EUIPO has registered close to five million trade marks and designs in total, received from applicants all over the world. Over the years, the EUIPO has been entrusted with additional tasks and responsibilities, from the creation of the registered Community design in 2003 to the transfer of the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights from the European Commission in 2012, and most recently the creation of the new title for GIs for craft and industrial products.

Together with the national and regional registrations, offered by IP offices of the EU Member States, gathered in the EUIPN, the EUIPO plays a key role within the European IP and innovation ecosystem. It does so by offering consistent and coherent services and solutions to support citizens and businesses that seek to protect the results of their investments in innovation.

The EUIPO has accomplished its mission with complete administrative and financial autonomy, funding all its operations through trade mark and design fees. This financial and administrative autonomy – coupled with a highly talented and skilled staff, including experts coming from all Member States, from the public and private sectors, and from EU institutions and agencies – has been one of the major components of its success.

For the last thirty years, the EUIPO has experienced disruptions and transformations and each time it has been able to reinvent itself, remaining vibrant and useful for its stakeholders. Currently the EUIPO is poised to open a new chapter in its history that

will determine the shape of everything to come. In the coming years it must realise its full potential, fully embrace change and innovation, and further develop its mission, whilst ensuring its overall long-term sustainability, as well as that of the EUIPN – for the benefit of its users.

In a world where innovation is becoming more open, more global and moving ever faster, we need to commit to doing not only more but also better to continue to be a catalyst for growth, job creation, investment, and economic and social development in Europe. Therefore, it is imperative that over the coming years the EUIPO is equipped to tackle the challenges that lie ahead. We need to grasp the opportunities presented in order to support our existing and potential users throughout the intellectual property rights (IPR) cycle, from registration to use and enforcement, helping Europe derive maximum value from its innovative power and intellectual assets. We renew our determination to be a modern, high performing and sustainable organisation, one that operates fully digitally and supports the EU's environmental goals, both by helping to protect green innovation through the IP rights we grant, and in our own operations.

In this context, we will work to establish the EUIPO as an IP hub offering – together with the national and regional IP offices of the EU Member States – high-value IP services to citizens and businesses. This will be built upon the core values of excellence, quality, professionalism, transparency, trust, community and inclusion and will contribute to fostering innovation, competitiveness and economic growth in Europe in a fair and inclusive manner.

This Strategic Plan, developed in a collaborative and inclusive process through the engagement of EUIPO staff, national and regional IP offices, the Management Board and Budget Committee, European institutions, user associations, international organisations and the public at large, sets out the goals that will drive our work in the coming years.





The Big Picture: Responding to the Challenges Ahead

IP is an essential part of the infrastructure of a modern economy, and its importance has increased in the past decades. Today, the bulk of the value of many companies consists of IP and other intangible assets. IPR-intensive industries account for 40% of all jobs in the EU, 47 % of its gross domestic product (GDP) and 93 % of European exports.

More than ever before, IP rights play a vital role in growing the economies of countries in Europe and elsewhere, by supporting innovation and giving large and small businesses the tools for their success. Furthermore, IP rights benefit consumers through a continuous stream of innovative products and services, expanding society's overall level of knowledge and well-being. Innovation is also needed to tackle the challenges facing the world, not least climate change. In this context, IP is a powerful tool for supporting and encouraging innovation and fostering competitiveness and economic growth in Europe.

Today, citizens and businesses are faced with multiple, evolving, and compounding geopolitical, demographic, environmental, social and economic shifts. The geopolitical system that has been dominant since 1989 is changing towards a multi-polar world in which economic and innovative power is increasing in regions beyond the traditional powers of Europe and North America. In this inter-connected and interdependent world, where the challenges of globalisation and technological progress have become ever more complex, having a well-functioning IP system is essential for remaining competitive in the global knowledge-based economy.

At present, several events are causing serious social, economic, and geopolitical disruptions at European and global level. The after-effects of the global pandemic are still being felt and the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East have led to profound changes in Europe's security architecture. In this context the first ever European defence industrial strategy sets a clear long-term vision to achieve defence industrial readiness and recognises that the IP system can efficiently protect and support investments in this area.

The pace of technological and societal change is accelerating, leading to new business models and consumer habits, but also new threats to our digital security and data privacy – all of which put the IP system to the test. While these events have been highly disruptive, they have also accelerated pre-existing social shifts and technology trends, providing economic operators with the opportunity to look for new sources of growth such as digitalisation, automation and innovation – all areas in which IP plays a critical role.

Faced with the scale and complexity of the challenges that lie ahead we must develop even further our abilities to overcome them.

One major challenge the EUIPO is facing concerns the high levels of uncertainty and volatility as regards the expected demand for IP services, namely the volumes of incoming trade mark and design applications. Coupled with high inflation rates, such uncertainty generates increasing difficulties in terms of resource planning and workforce management. Ensuring budgetary stability and long-term financial sustainability are therefore core challenges the EUIPO will face in the coming years. These challenges must be overcome in order to ensure that we will be able to continue to support innovators in the future, as well as ensuring the long-term sustainability of the EUIPN.

In view of the upcoming expansion of the IP regulatory framework, which aims to tackle the existing fragmentation of the European IP system, the EUIPO has recently been entrusted with a new responsibility in the area of GIs for craft and industrial products.

Several other legislative initiatives are underway. While these new responsibilities present an opportunity, contributing to improving the services that we provide, it is reasonable to expect that the EUIPO will be impacted in the future with a subsequent increase of its responsibilities and workload. As a corollary, we will have to ensure that over the coming years we are able to cope with growing levels of demand for IP rights, going beyond trade marks, designs, and GIs, while improving the quality of our work. In short, we will have to do more while optimising efficiency in the use of our human and financial resources. This implies a need to prioritise and rationalise activities and to simplify the way we work.

Another opportunity is associated with the emergence and impact of new technologies – such as Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) – which open new possibilities for both public administrations and private operators. These new technologies not only pose challenges to society as a whole, including to the IP system, but also offer a window of opportunity to modernise working methods of both public and private organisations, enhancing higher levels of performance, consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness.

In such a demanding global environment, where innovation has become pivotal, IP regulatory organisations are faced with a common need to bring the IP ecosystem much closer to all those who seek protection for their intangible assets. Together with national and regional IP offices, the EUIPO will leverage its role in promoting, supporting and protecting innovation to develop common solutions and provide citizens and businesses with the necessary tools to help drive their success through IP valuation, monetisation and commercialisation.

Additionally, the imperative need for IP protection in the digital world poses new challenges as regards ensuring trust and respect for IP rights. With the rise of e-commerce, online sales platforms and other digital intermediaries are becoming ever more relevant, making monitoring and enforcing IP rights ever more challenging.

The recently published 'Letta report on the single market', establishes the goal to ensure **a sustainable single market that works for all**. Currently, there are several groups in our society that are underrepresented in the IP and innovation systems, such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), women, and the younger generation of entrepreneurs. For instance, only 10 % of SMEs use IP rights and the younger generation displays a high level of scepticism about IP with around 40 % of them acquiring counterfeit products knowingly. On the other hand, women creators account

for only 24 % of designs protected in the EU whereas they account for a mere 13 % of the inventors applying for patents at the European Patent Office (EPO).

Therefore, more targeted efforts will be required to ensure that the IP and innovation ecosystems can work for all. The EUIPO must increasingly focus on diversity and inclusiveness and ensure that underrepresented groups can also actively contribute and benefit from the IP system. This is necessary for at least two reasons: first of all, it is right and just to provide opportunities for everyone to fully participate in the innovation and IP ecosystem. Secondly, it is also necessary from an economic and social point of view. By not taking full advantage of the valuable contribution of half of the population, the world's economies are missing out on a wellspring of ideas, creativity and innovation. Given the demographic trends in Europe and elsewhere, with ageing and sometimes declining populations, it is crucial for society to make full use of its human capital to generate innovation and growth, and the IP system has a role to play in this effort. Finally, small businesses represent the bulk of the EU economy, so if more SMEs make use of IP protection, the EU economy will become stronger and more resilient.

The EU Green Deal Industrial Plan sets the objective to transform Europe into a clean, resource-efficient, fair and competitive economy. In this context the EUIPO must contribute to Europe's green transition by becoming a fully-fledged sustainable organisation: by reducing our carbon footprint and consumption of energy and other resources, and thereby also contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, both through our own behaviour as an office and by ensuring that the IP system supports the necessary innovation in this area.

Finally, in today's world, where innovation impacts at global level and challenges are common to all IP offices, cooperation and working together are ever more important. In the coming years, the EUIPO must step up its cooperation engagement and ensure the long-term sustainability of the EUIPN in order to unlock its full potential. In this context, we will increase and intensify our cooperation with the national and regional IP offices in the EU.

We will also seek to project and promote EU IP policies worldwide, spearheading policies and initiatives that facilitate not only the registration and enforcement, but also the valuation, commercialisation and IP-backed financing. Special efforts will be placed on supporting EU candidate and neighbourhood countries for a robust and sustainable enlargement of the EU and countries with which the EU has strategic interests to work in partnership. This will serve as the foundation for implementation of EU external actions on IP, fostering alliances among like-minded IP organisations, aiming to support businesses to address global issues and to devise solutions to emerging challenges that affect the IP systems, keeping law and practice up to speed with the pace of technological change.



Vision and Mission

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Our vision is to ensure a robust, inclusive, diverse and sustainable IP ecosystem that works for all.

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We aspire to a world where intellectual property works for all, innovation thrives, knowledge is widely accessible and understood, and creativity is fostered without restrictive barriers. Collaboration and shared advancements are the norm, benefiting society as a whole.

We aspire to an IP system where the boundaries of intellectual property are designed to encourage collaboration. Access to knowledge fuels a collective effort to address global challenges, leading to a more interconnected and innovative society.

We aspire to a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive intellectual property system that works for all and that integrates different perspectives, and in which the benefits of innovation and creativity are widely distributed, fostering a more collaborative global society.

“

Our mission is to deliver, together with national and regional IP offices of the EU, high-value IP services to citizens and businesses in an efficient and effective manner, contributing to fostering innovation, competitiveness and economic growth in Europe.

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We will work towards enhancing our ability to be a catalyst for growth, job creation, investment and economic and social development in Europe.

We will work towards driving innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity for the benefit of all European citizens.

We will work towards strengthening our partnerships with IP Offices to empower citizens and businesses to effectively use IP rights.

Goals

In order to respond to the challenges that lie ahead and implement a renewed vision and mission, we will pursue five Goals.

Goal 1

Optimise operational efficiency and effectiveness

In the coming years the EUIPO will be exposed to high levels of uncertainty and market volatility. At the same time, it will have to deal with an increasing number of applications, coupled with the rising complexity in their examination stemming from the increase of valid trade marks in IPR registers across Europe (implying more earlier rights that can be used to contest new applications). In classification, complexity has also increased in recent years due to the creation of new businesses and the introduction of new types of products such as non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and other virtual goods. In this context we must continue to deliver high-quality decisions in a timely manner, in addition to carrying out new responsibilities entrusted to us.

Our goal is to ensure that the EUIPO maintains its high performance, by increasing our productivity, optimising operational efficiency and effectiveness, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our operations, with an agile allocation of resources and flexibility to deal with quantitative and qualitative changes in our workload.

Goal 2

Enhance the value of IP products and services

Fostering innovation, competitiveness and job growth in Europe, by delivering reliable, legally sound, and enforceable IP rights is a core task of the EUIPO. The ability of an IP right to generate economic benefits for its owner and for society depends primarily on the legal soundness and certainty of that right. Since quality is a never-ending endeavour, as an active part of the European public service we will continue to pursue improvements in every area of our work by expanding quality and consistency, legal certainty, predictability and accountability of our work.

Our goal is to strengthen the culture of quality across the organisation; enable innovators to reap the full benefits of IP; commit to support new policies and to reinforce the EU IP infrastructure; and prepare the EUIPO to receive new competencies in other areas of IP rights.

Goal 3

Improve access to the IP system and promote the use of IP rights

By allowing inventors and creators to achieve a return on their investment, IP rights enable innovation and benefit consumers, businesses, the economy and society as a whole. IP rights are not a goal in themselves; they are a means to an end, and that end is promotion of innovation and creation of economic value.

In order to fully harness the inventive and creative power of Europe, groups and sectors that have historically been underrepresented in the IP ecosystem, such as women, young people, and SMEs, need to be encouraged to fully participate and benefit from.

Our goal is to promote innovation, develop new and innovative solutions to support citizens and businesses, foster value creation and inclusion, and enhance IP as a tool for growth and sustainable development; to bring the IP ecosystem much closer to all who seek protection for their intangible assets, and contribute to an environment that stimulates entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity in Europe.

Goal 4

Build trust and respect for IP

An IP right that is not properly enforced does not deliver the expected economic benefits to its owner or to society. The methods used by the organised crime groups that supply counterfeit goods and copyright-infringing content to European consumers continue to evolve, taking advantage of new opportunities created by changing consumer spending patterns, in particular the digitalisation of the economy. We will further support enforcement authorities in the Member States and at EU level to help them obtain the knowledge and skills and the tools needed to combat infringement.

At the same time, there is still an IP culture deficit in Europe. In this regard, ensuring a closer involvement of stakeholders with the work of the EUIPO is a key aspect to enhance the spreading of IP knowledge among European innovators and creators and enable their effective participation in the IP system. More broadly, consumers and citizens must be conscious of the importance of IP and the need to respect IP rights. We will broaden our outreach and engagement efforts beyond IP experts, promoting education, awareness raising and the improvement of enforcement, all of which, particularly in the digital area, are key to building trust and respect for IP rights.

Goal 5

Ensure long-term sustainability of the EUIPN

The European IP system is based on the solid principle of the coexistence of different options – national, regional and EU rights. For this principle to be effective, the election of one or other system should depend solely on strategic decisions made by economic

operators. The creation of the EUIPN, consisting of the EUIPO and national and regional IP offices, and with the participation of user associations, is a landmark achievement. It has contributed to greater levels of convergence by offering consistent and coherent services and solutions to citizens and businesses that seek protection for the results of their investments in innovation.

In the coming years, we will increase our commitment to cooperation with national and regional IP offices and upgrade the network to become a true community while ensuring its long-term operational and financial sustainability, supported by the cooperation budget and offsetting mechanism. We will go further and enhance our partnerships towards the creation of global platform of IP offices beyond the EU to share ideas and views around how to increase, support and strengthen our cooperative networks for greater convergence.



Strategic Drivers

The noteworthy development of the EUIPO from a small registration office to an agency with global reach in the last decades has relied on **two complementary strategic drivers** that continuously support our overall strategy – one internal, focused on improving the way we work; and one external, focused on establishing effective cooperation with external stakeholders.

These two drivers are ‘enduring constants’ of the functioning of the EUIPO that find their justification in the specific nature of the EUIPO as an agency that delivers services directly to industry, as well as on its role to foster cooperation within the unique two-tier protection IP system in the EU. They will continue to be the basis for attaining our goals by providing the structural framework that supports the development and implementation of the strategy.

Strategic Driver 1

Modern, high performing and resilient organisation

Since it was established, the EUIPO has experienced remarkable growth in terms of workload, competencies and staff. The Office has also been able to considerably improve its operational efficiency, performance and productivity, with the users’ needs at the heart of everything it does. This strategic driver supports our strategy by responding to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, in order to ensure that the Office is able to consolidate the results achieved so far, while continuing to deliver high value services to users and bring about positive change in the IP system in Europe and worldwide.

We believe that we will only be able to progress even further as a modern, agile and high-performance organisation and continue to play a leading role if we are able to fully embrace change and innovation in pursuit of our mission, whilst ensuring our overall long-term sustainability, as well as that of the EUIPN. In doing this we will ensure that we carry out our strategy in a manner characterised by operational efficiency and accountability, preserving financial and administrative autonomy, and enabling us to monitor, anticipate and react in a timely fashion to relevant developments in the IP and innovation spheres.

Cooperation for high-value IP services to citizens and businesses

Globalisation and technological developments are ushering in a truly digital economy, making the future and destiny of all countries more closely interconnected than at any other time in history. The international IP system, characterised by an ever-stronger collaborative structure, requires higher levels of cooperation among a multitude of partners, allowing for a continuous exchange of expertise, knowledge sharing and the provision of services.

This strategic driver supports our strategy at European and global level, where we need to be more forward-looking and broader-minded, working together with the EU national and regional IP offices, the main IP organisations in Europe and worldwide, such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the EPO, among others, and the most forward looking and like-minded IP offices around the world. We believe that we have a special responsibility in this process. We will aim to project the cooperation within the EU to a global level in order to maximise the cooperation results for the benefit of EU businesses operating in the global market.



Organisational Enablers

Becoming a high-performance organisation enables us to engage more deeply with our cooperation partners in the network. In order to support our new strategy, it will be necessary, first and foremost, to reinforce our two strategic drivers – pursuing organisational excellence and engaging in cooperation – by leveraging our main Organisational Enablers to create an environment where people, technology and the workplace environment come together to drive innovation, productivity and the successful execution of the strategy, and ensure accountability and long-term sustainability of the EUIPO and the EUIPN.

—●— Organisational Enabler 1

People, technology and work environment

We will enhance organisational engagement, talent management and continuous development by implementing a modern and agile staff policy. We will take advantage of new technologies to transform the Office operations by making the processes more efficient and consistent, as well as more cost-effective, accurate and secure. We will foster a partnership between people and technology allowing the integration of technology, especially artificial intelligence (AI), with human skills to support and augment the capabilities of our staff, always in a manner that places the human first and that complies with the letter and spirit of the AI Act. We will enhance alignment between technology and workplace and promote a positive culture that values teamwork, innovation and staff well-being. In this way, we adapt to the changing nature of work while ensuring a sustainable workplace.

We will implement four Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 1**

Implement a modern and agile staff policy focusing on identifying, attracting, retaining and developing talent

The Office's staff is multilingual, multicultural, highly skilled and qualified. It is our most important asset, delivering a top-level public service to users of the EU IP system. To unleash its full potential, the EUIPO must develop a more open, diverse, inclusive, collaborative, innovative and dynamic organisational culture, while maintaining high standards of well-being and work-life balance. It must keep its staff engaged and position itself as an attractive employer by offering excellent working conditions, appealing career prospects and contractual stability through enhanced opportunities

for stable employment. The staff policy must ensure alignment between the staff and the mission and vision of the EUIPO, contributing to create a workforce guided by a sense of purpose, based on European values, with a view to fostering engagement and optimising performance culture.

In the current context of uncertainty and volatility in EUIPO's workload and revenue, the Office has had to reconsider working methods and develop new strategies to manage its resources more efficiently. Consequently, the planning and management of our workforce follows a strict methodology, based on a business case driven approach. All requests for staff resources, including those stemming from retirement or other departures, are evaluated to ensure their alignment with the strategic goals and implemented only when justified by imperative business needs. In pursuit of increased internal efficiency, optimised use of existing resources, recalibration of staff versus workload and long-term financial sustainability, tasks will be performed primarily by existing staff, while increasing automation efforts and use of AI as well as improving our information technology (IT) tools. Any new recruitments will be decided case-by-case, notably where reallocation of staff is not possible.

The Office will continue concluding contracts for a fixed period consistent with the principle of merit and having regard to its needs. Temporary agents (TA) will be the preferred recruitment category, so that over time, they will represent the main workforce population of the EUIPO. Contract Agent (CA) recruitments will be limited and as a result of the new staff policy initiatives, this population will gradually decrease. Recruitment entry grades will be more flexible and, where appropriate, include entry level AD 5 to provide opportunities to younger talent with limited professional experience, whilst addressing aging of the Office workforce.

TA and CA contracts will be concluded for 5 years with a possibility to renew for an additional 5 years. With a view towards employment stability and retention of well-performing talent, the Office will expand the offer of indefinite contracts. For the first time this framework will be applicable to both TA and CA. This measure will contribute to improving the proportion of permanent staff at the Office. Staff will also have the possibility to pursue permanent employment through staff policy initiatives such as the transfer exercise for established officials (FT) of other EU Institutions, including recruitment of new officials from EPSO or other Institutions' lists for permanent staff.

Subject to budgetary availability, the interest of the service and the duty of care vis-à-vis its staff, the Office will continue to offer possibilities for career improvement, such as transformation of contract agents to temporary agents further to successful TA selection procedures, changes of function group for contract agents or certification for FT.

In order to maximise cooperation with Member States and facilitate the exchange of Seconded National Experts (SNEs), the Office will engage with key partners, both at EU and international level, via Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or other bilateral cooperation frameworks.

A cautious and limited approach will be applied to the use of interim and consultancy services, in line with the general approach of the Office that favours the use of internal resources.

Innovation should become an integral part of EUIPO culture. Innovation implies a degree of empowerment, trial-and-error and sound risk-taking, and our staff will be encouraged to come forward with new ideas and test them. In this context, while successes will be celebrated, continuous learning and improvement should be accepted as an inevitable consequence of experimentation and be regarded as a development opportunity. Pursuing the ultimate objective of an agile, motivated and highly skilled workforce, all Office staff will benefit from opportunities for lifelong learning and professional and personal development, including career guidance services. The aim is to increase productivity while, at the same time, providing our staff with a healthy work-life balance.

- **Key Initiative 2**

Champion diversity and inclusion

Since diversity and inclusiveness are sources of strength, they must be championed by the EUIPO. In this regard, we will work towards ensuring gender balance, including at management levels. The Office will implement an Equal Opportunities Programme (EOP) consisting of a series of staff-related measures aimed at strengthening the diversity and inclusion of its workforce. The EOP initiatives will help to improve the gender, geographical and cultural balance of EUIPO staff. A new approach to geographical balance will ensure the necessary regional and cultural diversity among the Office's staff and help address the operational needs resulting, among others, from the specific language regime. We will intensify our efforts to aim towards targeting underrepresented member states and closely cooperate with our institutional stakeholders and partners, especially the national and regional IP offices, to increase awareness and reach out to more potential talents.

The EUIPO will actively reach out to the next generation of professionals from a variety of backgrounds. Where appropriate, the Office will opt to recruit entry-level staff, with no prior professional experience, providing opportunities to young graduates, and providing the new staff with tailormade training internally. To that end, we will further strengthen our relationship with universities across Europe, to ensure that the different types of employment relationships and the different modalities to join EUIPO will be well-known to prospective new staff members. We will develop further the Pan-European Seal and Young Professional traineeship programmes with options for employment, to promote potential and identify talent, securing the efforts invested and the development of internal knowledge.

- **Key Initiative 3**

'Talent, technology, together' – take full advantage of new technologies

A dynamic and knowledgeable organisation needs to be supported by an effective and secure digital environment that in turn needs to be equipped with state-of-the-art tools and solutions adapted to its needs. The EUIPO will embark on a fully-fledged and seamless digital modernisation to upgrade and develop digital tools, aiming to improve the internal and external user experience and to manage the technical debt accumulated over the years, moving towards a strategic transformation based on sustainable technology.

Technology is not a goal in itself. It is a means to an end and will be adopted to serve the needs of the organisation and our users, by helping us to deliver better services while improving efficiency. While in normal times change is gradual and innovation incremental, the changes in recent years have given rise to disruptive innovation, leading public administrations and business organisations to adapt their ways of working. The increasing pace of technological change impacts the granting of IP rights and the IP system overall, by creating new business models and needs. We will work to take advantage of new technologies to transform the registration of IP rights by making the process more efficient and consistent, as well as more cost-effective, accurate and secure. We will also use them to improve all other areas of work of the Office. In adopting new technologies, we will always take into consideration, evaluate and mitigate possible risks related to issues such as IP infringements, data privacy and cybersecurity threats, data protection and ethics. We will take the prudent approach and avoid technologies that are not yet proven and practically applicable to our work. Legal certainty is an important aspect of the EUIPO's work and when evaluating a new technology, we will always consider whether it adds to legal certainty or potentially puts it at risk. Striking a balance between cutting edge innovation and responsible implementation and maintenance is crucial for the successful adoption of technology. We will also work with the EUIPN and with our customers when we consider developing and implementing new technological solutions.

AI is not a rival to human intelligence; rather, it is to be used in partnership with it, with the final decision always taken by the human. We will develop AI-powered solutions to increase consistency and predictability by reducing the risks of refusals and deficiencies. We will increase efficiency and productivity by expanding automation for routine and time-consuming tasks. Over time, with the adoption of AI and machine learning, an important aspect of the role of examiners at the EUIPO will evolve towards becoming the trainers of the AI systems in the initial stages of the use of such tools, working to enhance their accuracy and scalability. When implementing AI solutions, we will ensure that the conversation between human and machine will always remain human-centric. The final evaluation of the output of the AI tool and the final decision will always be the responsibility of the examiner. We will also investigate the adoption of low-code development, which has the potential to enable staff to create applications with minimal coding effort.

We will work towards the integration of the front office and the back office and create a platform that enables interaction between examiners and customers. We will leverage the power of cloud computing to manage the increasing volume of data, to speed up implementation of new services and to reduce maintenance costs. Finally, we will enhance security and defence against digital threats, to ensure continuity of operations, in the context of the new cybersecurity and AI frameworks and collaborating with the relevant EU Member States and international actors.

- **Key Initiative 4**

Further adapt to the changing nature of work while ensuring well-being of staff

The EUIPO has made significant progress in enhancing its physical and cultural work environment in recent years. However, the fast pace of technological change not only poses unprecedented challenges to society as a whole, but also offers a window

of opportunity to modernise our working methods. In the coming years, it will be necessary to capitalise on these opportunities and ensure that the physical and digital environments provide the best possible conditions in terms of efficiency, quality, occupational, health and safety standards. We will promote remote and hybrid work as the new normal way of working while monitoring the impact on productivity and optimising the space utilisation to reflect new working trends. We will also explore ways to optimise the use of the EUIPO campus facilities, not only for the staff but also for the broader stakeholder community, to stimulate creativity and innovation in Alicante and beyond. Further to the physical work environment, we will strive for a corporate culture characterised by clear communication, a high degree of staff satisfaction and well-being, and a sense of belonging and pride in playing a part in advancing the broader mission of the EU. We will strive for a work environment characterised by a healthy work-life balance, open dialogue and a willingness to challenge long-standing assumptions. A culture of knowledge sharing, both within the Office and across the EUIPN will be nurtured.

We will avail ourselves of our technical facilities and aim to meet the highest environmental standards, with an increased focus on carbon footprint, consumption of energy and other resources, and waste reduction – all of which will contribute to the European green and digital transitions. By promoting teleworking and carefully managing our business travel, we will tackle the main sources of carbon emissions stemming from our work.

—●— Organisational Enabler 2

Financial and administrative sustainability

The EUIPO is a self-funding agency, financing its activities from the fees paid by the users of the IPR systems it administers. This status carries specific obligations and provides us with the ability to carry out our strategy and to support the sustainability of both the EUIPO and the cooperation activities within the EUIPN.

Financial autonomy empowers the Office to fulfil its mandate effectively, maintaining high service standards, adapting to the evolving needs of the business landscape and making a strong contribution to the EU economy. High levels of cooperation between the EUIPO and national and regional IP offices ensure a seamless, high quality and cost-effective access to IP protection in Europe.

Faced with higher levels of uncertainty and market volatility, the EUIPO budget and planning exercises risk being negatively impacted, potentially hampering its ability to continue to deliver its mission in an independent manner. In order to ensure its long-term sustainability, concrete measures will be required to maintain an administrative and financial model that aims to preserve the EUIPO's future operational capacity with the current levels of staffing while coping with potentially higher volumes of work and additional tasks that may be entrusted to us and maintaining a high level of quality. When taking on new competences, an assessment of the financial impact on the Office will be part of the planning and implementation process.

We must work to ensure that our staffing, resources and processes are systematically and effectively aligned with the expected demand for our products and services,

while always complying with the Staff and Financial Regulations and other elements of our legal framework. To this end, it will be necessary to strengthen the medium and long-term planning capacities by developing effective mechanisms to anticipate and accommodate fluctuating demand. At the same time, it is necessary to be aware of economic and policy shifts in the relevant markets, so as to assess how these may affect the level of demand for trade marks and designs and workload more generally. In addition, we must be able to analyse the impact of changes in the behaviour among the users of the IP system and other societal changes that may affect IP rights, whether at the EUIPO or at the national level in the EU.

Foresight is not only about demand, however. Together with national and regional IP offices, we will also discuss about the evolution of the EUIPN in the long term, and how to ensure the continued optimal functioning of the two-tier system of IPR protection in the EU.

Transparency and accountability are essential principles in public administration and promote good governance and trust in the policy-making process. Transparency and open communication play an important role in bringing the EU closer to citizens. In the context of the IP system, these principles are particularly important at a time when the granting of monopolies through IP rights is increasingly being scrutinised. As a visible interface of the European public service, the EUIPO focus is to deliver high-quality decisions while being accountable to public scrutiny.

We will implement three Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 5**

Actionable intelligence for forecasting and scenario planning

The EUIPO should leverage its role as a collaborative platform and bring together experts from different fields – IP, innovation, science, research, technology, economics and predictive analytics – to conduct environmental scans of the economic, technological and social landscapes relevant for IP. We will build a credible and reliable medium and long-term prospective capacity that can effectively support decision makers at the EUIPO and EUIPN in looking ahead at the development of the IP system, with a view to collectively identifying upcoming IP, business and innovation trends in Europe and worldwide that can affect the evolution of our workload in the long term. Working scenarios for the future will be set out and used to develop contingency plans. This capacity will also help anticipate the impact of new activities that impact IP or changes in the behaviour of users of the IP system and react to the changing circumstances. We must develop the ability to spot and analyse global trends and economic, geopolitical and policy shifts in important markets to understand how those trends can affect our work. To that end, we will reinforce our information gathering and analytical and forecasting capabilities on the economies of the largest trade mark and design filing countries. Looking ahead, we will also investigate how virtual worlds and virtual goods and services will impact the IP rights managed by us and by our partners in the EUIPN.

We will strengthen our ability for medium and long-term planning by developing effective mechanisms to anticipate and deal with fluctuations in demand. We will explore the use of AI and other advanced analytics methods in forecasting and trend analysis, and the forecasting models will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. We will create alert

mechanism to monitor specific socio-economic indicators that are relevant for short-term forecasting of filing volumes, such as business expectations or inflation rates and share them with the EUIPN members.

- **Key Initiative 6**

Improve accuracy and efficiency of financial operations

In order to preserve its financial autonomy, it is critical that the Office keeps a balanced budget. In the coming years, we must therefore focus on accuracy and efficiency of our operations, and, in particular, on our financial operations. In this context, value for money and return on investment must be central considerations in our decision making. Investment in new assets and IT systems should be driven by the needs of the business, including legal compliance. Any recruitment of additional staff should be limited and controlled, based on efficient and flexible management of the existing resources and a business-case approach to recruitment. Similarly, the Office should revise the activities contracted from external suppliers, prioritising critical services while cutting back on non-essential expenditures. Procurement processes and contracting policies will be optimised, under the Financial Regulation.

Given the high inflation experienced in the EU since 2020, the current level of EUIPO fees is considerably lower in real terms than it was following the latest revision in 2016. Therefore, we will support the European Commission with relevant data and analysis, should it decide to implement adjustment measures such as a mechanism for automatic adjustment of the fees in line with inflation in the EU, as well as adjusting the fees to better reflect the geographical coverage of the unitary IP rights and ensure an appropriate relationship between the fees of EUIPO and those of national and regional IP offices. Systematic analysis on the fee system and structure will be developed. Fees reform could also include designing a policy that aims for efficiency, for example through increased fees for particularly work-intensive applications, such as those that contain very long lists of goods and services and are more likely to generate deficiencies. Going beyond fees, we stand ready to assist the European Commission with data and analysis when new legislative proposals to reform and enhance the IP system in the EU are being considered.

While a reform of the fees charged by the EUIPO requires changes to the applicable legislation, there are other actions that can be taken to explore new revenue sources, both new markets and new products and services. Today, the EUIPO revenues are heavily dependent on European Union trade mark (EUTM) filings from a few large countries. This can result in fluctuations in demand that make it difficult to plan and budget. It is therefore desirable to diversify the sources of IPR filings. In particular, companies from large emerging economies, when expanding their activity to the European market, will need to protect their trade marks and designs in the EU. We should, therefore, promote the European IP system in those countries, both at European and national level. Finally, systematic analysis on the impact of new IP rights created by the EU legislator and entrusted to the EUIPO will also be carried out.

- **Key Initiative 7**

Open systematic and clear communication channels towards higher levels of transparency and accountability

The EUIPO should move closer to citizens and the business community by disclosing, in greater detail, how we set priorities, how we plan, execute, monitor, implement and measure the results of our actions and their impact. The metrics we publish will be revised so that they reflect more accurately how users experience the products and services provided to them by the EUIPO. In this way we can demonstrate how our activities add value to the IP system and to European society at large. In the coming years, it will be necessary to establish systematic and clear communication and feedback channels with the public at large and aim to make the decision-making process more transparent, effective and accessible. The EUIPO Transparency Portal will be revamped with additional types of information and made more user-friendly. We will strive to communicate using plain, understandable language and we will provide automatic translation in all EU languages in order to reinforce multilingualism and accessibility. Responding to the interest among our stakeholders and the general public regarding the application of AI and machine learning, we will be transparent about our use of such technologies in different areas of our work, including making the model descriptions accessible.

Organisational Enabler 3

Network engagement

The EU is an IP-intensive region and IP rights are fundamental to the success of the European economy. To ensure that the EUIPO and the national and regional IP offices of Member States continue to play an effective and relevant role in such an environment, it is necessary to promote a strategic reorientation of the EUIPN towards long-term sustainability, stepping up the network to become a real community and achieve the full potential of the dual system of protection of trade marks and designs in Europe. In order to give users of the IP system a consistent experience regardless of which IP office in the EU they are dealing with, it is necessary to strengthen common standards and practices to ensure interoperability, consistency and efficiency of procedures and systems across the EU. Interaction with other types of IP and related rights such as GIs, domain and company names, and trade secrets is also part of this framework.

In carrying out the Key Initiatives in this area, the EUIPO and the EUIPN aim to be valued institutional partners for the EU institutions in formulating and implementing policy. In this regard we will increase our network engagement and reinforce the cooperation infrastructure to enhance the network to become a true community.

We will implement four Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 8**

Simplify the cooperation framework to optimise EUIPN capabilities

To fully exploit the positive impact of the EUIPN, in Europe and worldwide, it will be necessary to develop simpler, clearer and more practical cooperation rules to ensure more transparency, flexibility and subsidiarity as regards cooperation projects and initiatives. Continuous support to national and regional IP offices will be ensured, allowing them to effectively participate in the cooperation activities, by optimising the use of cooperation funds and the offsetting mechanism. As is the case in every other area of activity, the cooperation within the EUIPN should become more efficient and effective, with rationalised resource use and a streamlining of the bureaucracy in the operation of the network.

- **Key Initiative 9**

Reinforce the governance of cooperation activities

The transparency of cooperation activities must be maintained, and the governance of cooperation programmes should be reinforced through the creation of new, stable, systematic and dedicated cooperation structures. This could be done through the creation of a Cooperation Board tasked with following-up and overseeing the preparation, launch, implementation and evaluation of cooperation activities, contributing to increased collaborative work. On the other hand the Board will promote work sharing; enable informal discussions and coordination on pressing issues; evaluate the expansion of cooperation activities to new areas; and facilitate the identification, sharing and evaluation of best practices, data and knowledge among the EUIPO and the national and regional IP offices.

- **Key Initiative 10**

Pooling EUIPN resources for real-time cooperation

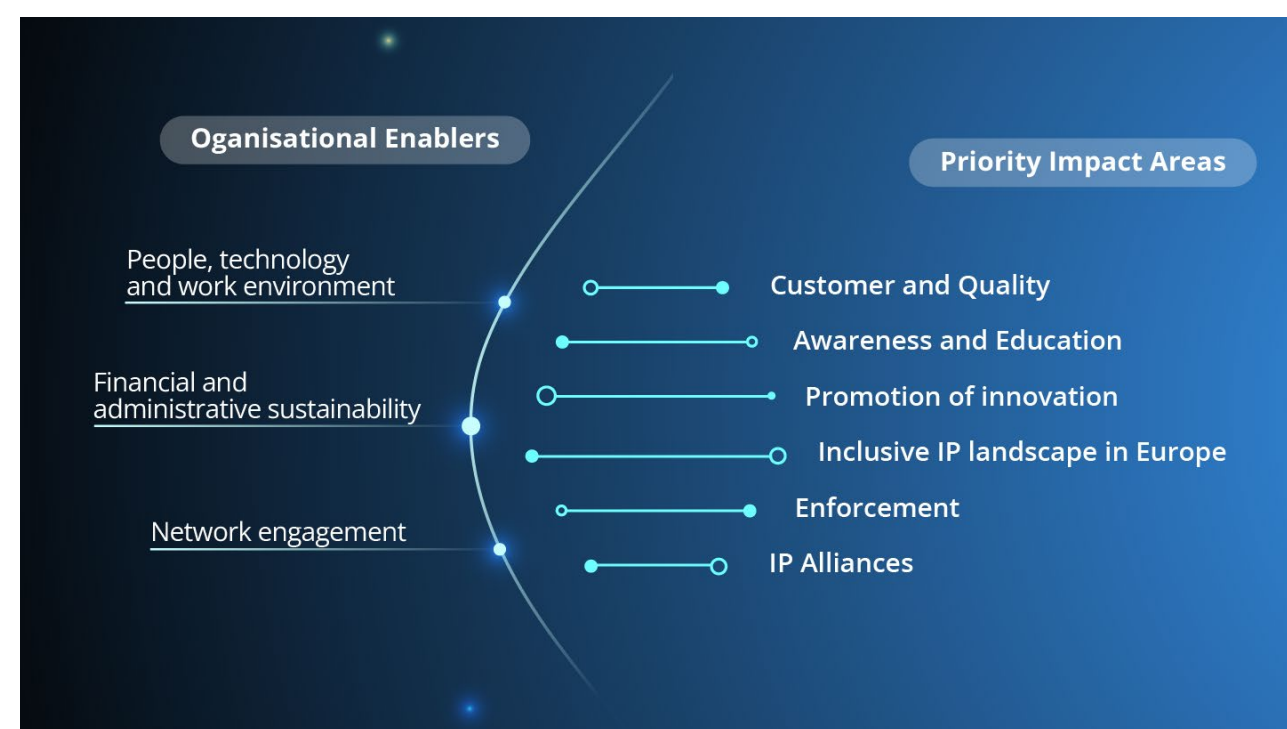
Both the EUIPO and the national and regional IP offices have staff with deep expertise and knowledge of IP, including knowledge of relevant factors specific to a particular Member State. This knowledge and expertise is already shared to some extent, in particular through the Seconded National Expert (SNE) programme at the EUIPO and the deployed resources at national offices, but it should be leveraged across the EUIPN for the benefit of all parts of the network. Good ideas and practices come from all sides, and it is therefore important that the flows of knowledge between the EUIPO and the national and regional IP offices are bi-directional, and indeed omni-directional, so that good practices in one IP office can be adopted by other IP offices.

In order to fully leverage the expertise and knowledge of the professionals in the EUIPN, Virtual Cooperation Platforms will be created in different areas, building upon the existing EUIPN collaborative structures aiming to bring together experts from the EUIPO and national and regional IP offices, making use of the hybrid working practices that have become the norm. These experts will come together to address issues in areas such as core business, technology watch, quality standards, forecasting, economic studies related to IP, awareness raising, and enforcement. Resources such as the EUIPO Academy, the Observatory, and similar activities in the national IP offices should be made fully accessible to the entire EUIPN.

• Key Initiative 11

Expand the network beyond IP offices

In today's interconnected business landscape, the collaboration between the IP system and other relevant ecosystems – such as innovation, SMEs, business support and financial ecosystems – is paramount. The EUIPN is a network of IP offices, with the participation of users. In order to help enhance IP as a tool for innovation and growth, the network should be diversified to include the participation of relevant sectors such as finance, accounting and economics, business and innovation support organisations and academia. By fostering such collaboration, the EUIPN can contribute to make IP a more strategic asset that fuels innovation, drives business growth and attracts investment. Engaging with these systems and understanding their specific needs will allow the EUIPN to build new synergies at European and national levels to optimise outreach and also tailor promotional and educational resources, tools and services to reach businesses and entrepreneurs more effectively and empower them to leverage their IP assets. Through such partnership we will aim to ensure that IP becomes an integral part of business strategies, thus contributing to overall competitiveness and growth of European businesses, positioning them for success in the EU and in the global marketplace.



Priority Impact Areas

Sustained by the two strategic drivers and building upon the Organisational Enablers, we will work in six **Priority Impact Areas** that have a direct impact on the outside world: on our customers, on SMEs that may not yet have made use of the IP system, on other IP offices, on the IP enforcement community, and on society at large. They are interlinked and will contribute to the attainment of all Goals.

Customer and Quality

We will enhance the customer experience by delivering innovative IP products and services in a timely manner

The EUIPO is a user-driven organisation that provides, on a daily basis, services to industry and innovators all around the world. Users of the IP system must therefore be placed front and centre of everything we do. In order to enhance the customer experience and ensure the delivery of innovative services to the market, it is necessary, first and foremost, to take steps to better understand the life cycle of customers' interactions with the EUIPO – from registration to enforcement and commercialisation – and create an organisation-wide vision of how to best serve each customer's needs.

Designing innovative services tailored to the needs of different user groups and segments – direct filers, one-off applicants, SMEs, large law firms, or multinationals – should be pursued by increasing transparency and stakeholder engagement and making every customer access point consistent, clear and intuitive. This can be facilitated by increasing direct contact between customers and examiners and enhancing the customer experience in areas such as quality of product and service reliability, consistency and user-friendliness. The customer experience will be adjusted to the specific needs of the various customer segments. We will move from the current distinction between a front office and back office to a 'Total Experience Model', integrating the experience of the customer and the EUIPO examiners.

The process of filing the application for an IP right should be easy and straightforward from the users' point of view, explained in clear language and accessible to customers at all levels of technical expertise. Increasingly, our customers rely on mobile solutions such as smartphones and tablets to access EUIPO services, and we must make sure that the corresponding online tools are well-suited to such devices. We will continue to develop and implement pre-assessment services powered by AI and based on the legislation in force. In applying AI to pre-assessment and examination support, we will ensure the trust and transparency of those solutions and we will implement them only after thorough testing by examiners and users. The final decision will always be taken by the examiner, guaranteeing the ability of the Office to take its decisions in an autonomous and independent manner, in accordance with the applicable law.

The EUIPO has a deserved reputation for providing high-quality services to its customers thanks to its well-established quality management system. We will continue to promote an organisational culture focused on quality and efficiency, with a spirit of continuous improvement. Our quality vision, principles and priorities will be reviewed, taking a controlled risk-based approach and promoting convergence with national and regional IP offices. We will improve our quality metrics by revamping internal and external quality checks to ensure that they accurately reflect what the users experience when dealing with the EUIPO.

Since legal certainty is paramount for users and for the credibility of the system as a whole, we will need to further develop a consistent, coherent and simplified practice, fully aligned with the case-law of the Boards of Appeal, the General Court and the Court of Justice, optimising the value of IP rights and providing users with higher levels of predictability and legal certainty.

Our efforts will focus on upgrading the quality model by developing a collaborative approach to consistency; simplifying the examination guidelines; reinforcing communication channels with the public at large; involving users in designing IP products and services; providing targeted training and education to address specific quality issues; and further leveraging data-driven analytics to manage and enhance quality across the EUIPO. We must ensure that our services and the information we provide to users are accurate, dependable and up to date.

Finally, it should be recognised that the definition of ‘quality’ varies across customer segments. For some users of the IP system consistency and legal certainty are paramount, while for others (for example, SMEs), predictability is of utmost importance. Similarly, applicants from some sectors and customer segments may put a greater value on timeliness than others. We will strive to take into account such differences in quality requirements.

We will implement five Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 12**

Improve overall customer experience

When customers interact with the EUIPO, they generate data and information. We will take advantage of this data to improve customer experience by centralising and integrating in one structure or platform all customer feedback, surveys, analysis of customer behaviour when conducting business with the EUIPO, customer complaints, queries, communications and all related key performance indicators (KPIs). We will use technology, especially AI, to provide intuitive, personalised and efficient customer service in areas such as linguistic challenges or support during peak periods using enhanced self-service tools. All relevant IP texts will be translated into all EU languages and we will make use, to the maximum possible extent, of machine translations aiming to increase transparency and promote multilingualism. New services to be developed could include managed interaction with other types of IP and related rights such as domain and company names, as well as the development of IP infringement prevention strategies. Finally, we will intensify our efforts to combat fraudulent invoices, impersonation and other types of fraud perpetrated against our customers.

- **Key Initiative 13**

Develop a collaborative approach to consistency

We will pursue a collaborative approach to consistency by further engaging with national and regional IP offices, national and EU courts, and business stakeholders such as rights owners and trade associations, including expanding the current Stakeholder Quality Assurance Panels to new areas and IP rights. Furthermore, a Comprehensive Early Case Management System will be established in order to enhance consistency of decisions by using AI to analyse previous decisions in similar cases; identify cases in areas that are new and therefore lack a pre-existing body of decisions; and areas where consistency of decisions can be further improved; offering, at an early stage, suitable mechanisms for finding global, time and cost-effective solutions for users.

- **Key Initiative 14**

Enhance predictability by leveraging AI

AI has potential to improve the EUIPO’s operations and the customer experience, in particular by enhancing predictability and consistency, and we will exploit that potential. In particular, we will apply data-driven analytics to manage and enhance quality and in particular to improve predictability through the use of pre-assessment tools, enabling the customer to make an informed decision at the time of filing an application. The examination process will be supported by AI tools that are subject to a set of well-defined rules. AI could improve classification of goods and services significantly by analysing the more than 85 million goods and services terms in the EUTM applications filed since 1996 to uncover patterns that would link the NICE classification to a firm’s economic activity, thereby facilitating a correct classification at the time of application and minimise deficiencies. The examiners will have at their disposal a powerful GenAI tool that will encompass relevant IP laws, the practice of the Office as developed in the EUIPO Guidelines, legacy decisions by the first and second instance, and case-law from European and national courts.

- **Key Initiative 15**

Establish co-creation platforms bringing together examiners and customers

Co-creation platforms for managing inter partes cases will allow for active participation by the parties to the proceedings, bringing together all relevant interactions among the parties themselves and also between the parties and the EUIPO. The platforms will enable exchange of evidence and make possible deployment of pre-assessment functions. In the ex parte area, we will simplify the examination guidelines and streamline the procedures for examination. Enhanced user area features will contribute to shorter length of proceedings and more regular interaction with customers, while ensuring that the ultimate decision on the case will continue be taken by EUIPO in an autonomous and impartial manner.

- **Key Initiative 16**

Expand alternative methods for solving disputes

Disputes about IP rights are often time-consuming, expensive and burdensome for companies of all sizes, especially SMEs. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offers the possibility of enabling conflicts to be settled amicably in a single process. ADR gives users the opportunity not only to settle, in a timely manner, any dispute pending before the EUIPO but also pending before other IP offices and courts in both the EU and third countries. It also allows inclusion of any parallel conflicts involving the same parties and any type of IP right. The end goal is to find a global agreement that settles the conflicts between the parties once and for all. ADR thus offers legal certainty, speed and economy, which are of added value to business. Building on the experience of the EUIPO Boards of Appeal in mediation and conciliation, the time is now ripe for expanding ADR to first instance inter partes proceedings. Taking advantage of this impetus, new ADR services that bring additional value to users will be offered following consultations with the recently established Mediation Stakeholders Network. In the future, a range of new services could be explored. All of these services will be offered both online and offline through an all-encompassing ADR Centre.

Awareness and education

We will support a greater understanding of IP matters in Europe and beyond

There is an IP culture deficit in Europe. IP is still seen as a highly technical complex and enigmatic area of work, and many do not understand its importance and potential as a powerful tool to support innovative businesses. There is a widespread perception, especially among young people, that IP rights are only useful for big and well-established businesses. We need to counter this perception by demonstrating that IP is for everyone.

The EUIPO should therefore ensure that IP knowledge is leveraged, and expertise is shared with external stakeholders to support innovation, economic growth and ensure greater inclusiveness. It is necessary to broaden our outreach and engagement efforts beyond IP experts, bringing the IP ecosystem much closer to the general public and other stakeholders at the grassroots level – citizens, industry, enterprises, start-ups, and SMEs. It is also particularly relevant to address IP scepticism, especially among young people. This scepticism is reflected in the greater propensity among young people to purchase counterfeit goods or to access copyright-infringing content online, compared to other age groups. We must therefore target youngsters and educate them about the damaging effects of IP infringements, whether on the economy, on the environment or the health and safety of consumers.

Instead of talking about technical aspects of IP we need to address it from a non-legal, business angle and show how IP contributes to improving lives and creating jobs, and that IP rights are not just for big companies, but also for SMEs and individual creators and innovators, and that IP also benefits consumers and the general public.

When addressing the citizens or SMEs on IP, we will implement common initiatives in a subsidiary manner. The national and regional IP offices are close to the SMEs and residents of their respective countries. Awareness and outreach activities will be

customised to take advantage of local knowledge and to take into account the specific situation in each Member State. Educational materials will be developed by EUIPO and made available to the Member States, translated into the appropriate language, and customised to local needs.

We will implement five Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 17**

Broaden outreach beyond IP experts

To support a greater understanding of the importance of IP in Europe and beyond, we need to broaden our outreach and engagement efforts beyond IP experts and bring the IP ecosystem much closer to the general public and other stakeholders – especially citizens, start-ups, and SMEs. In concrete terms, this means being present at trade exhibitions and fairs and other events where we can reach those communities. IP must be addressed and explained from a non-legalistic, business angle, to show how it can contribute to improving lives. Relevant audiences will be addressed with interactive and easily digestible content on social media, through a combination of direct outreach and via influencers.

- **Key Initiative 18**

Address IP scepticism through enhancing IP in Education

To address IP scepticism, especially among young people, and help the next generation of innovators to thrive by assisting them in making use of IP rights to protect their innovations, we will reinforce the cooperation with educational authorities and institutions to integrate IP awareness into the curriculum at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary. We will partner with a wide range of institutions to achieve this, and we will develop educational materials, toolkits, lesson plans and online resources that are tailored to different age groups, learning levels and educational contexts. Furthermore, we will organise workshops, seminars and guest lectures on IP, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. The network of European Schools should play a particular importance, for example by serving as a pilot for new activities in this area

- **Key Initiative 19**

Raise awareness and promote the use of the design and GI systems

With the recent adoption of the legal reform packages, the EU legislator has approved an update of the EU design rules making them ready for the digital age, as well as created a new EU scheme for GIs for craft and industrial products. In reaction to the emergence of new technologies such as 3D printing and AI, protection of EU design will apply not only to physical objects but also to those visualised in a graphic, apparent from the spatial arrangement of items and will include animations, maps and fonts. The EUIPO will take advantage of the opportunity provided by the legal reform to raise awareness of the protection provided by registered design rights and the advantages it offers to companies and to individual designers. In promoting the awareness of design, the annual DesignEuropa Awards will play a significant part, as will cooperation with

national and regional IP offices, design associations, design schools and industry. In parallel, the EUIPO will closely cooperate with users of the new EU scheme for GIs for craft and industrial products, aiming towards efficient and transparent administration and promotion of the new protection system.

- **Key Initiative 20**

Support SMEs in understanding and using IP rights

To break down the perceived barriers to access the IP system by SMEs, we will carry out a number of targeted activities, with the European IP Information Centre (EIPIC) as the central EUIPN platform to define common goals, share good practices, support national and regional offices' initiatives, and measure impact at national and EU scale. Financial support including the possibility to partially finance obtaining IP rights through the SME Fund will be considered. We will continue conducting pan-European surveys of SMEs, to better understand their needs and behaviour in respect of IP. We will also make use of the expertise of the IP Scan Experts network. The overall goal is to provide accessible, tailored and comprehensive support to SMEs in managing, protecting and leveraging their IP rights. Furthermore, the market gap in terms of IP competency of human resources in European companies, particularly SMEs, needs to be addressed. This requires a strategic reorientation of the mission of the EUIPO Academy from focusing on technical capacity building to ensuring the development of skills within the IP system. This will be done by establishing a renewed and enhanced partnership with the national and regional IP offices, user associations and organisations representing advisers for businesses, such as accountants, innovation centres and chambers of commerce.

- **Key Initiative 21**

Establish a network of dedicated IPR helpdesks in Europe

The European Commission has established IPR helpdesks around the world, designed to assist EU SMEs that are doing business outside their home country. The EUIPO is currently managing the IPR helpdesk for Africa. Leveraging the capabilities of the EIPIC, we will work with the national and regional IP offices to enhance existing local IPR helpdesks for SMEs across the EU, in close alignment with the European Commission and ensuring complementarity with the European IPR Helpdesk, operated under the Horizon Europe initiative.

Promotion of innovation

We will foster value creation

Although Europe's creative and innovative industries have carved out an important share of the world's intellectual capital, Europe needs more innovation and more innovation-driven economic growth. The more robust the innovation system, the more likely it is that innovative ideas get to the market and become tangible products and services. **The Draghi** report¹ from September 2024 sets out the challenges facing Europe in the coming years, one of which is Europe's relatively weak position in new technologies, which in turn produces a "vicious circle of low investment and low innovation".

¹ "The future of European competitiveness" – Mario Draghi (September 2024)

https://commission.europa.eu/topics/strengthening-european-competitiveness/eu-competitiveness-looking-ahead_en

The transition to a net-zero economy and climate change mitigation and adaptation requires innovation, new technologies and business models, with IP playing a critical role in their success. To remain a global leader, Europe needs to create; to effectively protect; and to capitalise on its IP.

This is the reason why the EUIPO will strive to bring the IP ecosystem much closer to industry, start-ups, SMEs, universities, research institutions and to all those who can benefit from protecting their intangible assets through IP. The story to be told is a "business story" rather than an "IP story". In other words, rather than focusing on the legal aspects and procedures related to the various IP rights, we must focus on the benefits that a creator, an inventor or an SME can derive from IP. In carrying out these activities, we recognise the variations between EU Member States as regards use of IP. Therefore, these activities can only succeed in a Member State when the corresponding national IP office and the EUIPO work closely together to make best use of local expertise.

Making the IP system more accessible to innovators and creators is not in itself sufficient to generate economic benefits of IP. We must also work to help European innovators turn their innovation into capital, jobs and economic success. Today the total value of existing intangible assets is estimated to represent more than 80 % of the total value of listed companies. Likewise, it is also well documented that companies that follow an active policy of investment, protection and management of intangible assets generate higher results and benefits for shareholders and workers. Nevertheless, we still do not have a reliable and consistent way of valuing these assets, which prevents many companies from leveraging what is often their most strategic asset – their IP – to access the financing they need to scale-up.

In some cases, European businesses continue to lag behind their counterparts in other parts of the world when it comes to obtaining risk financing (venture capital), and we must work towards reducing that disadvantage in the coming years. There is plenty of innovative power in Europe, but without finance these innovative ideas will not turn into the jobs, growth and solutions to the challenges facing Europe (such as climate change adaptation and the new technologies) – they will either wither or the entrepreneurs will leave Europe for other regions where risk capital is more readily available. IP valuation, commercialisation and IP-backed financing should therefore become one of the key areas of work within our wider efforts to ensure that IP supports entrepreneurs and enterprises in maximising and leveraging their innovation.

To close this gap, efforts are needed to raise awareness among investors and start-ups about the value of IP with a focus on showcasing success stories and simplifying IP valuation for SMEs. The initiatives in this priority area could include support to IP valuation services through cooperation with specialist providers, creating matchmaking platforms for SMEs and investors, and integrating IP education into existing start-up support programmes. Additionally, more research on IP-related finance is needed, including joint studies with relevant IP organisations, as well as the development of user-friendly IP valuation tools and the promotion of IP as viable collateral for loans. In carrying out this work, it is essential to engage with the banking and investment communities to understand their decision-making process when considering providing finance to a start-up or an SME. It is also important to recognise that IP does not exist in isolation. It is an integral part of a company's overall strategy as set out in a credible and realistic business plan. This should be taken into account when developing support programmes for SMEs.

The EUIPO, in cooperation with the European Commission, the national and regional IP offices and other partners, will work to strengthen the start-up financing ecosystem in Europe to help close the gap with other regions around the world. This does not necessarily mean copying other parts of the world – this is often neither possible nor desirable – but there are regions of Europe that are doing well in this regard. It is necessary to learn from good practices in this area and to implement them across the EU.

In addition to helping IPR owners access risk financing, we recognise that there are companies that are not looking for such financing but want to monetise their IP rights by licensing or selling it to other companies. Taking advantage of experience in Member States where initiatives in this area have been implemented, we will consider ways to facilitate such monetisation.

We will implement five Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 22**

Provide effective support to business, in particular most innovative companies, to use IP to grow in the global marketplace

We will partner, together with the national and regional IP offices and the European Commission, with innovation agencies and associations, research institutions, universities, incubators, trade exhibitions and fairs to make IP a fundamental business tool, with IP protection and enforcement embedded by design in their activities. In particular, we will work with the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) and the EIC Accelerator, part of the Horizon Europe funding scheme, to make IP a critical asset for start-ups bringing new products and services to the marketplace. We will also engage with the national and regional IP offices to provide targeted support to regions in the EU with low rates of IPR activity and strive towards a better regional balance of funding across the EU. Collaborating with other organisations such as the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), we will launch programmes dedicated to entrepreneurship and innovation, with a strong emphasis on IP.

- **Key Initiative 23**

Position the EUIPO as a thoughtful organisation

To effectively promote innovation, we must first understand its nature. To that end, we will conduct joint studies and analyses on topics where innovation is key to finding solutions, such as climate change or virtual worlds. We will work with EU agencies and bodies such as the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and services of the European Commission, the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) or the European Environment Agency (EEA), and other interested organisations, such as the WIPO, the EPO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), regional development banks and IP offices outside the EU. To conduct empirical studies of this kind, data is needed, and so we must develop EU-level and national datasets on innovation and other relevant subjects such as geographical or gender balance among IPR applicants. This combination of data and analysis will enable us to target effective action to stimulate innovation.

- **Key Initiative 24**

IP as a tool for growth and sustainable development

One of the key capabilities that the EUIPO and our partners in the EUIPN bring to the table is the detailed data on IP that is contained in our registers, including data on the scope of protection conferred by the IP right, which greatly affects the value of the underlying intellectual asset. This data will be leveraged across the EUIPN and made available to valuation service providers and for new services for SMEs offered by the EUIPN in areas where the market is unable to do so. Furthermore, we will strive for the connection among various IP assets in IP registers in the EUIPN, including IP rights, domain names, company names and licensing/transfer/co-existence contracts. This facilitates development of an overall IP assets strategy and commercialisation of a company's IP rights, for which we will create advice/expert mentorship pro bono programmes.

- **Key Initiative 25**

Establish a widely accepted IP valuation methodology

One of the barriers for start-ups and SMEs to access financing is the absence of a widely accepted method to value their IP, which limits their ability to use IP as a basis for obtaining funds, whether through investment or bank lending. We will therefore engage with the world of finance, including national accounting networks and bodies such as the International Accounting Standards Board, to develop a commonly accepted valuation methodology in order to make it available for those seeking capital to support the growth of their business. To enhance the credibility and quality of IP valuation services, we will cooperate with relevant organisations towards providing the means for a training, certification and recognition process for professional evaluators in Europe, qualified to perform these tasks both for market operations and for accounting recognition.

- **Key Initiative 26**

European IP platform bringing together SMEs and capital providers

To bridge the gap between the European SME/start-up ecosystem and the world of finance, we will partner with financial institutions, including venture capital firms and insurers, in order to facilitate business access to financing based on their IP portfolios. By bringing together actors from these two worlds, an added impetus to promote IP among SMEs will potentially lead to enhanced funding opportunities. We will also intensify our cooperation with the European Innovation Network, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Investment Fund (EIF) and with start-up organisations. Finally, in order to support those SMEs that are looking to monetise their IP by selling or licensing their IP rights, we will consider the feasibility of establishing an online platform to facilitate such transactions.



Inclusive IP landscape in Europe

We will make all types of IP in the EU accessible to all

Today's European IP system is unique. It is composed of both unitary and national/regional IP rights. Other IP rights, most prominently copyright, are strictly national and have no registration requirements as exist for the other IP rights. Other types of intellectual assets, for example domain names, are managed by a variety of registries and registrars. This, together with the potentially game-changing impact of new technologies such as virtual worlds and AI, creates a need for some level of coordination and rationalisation.

Europe is rich in culture and creativity. Copyright ensures that creators receive recognition, remuneration and protection for their works and is therefore a cornerstone for the EU cultural and creative sectors. Copyright also plays a crucial role in preserving our European cultural heritage, a central element of our history and identity, and it is a driver for growth and jobs. According to a recent EUIPO study, copyright intensive industries contribute 7 % of the EU's GDP, employing over 17 million people. In this context, the EUIPO should enhance its support for to the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) by focussing more on copyright.

Digital transformation brings new challenges and opportunities for creators, while testing the limits of EU copyright that is territorial and lacks full harmonisation. Online content actors operate across borders. Fast-moving technological developments such as the rise of GenAI demonstrate the need for action and new solutions protecting copyright. Each new digital innovation cycle increases the importance of a well-functioning copyright infrastructure that can help copyright holders to value their rights, and users to access their works. This calls for new efforts to enhance cross-border cooperation and find new solutions at EU level.

The EU's regulatory framework for AI – the AI Act – imposes on providers of General Purpose AI systems compliance with EU copyright law (in particular the right of the copyright holders to opt-out from the text and data mining exception) and transparency requirements (including publishing sufficiently detailed summaries of the content used for training).

The EUIPO is already entrusted with tasks in copyright enforcement and awareness, in engaging national copyright administrations and with the management of copyright databases on orphan and out-of-commerce works. Building on this expertise and its networks, in close cooperation with the European Commission, we will work towards the creation of a copyright centre and further support EU policy objectives and initiatives intended to reinforce the copyright EU infrastructure and tackle the challenges posed by GenAI.

The fragmentation of the IP system in the EU may be addressed by the EU legislator by creating new IP rights and entrusting EUIPO with new responsibilities. We will support the European Commission in this effort, while also identifying synergies with other types of IP such as Community Plant Variety Rights or .eu domains.

Furthermore, today, segments of the EU population, such as women entrepreneurs and youngsters, remain significantly underrepresented within the IP landscape. Women

designers account for only 24 % of design registrations according to EUIPO statistics. Similarly, a study by the EPO showed that only 13 % of the inventors filing patents in Europe are women. In order to fully harness the inventive and creative power of Europe, groups and sectors that have historically been underrepresented in the IP ecosystem need to be given the opportunity to fully participate in this system. This is something that we must do, not only because it is simply the right thing, but also because we must take full advantage of the human capital and creative potential among Europeans. We must in the first instance understand the reasons behind such underrepresentation by collecting relevant data and analysing them so as to be able to develop effective initiatives to address the problem.

Strategic partnerships with EU entities such as the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the EIT can further amplify outreach efforts, through programmes such as the 'Women Leadership Programme' (WLP) and initiatives promoting gender equality and inclusivity in entrepreneurship.

We will implement six Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 27**

Ensure a consistent implementation of the new legal frameworks on design and GIs in the EU

Recent legislative reforms in the area of design, as well as the creation of the new industrial and craft GI at EU level entrust the EUIPO with new responsibilities. These will be implemented in close cooperation with national and regional IP offices in the EU to ensure a high degree of convergence along with consistency, legal certainty and predictability. We will facilitate exchanges within the EUIPN on areas of common interest, for example the definition of standards for controls, developing information materials, and transposition of the new design directive into national law. As part of the process, the Office will have to open new markets, integrate new stakeholders and implement processes that are materially different from those relating to trade marks and designs, for example dealing with the industrial and craft GIs in the Member States that choose to opt out of a national scheme in favour of direct registration at EUIPO.

- **Key Initiative 28**

Prepare the EUIPO to cope with new tasks

As part of our effort to strengthen the IP system in Europe, we must be ready to take on further new responsibilities that may be entrusted to us, as well as to coordinate and integrate with unitary IP rights managed by other organisations.

Through our cooperation with EURiD, the registry for the .eu domain, and through the regulations governing GIs, the EUIPO will be involved in managing the interaction between trade marks, designs, GIs and domain names. This can be extended to other types of domains and other related rights such as company names. In doing so we will position the EUIPO as the office to which the EU institutions will look when considering where new IP-related tasks should be carried out.

Furthermore, we will follow the developments of legislative initiatives and be ready to

cope in an effective and efficient manner with any new task the EU legislators might decide to entrust to the EUIPO.

- **Key Initiative 29**

Establish the EUIPO Copyright Knowledge Centre

We will support the evolution of the EU copyright framework by establishing the EUIPO Copyright Knowledge Centre, which will provide first online information resources on ways to protect, respect and value copyright to unleash the full potential of digital markets for creators and businesses. We will develop this initiative in full cooperation with the European Commission, aiming to support the design and implementation of EU policy initiatives in this area, and with the member states. In addition, the Centre will be a forum to engage the public and private copyright communities and other interested parties, to understand their needs and to identify how and where the EUIPO could fill the gaps or complement existing initiatives. It will also develop proposed solutions to enhance the copyright infrastructure in the EU. The guiding principles for the EUIPO's engagement on copyright will be cooperation with all relevant stakeholders to help address EU policy and market needs, and innovation to support the development of value services, building on our EUIPO experience with other IP rights. This will include services facilitating licensing and ADR, work in the area of copyright and AI (in line with the implementation of the AI Act), and delivery of solutions to help preserve Europe's cultural heritage. Technical solutions and practices to address copyright issues, including infringement, related to GenAI will be analysed while implementing capacity building programmes with judges and law enforcement authorities.

The Centre will also consolidate the Office's existing initiatives, including enhancement of the functionalities of the Out-of-Commerce Works Database to cope with the increasing volume of records that will be registered in the coming years; assistance to the European Commission in monitoring the implementation of the Recommendation on Live Event Piracy; and further development of Agorateka, the portal helping users find legal content on the internet.

- **Key Initiative 30**

Enhance copyright support services

A new database **CopyrightView** will be created to consolidate information on national and EU copyright databases, providing information on copyright status, authorship and ownership of works (for example, whether they are in the public domain, conditions for access, etc.), with a view to develop advanced search functionalities. In addition, we will explore the feasibility of an EU Digital Deposit System for all types of digital content with a broad range of IP use cases (evidence, attribution). In the field of copyright this may include search and content management functionalities that would help address some of the challenges raised by new technological developments such as GenAI. Finally, we will support Member States' implementation of new ADR procedures established by the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market, while exploring EUIPO mediation solutions as part of our ADR Centre.

Furthermore, the EUIPO will enhance support on measuring CCSI contributing to the update of Eurostat and UNESCO's Frameworks on cultural statistics. In this context we

will broaden our statistical scope to include creative aspects and measure culture's social dimension, providing detailed data across sub-sectors like music, but also heritage or books.

- **Key Initiative 31**

Develop target programmes to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in the IP system in Europe

Before tackling a problem such as underrepresentation of certain groups, we must understand its extent and its causes. We will collect data on the gender and geographical makeup of IPR applicants in Europe and conduct research to analyse the reasons for any imbalances as regards gender or geographical origin. To reach groups such as women or young people, we will design and implement awareness campaigns that are more inclusive and address the intended audience in appropriate language as much as possible. Specific events, such as innovation competitions or workshops on entrepreneurship and creativity will be organised. In carrying out these initiatives we will cooperate with other agencies and bodies that have experience with inclusion issues, such as the European Institute for Gender Equality. We will celebrate and champion diversity and inclusion in our public activities, highlighting women and youth who are successful as innovators and creators. We will lead by example in ensuring a broad representation in major events that the EUIPO organises. Analogously to the DesignEuropa Award, we will establish awards that recognise organisations that contribute to diversity and inclusion in IP.

- **Key Initiative 32**

Enhance the IP Next-GEN

Young people are today's consumers and tomorrow's innovators and creators. Bearing in mind that IP is a powerful connector between innovative ideas and the market, it is important to reach out to the young generation with the message that their creations need IP protection. We will work closely with organisations such as the Knowledge and Innovation Communities established by the EIT to promote IP awareness in social media and at public events, including the dissemination of success stories – new companies that have been built on a foundation of IP rights. IP events targeted at young people (for example, innovation competitions) are also part of this effort. This initiative not only strengthens Europe's economy and entrepreneurship ecosystem but also reinforces IP as a vital driver of innovation, growth, competitiveness and job creation within the EU.



Enforcement

We will ensure trust and respect for IP rights

Enforcement is a necessary step in making sure that IP translates into growth and job creation. An IP right that is not well enforced is unlikely to deliver economic benefits to its owner or to society at large.

Infringement of IP rights is often carried out by organised crime groups that are very adaptable and take advantage of new opportunities, such as the rapid expansion of

online commerce. This puts a great deal of strain on enforcement authorities such as customs and police, which are faced with a rapidly growing quantity of potentially IP-infringing commodities in an environment of resource constraints and competing priorities. In this context, it is of utmost importance that IP crime remains a priority for the EU under the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).

At a time when businesses are urgently pursuing opportunities for recovery, the effective enforcement of IP rights is even more important than ever before. Faced with increasing expansion of the internet and e-commerce and the advent of virtual worlds and virtual products, new consumer spending habits are starting to arise as companies pursue new economic activities in the online environment. In this context, we must look at wider topics related to how to protect business ideas online and respond to new challenges regarding jurisdiction, territoriality and enforcement.

This raises questions as regards the accountability of providers of digital services and online intermediaries and platforms. In this sense, the priority will be to engage in meaningful cooperation with major e-commerce players for assuring protection and enforcement capabilities, using the potential of new technologies, in particular, blockchain and digital twins. The aim should be to create an IP protected market, ensuring the lawful origin of products and services.

While EUIPO and most national and regional IP offices have no direct enforcement responsibilities, we are tasked with providing support to the enforcement community and the rights owners. In defining those support activities, the cooperation within the EUIPN is essential to understand the needs of local enforcers and rights owners, particularly SMEs.

Working through the European Observatory on Infringements of IP Rights, we will continue to study infringement of IP rights with a view to quantifying, understanding and ultimately combating IP crime while managing the tension between the need for information sharing and the need to respect data protection rules.

The European Commission has adopted the Recommendation on measures to combat counterfeiting and enhance the enforcement of intellectual property rights and the Recommendation on combating online piracy of sports and other live events. These Recommendations entrust the EUIPO with tasks related to the implementation and monitoring of their impact, and we will carry out those tasks in close cooperation with the European Commission. We will also contribute to the Commission's implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA) by helping to assess threats and compiling and sharing best practices.

Furthermore, the EUIPO must step up its efforts as regards the development of solutions to strengthen IP rights enforcement capabilities, by developing capacity building in that area; further facilitate access to pro bono services for IP legal advice and support; and ensure affordable access to justice through ADR.

Our ambition is to make Europe the leading region in the world when it comes to IP protection and enforcement.

We will implement four Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 33**

Support IP rights owners to combat infringement

The EUIPO will assist IP rights owners, particularly SMEs, with information and assistance in protecting their IP rights. Together with the national and regional IP offices we will collaborate with industry associations, trade organisations, consumer groups, and any other private sector organisation affected by IP infringement to develop joint programmes to combat infringement and create IP awareness, including by showcasing examples of companies that have been victims of IPR infringement. The registers in the EUIPN will be enhanced by introducing solutions to assure the lawful origin of products and services, such as digital origin certificates, and blockchain-based solutions to facilitate IP transactions. The type of collective management solutions that exist in the area of copyright will be explored also for other IP rights to strengthen enforcement. New IP rights owners will be supported with information on how to protect and enforce their IP rights, including support for detection of infringement using technologies such as web crawling to detect domain names, company names and social media activity that could be an indication of infringement. We will continue to promote the use of the IP Enforcement Portal in the business community. We will also add an infringement helpdesk capacity to existing structures such as EIPIC, and we will provide affordable access to justice through ADR for infringement cases. SMEs often report that taking action against an infringer of their IP rights is unaffordable due to high legal costs. We will therefore map and analyse the availability of insurance against IP infringement that exists in some Member States.

- **Key Initiative 34**

Ensure fair online commerce

We will engage with major e-commerce platforms and other intermediaries with the ultimate objective of ensuring that online commerce is clean and fair. Enforcement capabilities must be integrated into the operation of e-commerce platforms. Participation of e-commerce platforms and other intermediaries in the IP Enforcement Portal will be promoted. We will also cooperate with payment services providers to identify the money flows related to IPR infringement. The existing cooperation with EURid will be extended to other EU domain registries, both ccTLD and gTLD, in order to further assist brand owners in protecting their rights online. We will support the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on measures to combat counterfeiting and enhance the enforcement of IP rights.

- **Key Initiative 35**

Leverage technology for enforcement

New technologies such as AI can play a role in making enforcement of IP rights more effective. We will invest in such technologies to increase enforcement capabilities, for example by using AI for risk analysis carried out by customs when choosing which incoming shipments to examine when they reach our land borders, ports and airports. In cooperation with the European Commission's DG TAXUD, we will enhance the IP Enforcement Portal with new features and capabilities, and increase its use by the enforcement community and the rights owners. We will also explore the possibility of extending the portal outside the EU. We will also ensure easier access to IPR databases such as TMview through APIs and mobile devices.

- **Key Initiative 36**

Build up a think tank for enforces enhancing knowledge on combating infringement

While the EUIPO has no operational enforcement role, we provide tools, training and knowledge sharing for enforcers to enable them to do their job more effectively. We will continue to develop capacity building and facilitate knowledge sharing, both on the enforcement and judicial levels. To combat a phenomenon such as infringement, it is necessary to know how it is carried out and what is the resulting damage to rights owners, the economy and the public. We will carry out further studies to quantify the extent and the consequences of IPR infringement, as well as studies examining the business models used by the infringers. We will increase our cooperation with the European Commission's DG CNECT and the JRC to fight online copyright infringement, in particular by supporting the Commission's Recommendation on combating online piracy of sports and other live events.

The EUIPO will enhance its awareness raising efforts, increasing its focus on creators' IP awareness and literacy, in synergy with initiatives supported at sectorial level by the European Commission (IP portal on the Creative Unite Website) or international partner organisations such as 'WIPO for Creators'. Furthermore, we will enhance data collection and monitoring on the economy and innovation trends in the cultural and creative industries to showcase new market and technological developments on a broader scale.

IP Alliances

We will evolve from network to community

The international IP system, characterised by an even stronger collaborative structure, requires higher levels of cooperation among external partners, allowing for a continuous exchange of expertise, knowledge sharing and the provision of services.

At the **European level**, in order to fully leverage the expertise and knowledge of the professionals in the EUIPN, virtual communities of IP experts in different areas will be created to streamline cooperation and facilitate discussions on matters of common interest. In this way, resources from the EUIPO and national and regional IP offices will be pooled for the benefit of the entire network. In this context we will launch the next generation of European Cooperation Projects (ECPs) by expanding them to new areas, focusing on consistency of user experience; emerging technologies; promoting IP inclusiveness; supporting business and innovation; and fostering green practices.

The EUIPO and the national and regional IP offices are faced with the same technological trends and will face similar challenges and impacts on their operations. New working solutions making use of AI and machine learning will be developed, also with the involvement of the users of the IP system, aiming at being available for both the EUIPO and the members of the EUIPN. Our flagship search tools created collaboratively by the EUIPO and the national and regional IP offices in the area of trade marks, designs and GIs – TMview, DesignView and GIview – will be leveraged to provide enhanced services and user experience around a unified **IPView** tool. New functionalities will be developed such as pre-assessment solutions applicable to both national and EU

rights, search report and surveillance letters, domain and company names and GIs. The next generation of ECPs will operate under the principles of consolidation, impact of actions, innovation, sustainability and streamlined project implementation, through more dynamic and effective working methods.

At a **global level** the EUIPO has established partnerships with some 100 IP organisations all over the world for the development of concrete and tangible cooperation activities, supported by bilateral cooperation agreements with national and regional IP offices; TM5 and ID5 IP offices of China, Japan, South Korea and the United States or by EU funded programmes in the IP field for which the EUIPO is the implementing agency, covering countries in Africa, China, South-East Asia, Latin America, Western Balkans and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

We will work to ensure a global level playing field for EU businesses by eliminating barriers to using and enforcing IP, fostering innovation worldwide. Additionally, we will assist the European Commission in implementing external initiatives related to IP. International cooperation activities will be expanded to new areas such as GIs, copyright, IP valuation, IP-backed financing as well as emerging technologies.

The EUIPO needs to be more forward looking and broader minded and engage with the most forward-looking IP offices and organisations around the world to share ideas, best practices, and perspectives on how IP can drive growth. In this context we will leverage our cooperation partnerships to jointly identify and develop common projects of high impact; explore synergies; avoid inconsistencies and duplication of work; and maximise the cooperation results for the benefit of the stakeholders of the global IP system.

We will implement ten Key Initiatives in this area:

- **Key Initiative 37**

Establishment of virtual communities for collaboration

To fully leverage the expertise and knowledge of the professionals in the EUIPN, virtual communities of experts will be created to promote the pooling of EUIPN resources for real-time cooperation. These virtual communities will contribute to sustaining and deepening the EUIPN, employing a knowledge-driven approach to finding common, widely accepted, and consistent solutions to common challenges. These agile virtual communities of experts will ensure that information sharing, and exchange of best practices evolve into reinforced levels of horizontal cooperation among IP offices – as well as business and institutional stakeholders – aiming to provide benefits for IP users at national and EU level. These virtual communities will discuss, in a systematic and structured way, matters such as trade marks, designs and GIs; technology trends and IT security; new competences to be implemented at EU and national level; prospective planning and foresight; and quality schemes.

- **Key Initiative 38**

Ensure a consistent user experience

We will collaborate with the EUIPN members to provide a consistent experience for both internal and external users, resulting in a unified and nearly seamless approach to delivering core IP services. This effort will enhance clarity and consistency in applications, processing and examination. The approach will be to streamline the current technological landscape with a focus on consolidated, and as much as possible, standardised products, reducing the need for customisation while facilitating maintenance, growth and sustainability. Through this initiative we aim to provide the EUIPN and the European IP community with the next generation of tools and practices that deliver value and a consistent yet exceptional user experience.

User and examiner interfaces of front and back office will incorporate functional modules to evolve towards an **End-to-End Single Product Solution**. Their upgrade timeline and scope will be defined and released into technical packages. Furthermore, we will continue working together to establish consistent and predictable EU practices that respond to the changing needs of users at the national, EU and global level. Achieving this will involve integrating established EU practices into user and examiner platforms exploring innovative technologies such as the Large Language Model (LLM) to optimise efficiency and use. In addition, enhanced collaboration and knowledge sharing initiatives among key national and international stakeholder groups will be developed to promote and extend the visibility and benefits of these practices, supporting a more consistent user experience across jurisdictions.

- **Key Initiative 39**

Joint exploration and application of emerging technologies

We will explore and use best practical applications of recent technological advances in areas such as GenAI, Big Data, blockchain and digital environments to enhance the value of the cooperation projects. It will serve to build alliances around the exchange of data and knowledge accumulated by IP organisations, the EUIPN and major international IP offices in areas such as the automation of processes and supporting common tools such as Similarity for IP offices. Equally, we will further investigate blockchain use cases that can automate and simplify IP processes such as eWallets and common identifiers for IP owners. At a broader level, opportunities exist to share and compare data, and data-driven projects, with international partners such as WIPO and the EPO. The EUIPN is an environment rich in IP data; however, the full potential of this data is yet to be explored. We will bring European and national experts together to analyse, clean and combine IP data that can help EUIPN members with strategic planning and decision taking. This includes data on trade mark and design filings/registrations, patents and other IP rights, as well as data coming from related financial and macro-economic domains.

- **Key Initiative 40**

Foster Green Best practices

We will identify and spearhead IP related aspects of green initiatives to tackle climate change and sustainability. Best practices from IP offices in this area will be assessed and discussed in the context of the EUIPN. The focus will be on showcasing initiatives related to infrastructure and employee-focused initiatives implemented to create a sustainable workplace, reduce emissions, waste management, focusing on management and reporting of environmental indicators, improving sustainability of buildings, greening business travel, among others. On the other hand, we will raise awareness among IP professionals, businesses, and the public about the importance of green innovation and the potential benefits of integrating environmental considerations into IP strategies, incentivising innovators to prioritise sustainability, leading to more environmental-friendly products and technologies. Collaboration between IP rights holders, governments, academia, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop and promote green technologies and ensure their protection will be fostered. Finally, we will focus on encouraging sustainable innovation by taken measures such as highlighting environmental certification marks or studying the prevalence, and possibly the validity of green terms in applications, as well as create a **GreenIPView** Data Base to showcase relevant 'green IP rights'.

- **Key Initiative 41**

Business and innovation support

Cooperation towards providing support to businesses will be centralised around a revamped EIPIC. Given the proximity and close understanding of the SMEs in each national jurisdiction, the role of the national and regional IP offices is pivotal to ensure optimal impact. The principle of subsidiarity will therefore be supported alongside the promotion of the trade mark, design and GI systems. The revamped EIPIC will also fully contribute to EU strategy, and especially the European Commission's IP action plan. The catalogue of activities includes support for addressing IP needs: setting out and implementing IP strategy, providing information and assistance on IP protection, ADR mechanisms, as well as new initiatives in the field of IP-backed financing, monetisation and commercialisation.

- **Key Initiative 42**

Foster an inclusive IP landscape

Common actions will be coordinated through the EUIPN with the national and regional IP offices, the EUIPO Academy and the Observatory to extend IP training, capacity building, knowledge and awareness to both established and new audiences, building perceptions of IP within other authorities dealing with IP such as customs and enforcement agencies. Furthermore, the same approach could be followed to include the promotion of trust and value in IP at the local level, building on the groundwork of the Authenticities initiative to strengthen collaboration with municipalities and to generate IP awareness and values across communities. IP inclusivity can also be promoted among educational establishments at primary, secondary and tertiary level, including the co-development of teaching and training materials validated by the pertinent authorities within the Member States.

- **Key Initiative 43**

Support EU business in the global market

The EUIPO will work to ensure a global level playing field for EU businesses by eliminating barriers to using and enforcing IP, and innovating globally, in key trade partner countries. We will cooperate with the European Commission in the implementation of IPR helpdesks and look for synergies with EIPIC, thus enabling the EUIPN to gain an international dimension when it comes to supporting EU SMEs, including on issues related to infringement of their IP rights. Helpdesks will also provide a platform to promote the EU system due to significant number of activities targeting EU and non-EU businesses. Innovative activities of added value should include IP valuation services and support for access to financing based on IP assets. In addition, we aim to promote the EU IP systems to attract new users, with a particular focus on engaging youth and women innovators. This endeavour involves fostering trust and respect for IP in targeted non-EU nations by highlighting its advantages, raising awareness, and providing training to diverse stakeholder groups beyond the EU.

- **Key Initiative 44**

Support the implementation of EU policies in third countries

The EUIPO has supported the European Commission in the implementation of external actions on IP in the last years. This support will continue and intensify, under a novel approach – Team Europe. National offices will voluntarily engage in this endeavour alongside the EUIPO, contributing to EU-funded projects and programs in neighbouring and candidate countries. The aim is to assist these countries in aligning their IP systems with the body of EU law, thus preparing candidate countries to integrate into the single market and eventually join the EU and the EUIPN as full members. New programmes will be implemented with main trading partners of the EU, in particular those countries with which the EU has – or is negotiating – a Free Trade Agreement, in order to promote the EU IP systems, streamline business activities, foster innovation, and remove obstacles hindering IP protection or enforcement.

- **Key Initiative 45**

Expand cooperation to new areas

To ensure that the scope of international cooperation continues to respond to the needs of EU businesses in the global market, the EUIPO will expand its activities to new areas such as GIs, copyright, IP valuation, IP-backed financing as well as emerging technologies. We will identify international best practices and evaluate the possibility to integrate them in the work of the EUIPN/ECPs. Establishing and reinforcing international partnerships will be promoted to ensure a robust and sustainable GI system, aiming to cement the international role of the EUIPO as a Centre of Excellence in the GI area. We will contribute to develop further the international dimension of the Geneva Act and support the European Commission in third country negotiations as regards craft and industrial GIs. On the other hand, cooperation will focus on pressing topics such as IP valuation and IP-backed financing by capturing best practices from forward-looking countries. Partnerships will be established with European and international financial institutions such as the EIB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to identify ways to reduce the cost, time and complexity of IP valuation. Finally, we will examine AI impact

on IP systems and administrations by collaborating with WIPO, EPO, and the most technologically innovative IP offices, both on relevant legislative and practice changes, as well as on the application of AI for IP administration and enforcement authorities.

- **Key Initiative 46**

Create an IP Alliance among like-minded IP offices and organisations

The EUIPO has agreements on cooperation in IP-related activities with IP offices all over the world and with international organisations such as WIPO, EPO or the OECD. The EUIPO international cooperation is also developed under international networks in particular TM5 and ID5 with the IP offices of China, Japan, South Korea and the United States. Furthermore, the EUIPO is the EU agency responsible for the implementation of EU funded programmes in third countries in the IP field. This relevant experience in international cooperation matters, combined with our experience to actively participate in a network consisting of 27 EU Member States, gives us a particular responsibility to drive cooperation forward, both within the EU and beyond.

Leveraging this experience and capabilities, we will support further convergence of the IP system and innovation worldwide by stepping up our cooperation engagement. In this context we will promote the creation of an **informal platform** among like-minded and most forward-looking IP offices and organisations worldwide, user associations, business support organisations and financial institutions to share ideas, best practices and perspectives; create awareness about the EU IP systems; and to promote discussions on how to better respond to the challenges and needs of users globally. This International IP Alliance will contribute to identifying and spearheading high-impact solutions to global emerging challenges on selected topics such as those coming with technological innovation, i.e. impact of AI on IP systems, new technologies used in the IP offices, green practices, digital enforcement, among others. Solutions that have proven successful in other leading countries will be identified and shared with national and regional EU IP offices, contributing to further reinforcing and developing the EUIPN.



Implementing the strategy - Together

The strategic framework described in this document sets out the broad guidelines for our work during the rest of this decade. Its successful implementation will require an all-inclusive approach, built upon the active contribution and full commitment and dedication of all staff of the EUIPO; close collaboration with the national and regional IP offices and with stakeholders; regular and systematic input from the users of the IP systems; under the supervision of the EUIPO's Management Board and Budget Committee.

As regards the implementation of our strategy, each year the annual work programmes of the EUIPO will include detailed information on the different actions to be implemented. Furthermore, the respective human and financial resources associated with each year's actions and projects will be included in the Annual Budget of the EUIPO and in the Office workforce planning.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be monitored using a set of performance indicators, which will be published on a regular basis. A monitoring dashboard, including a summary of the different workstreams and actions undertaken under each of the three Organisational Enablers and the six Priority Impact Areas, with their respective timelines and expected results, will be developed.

The performance indicators are organised hierarchically. At the top, measuring the progress towards the five Goals, are the impact indicators. These indicators, each of which is linked to one of the five Goals, represent the aspirations of the Office on a macro level and are not measured directly. Rather, they are measured through the lower-level outcome and output key performance indicators (KPIs), associated with the Organisational Enablers and the Priority Impact Areas.

Output KPIs represent the products or outputs generated and delivered through the underlying activities. The benefits expected to be generated by those outputs are the outcome KPIs. Those outcomes in turn contribute towards the achievement of the Goals, as reflected by the impact indicators.

The tables presented in the appendix 2 reproduce the 5 Goals along with the impact indicators for each goal, along with the principal KPIs that will be measured to gauge progress. Appendix 3 contains a complete listing of the KPIs.

The KPIs will be included in the annual work programmes, along with the corresponding targets for each year. Some of the KPIs shown in Appendix 3 will only be calculated in 2026 and subsequent years, depending on the timing of the activities that give rise to those KPIs.

Finally, in view of its long-term nature, this strategic framework and the initiatives set out in it are subject to changes and/or adjustments during the five-year period, motivated by internal or external events unforeseen at this time. It should therefore not be understood as something 'written in stone'. The list of KPIs is also subject to modification, for example due to new activities implemented in a particular year.

Strategic Plan
2030
The EUIPO's DNA

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