

Israel joins the International Trademark System



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Israel joined the international trademark system following the deposit of its instrument of accession to the Madrid Protocol for the International Registration of Marks with WIPO Director General Francis Gurry this week. The [Madrid System](#), which will become operational in Israel on September 1, 2010, offers trademark owners a cost-effective, user-friendly and streamlined means of protecting and managing their trademark portfolio internationally.

Mr. Gurry welcomed Israel's accession noting that "Israel's membership of the Madrid Protocol offers a valuable option for Israeli enterprises to export and leverage Israeli brands in international markets with significant opportunities for business development." He also noted that the system's expanded geographical coverage makes it a more attractive option for all businesses operating in international markets. The Director General said that Israel's membership will "facilitate market access and the channeling of resources to Israel by foreign trademark holders."

Under the WIPO-administered Madrid System a trademark owner may protect a mark in up to 85 countries by filing one application, in one language (English, French or Spanish), with one set of fees, in one currency (Swiss Francs). Applicants wishing to use the Madrid system must apply for trademark protection in a relevant national or regional trademark office before seeking international protection. An international registration under the Madrid system produces the same effects as an application for registration of the mark in each of the contracting parties designated by the applicant.

If protection is not refused by the trademark office of a designated contracting party, the status of the mark is the same as if it had been registered by that office. Thereafter, the international registration can be maintained and renewed through a single procedure. Thus, the system provides a cost-effective and efficient way for trademark holders to secure and maintain protection for their marks in multiple countries.

Trademarks are a key component of any successful business marketing strategy as they allow companies to identify, promote and license their goods or services in the marketplace and to distinguish them from those of their competitors, and cement customer loyalty. A trademark symbolizes the promise of a quality product and in today's global and increasingly electronic marketplace, a trademark is often the only way for customers to identify a company's products and services. Trademark protection hinders moves to "free ride" on the goodwill of a company by using similar distinctive signs to market inferior or similar products or services. Loss, dilution or infringement of a high-value trademark could prove devastating to a business.

Israel is the 85th member of the WIPO-administered international trademark system which is governed by two treaties, namely, the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks (1891) and the Madrid Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks (1989).

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