

M. Christian Archambeau
Executive Director
EUIPO
Avenida de Europa, 4
E-03008 Alicante, Spain

April 29, 2020

Dear M. Archambeau,

We sincerely hope that the COVID 19 has not had any effect on your health or that of your family and friends and of course, your teams at EUIPO and their families.

We write regarding the serious impacts of COVID19.

You will, of course, be fully aware that besides the health issues, being caused by the pandemic, a consequent side effect is on legitimate European registered companies, many of which have had to suspend many of their activities due to various national restraints and restrictions designed to halt the spread of the outbreak. This is of course having a major impact on many well-known multinational businesses but also on our much valued small and medium sized enterprises.

As trade and industry associations with the objective of protecting Intellectual Property Rights, we represent thousands of brands and we are naturally concerned about the detrimental effect the continuing crisis is having on the finances of companies across Europe. Unfortunately, as many of these businesses are being drawn into safeguarding their existing employees and budgets, many have already decided to make changes in important support areas. One of the activities under threat appears to be intellectual property protection and enforcement. You more than others will understand that, for many enterprises, Intellectual Property rights have become their major business asset. However, we have already been contacted and informed that their budgets for IP protection are either being cut or reduced to a minimum.

This will have a natural knock-on effect on the level of support that IP associations can provide. Moreover, we are also concerned that national and regional IP offices across the world will feel the impact, as the need for applications, registrations and renewals will be collaterally reduced.

It is our view, that the effect of stopping, or even cutting back, on brand protection will hand a significant advantage to infringers and counterfeiters, who are continuing to manufacture and stockpile products in readiness for COVID19 restrictions to be relaxed.

In the circumstances, we would like to make a proposal to you, as Executive Director of the EUIPO, that consideration be given to measures such a postponement in the payment of fees. This might help companies to retain a robust level of IP protection, for trademarks and designs, which could enable them to continue to safeguard their brands, products, services, and businesses reputations.

Moreover, many prestigious members have also asked if, in light of the impending impact of the current crisis, the EUIPO would be willing to consider a temporary reduction of fees until late 2021?

There are of course other possible initiatives, such as instigating an awareness raising campaign about the associated dangers, which might result from taking a less robust approach to IP protection and enforcement of their rights.

We remain at your disposal to support you in these difficult times for all of us who recognise that intellectual property rights are vital in protecting business, consumers, jobs and our economies.

Kind regards

Signatories (*Overleaf*)

ABAC BAAN



ACG



ANDEMA



APM



INDICAM



UNIFAB

