

# Intellectual Property and SMEs

**Need for quality support services**



**European Commission**  
Enterprise and Industry

# Innovation, a key to Europe recovery

- Innovation is a key element of the **Lisbon Strategy** for Growth and Job.
- The ***European Economic Recovery Plan*** proposed by the Commission to respond to the economic crisis puts a particular emphasis on innovation and greening of EU investment.
- In particular, innovation is key to the success of the “smart” investments proposed by the Commission in key areas like energy efficiency, clean technologies for sectors like construction and automobiles.

# IP and SMEs are key to Innovation

- Innovation is all about creating, applying and commercializing new knowledge: **Intellectual Property (IP)** is at the core of this process. A proper IP management is the key to the success of any innovation strategy.
- **SMEs** account for over 99% of all European businesses, and in many fields provide the channels along which new technologies and services develop. Their growth and innovation potential is key to Europe economy.

# IP management is key to SMEs

- Proper IP management needs to be included in SMEs **business plans** in order to help them to :
  - Better **protect** their innovation by registered rights and/or unregistered methods
  - Efficiently monitor and **enforce** their intellectual property rights and fight **counterfeiting**
  - **Access** relevant information and technologies and **avoid** wasteful investment in R&D
  - **Commercialise** their inventions, **market** their brands, **license** their know-how
  - **Negotiate** joint ventures and other contractual agreements
  - Enhance their **access to finance**

# SMEs need support on IP management

- A large majority of **SMEs** (70%) estimate they need support in the area of IP management (*SBA public consultation*).
- The **Commission** recognises this need and encourage the development of publicly funded services to help SMEs manage their IP and fight counterfeiting, see:
  - *The Small Business Act*
  - *The Industrial Property Rights Strategy*
- Services already exists but **more and better services** are necessary. (see [Benchmarking study](#))

# IP services for SMEs

- Need to develop **coherent offers** of services at national/regional levels:
  - that address **all level** of SMEs' awareness (from lack of interest in IP to support IPR enforcement)
  - that address the full range of **IP management** issue (not limited to IP protection or patents)
  - that ensure **complementary** services (different actors, public/private)
  - → need to develop **(national, regional) IP awareness policies**
- Need to develop **quality services**
  - **tailored** to SME/business needs
  - combining technical, legal and business expertise
  - → need to develop **synergies and cooperation** between national patent offices and technology/development agencies, SME intermediaries.

# EC direct support

- EC provides direct support through a number of projects:
  - **IP4Inno**
    - training the trainers
  - **IPeuropAware**
    - development of support services by NPOs in collaboration with business intermediaries,
    - awareness action for the fashion and design industry
    - FP7 IPR helpdesk
  - **China IPR SME Helpdesk**
    - SME support to IPR protection and enforcement in China
  - **Enterprise Europe Network**
    - services to SME, including IPR; collaboration with NPOs.