05/21/2026 Events

· On 20 May, the 'EU4IP – Western Balkans' project was launched by the European Union Intellectual Property Office and the European Commission, in partnership with the intellectual property offices and authorities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and the Republic of Moldova.

- The initiative will support the EU's Western Balkan partners and the Republic of Moldova's integration into EU intellectual property systems.
- The project's goals are aligned with the EU's strategic objective to advance EU accession negotiations with the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova.

20 May 2026, Alicante, Spain. The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), together with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), officially launched the 'EU4IP – Western Balkans' [1] (EU4IP-WB) project to support Western Balkan partners and the Republic of Moldova in advancing their EU accession process through stronger intellectual property (IP) systems.

The initiative will focus on IP acquis alignment, capacity building, IP enforcement and raising greater awareness of the value of IP among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and young people.

EU4IP-WB will complement the existing EU4IP project in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine, taking advantage of the EUIPO's long-standing experience in the successful implementation of IP-focused EU-funded projects all over the world, together with its specialised European Union Intellectual Property Network, [2] IP experts and advanced digital tools.

The EU4IP-WB official project launch took place on 20 May at the EUIPO headquarters in Alicante, Spain, bringing together high-level representatives from the European Commission, EUIPO, Western Balkans and Republic of Moldova.

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, **João Negrão**, said: "A stronger intellectual property system is the bedrock of a more innovative and prosperous society. The launch of EU4IP for the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova is our shared commitment to building that foundation – delivering real, tangible benefits for industry, for users, for business, and for society."

The representative of the State Agency on Intellectual Property (AGEPI) Liliana Vieru, head of the Promotion and International Relations Department, stated: " For the Republic of Moldova, this project comes at a particularly important moment in our European integration process. Strengthening intellectual property rights is not only a sectoral reform objective; it forms part of a broader effort to strengthen regulatory predictability, improve investment protection, and accelerate our integration into the European Single Market."

Supporting innovation, growth and EU integration

Strong IP systems are essential to modern economies. By protecting ideas, brands, inventions, designs and creative works, IP rights encourage innovation, attract investment and create new business opportunities.

Through EU4IP-WB, IP authorities will be widely supported to empower businesses, creators, entrepreneurs, SMEs and young innovators across the region to benefit from more reliable, just and efficient IP frameworks that help them protect their assets to grow domestically and access wider European and international markets.

Meanwhile, this EU-funded project will contribute to the broader EU efforts of boosting economic

growth, promoting economic integration with the EU internal market and within the region and regional cooperation, in line with the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans [3] and the Common Regional Market (CRM) action plan. It will help to introduce and leverage more consistent IP rules and practices, which will make trade easier within the Western Balkans as well as between the region and the EU.

The EU4IP Component for the Western Balkans is co-funded by the European Commission and the EUIPO, and will run for three years from January 2026. As its implementing agency, the EUIPO will work closely with IP offices, public administrations, enforcement authorities, the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) Secretariat, and other stakeholders to modernise services, simplify procedures, and strengthen fair and effective IP protection for innovators and businesses in preparation for EU accession.

ABOUT THE EUIPO

The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) [4] is one of the largest decentralised agencies of the European Union, based in Alicante (Spain) since its foundation in 1994. The EUIPO manages the registration of EU trade marks, designs, and craft and industrial geographical indications, all of which are intellectual property rights that cover the 27 EU Member States. The EUIPO also carries out cooperation activities at EU and international level to create a level playing field in the world of IP and is responsible for the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights [5]. In 2025, the EUIPO was ranked as the most innovative IP office in the world [6].

ABOUT THE AGEPI

The State Agency on Intellectual Property (AGEPI) [7] is the administrative authority of the Republic of Moldova, under the Ministry of Justice, responsible for promoting and implementing policies in the field of legal protection of intellectual property, including industrial property, copyright, and related rights.

AGEPI represents the Republic of Moldova in international, regional, and intergovernmental organizations in the field of intellectual property, including the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), maintains and develops cooperative relationships with relevant institutions and international partners to strengthen the national intellectual property system and promote European integration.

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* This name does not prejudge the status of Kosovo and is in line with UN Resolution 1244 and the decision of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's declaration of independence.


[10]

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