

# IP vouchers for SMEs: applications now open

January 11, 2021 [About the EUIPO](#)

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As of 11 January small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based in the EU can apply for financing under the new [Ideas Powered for Business SME Fund](#).

The application window is open from 11 to 31 January. This is the first of **five application windows** that will run throughout 2021.

Open to all enterprises in the EU that fit the [official definition of a SME](#), the new scheme offers **financial support in the form of reimbursements** for trade mark and design application and for IP pre-diagnostic services (IP Scan)\*, **up to a maximum amount of EUR 1 500 per business**.

The new scheme is run through the [Ideas Powered for Business programme](#) at the EUIPO, and forms part of the European Commission's [IP Action Plan](#). It is carried out in cooperation with the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU.

Commissioner for Internal market Thierry **Breton** said: *"The coronavirus pandemic has hugely impacted SMEs. We want to help SMEs capitalise on their innovations and creativity to support their recovery."*

The requirements, timing and other information relevant to the scheme can already be consulted through the **Ideas Powered for Business [hub](#)**.

\* IP pre-diagnostic services under this scheme are only available through

participating national and regional IP offices of the EU. Before applying, you should check the list to ensure that the IP office in your Member State offers this service.

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## Europol and Frontex to exchange liaison officers



In December, Europol and [Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency](#) signed an agreement to exchange liaison officers. The agreement is part of the Joint Action Plan signed by the Executive Directors of the two agencies last year, aimed at strengthening the agencies' common effort in enhancing the security of EU citizens.

The liaison officers will contribute to information exchange between both agencies.

"I am looking forward to welcoming the first Europol liaison officer in Warsaw later this year. The exchange of information between the two agencies will improve the work of border guards and support investigations," said **Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri**.

"I am glad to welcome the Frontex liaison officer to our headquarters in The Hague. With more than 250 officers from almost 50 countries and agencies, Europol hosts the biggest law enforcement network in Europe. Liaison officers meet and network daily under one roof; they build strong international working relationships, coordinate operational cooperation, and securely share criminal information and best practices," **added Europol**

**Executive Director Catherine De Bolle.**

The first liaison officers will start working in Warsaw and The Hague later this year.

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## **Article – Coming up in Parliament: vaccines, EU-UK deal, recovery**



### **Vaccines**

On Tuesday the environment and public health committee will discuss with European Commission representatives the vaccine contracts concluded by the EU as well as the progress on the [authorisation of vaccines](#).

### **EU-UK agreement**

On Monday, the international trade committee starts examining the deal on the future EU-UK relations concluded on 24 December 2020. The international trade committee and the foreign affairs committee will hold a joint debate on

Thursday. Other committees (transport, fisheries, economic affairs and internal market) will also discuss the impact of the deal in their respective policies.

Even if the agreement is being provisionally applied from 1 January, Parliament [needs to give its approval](#) for it to enter into force on a permanent basis.

## Recovery

The economic and monetary affairs committee will vote on Monday on a [provisional agreement](#) with the Council on the establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The €672.5 billion facility is the main instrument under the [EU's recovery plan](#) and is designed to help EU countries tackle the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Preventing terrorist content online

The civil liberties committee votes on Monday on whether to endorse an agreement with Council on measures to [prevent the dissemination of terrorist content online](#).

## EU culture and youth programmes

On Monday the culture and education committee votes on agreements reached with the Council on the functioning of three EU programmes for 2021-2027: the [Erasmus+](#) exchange programme; [Creative Europe](#), which supports culture and the audiovisual sector; and the [European Solidarity Corps](#), which promotes volunteering in the EU.

## Biodiversity

The environment committee holds a public hearing on Thursday to look into the risk of a mass extinction of species on the planet. MEPs will also discuss how the [EU biodiversity strategy](#) for the next decade can address the problem.

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## [Forward look: 11 to 24 January 2021](#)



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## **Message from EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel**

In this first week of the new year, I would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you a very happy 2021. Ringing in the new year may have felt a little different this time as we reflected on the trials of the past 12 months.

Yet in many ways, we have emerged strengthened and enriched and can look ahead with optimism. The past year saw astounding triumphs of human and scientific achievement, with vaccines rolled out with record speed, our preparedness for future crises strengthened and our ability to adapt to digital working and learning tested and confirmed. Of course, 2021 will not be without its challenges. We are all still learning from this pandemic, which continues to evolve.

But we embark on the year with more wisdom, fresh hope and a new openness to innovate and evolve. On behalf of the EMCDDA, I would like to wish you health and happiness and a fruitful and positive year ahead.

Alexis Goosdeel