

In December, [we reported](#) that the EU trade mark reform package had been given the go-ahead. At that time, we were awaiting publication of the final text of the legislation implementing the reforms and confirmation of the dates on which the reforms would take effect. We now have both of these.

New [Regulation 2015/2424](#) was [published](#) on 24 December 2015. This Regulation will reform the current Community Trade Mark (CTM) regime by amending existing Regulation [207/2009](#) and Regulation [2868/95](#) and repealing Regulation [2869/95](#). The new Regulation will come into effect across Europe on **23 March 2016**. From that date, CTMs will be renamed European Union Trade Marks.

In addition, new [Directive 2015/2436](#) was published on 23 December 2015. This Directive will reform the national trade mark system of each EU member state by repealing existing Directive [2008/95](#). The new Directive will need to be implemented into the national laws of each member state by 14 January 2019, with the implementing provisions coming into effect in each state a day later on 15 January 2019.

As we reported in our previous update, the overriding objective of the reform is the modernisation of trade mark systems across Europe. The aim is to foster innovation and growth by making these systems more accessible, efficient and effective for businesses in terms of lower costs and complexity, increased speed, greater legal certainty and better protection against counterfeiting. Although it will be three years before changes happen at national registry level, reforms at European Union Trade Mark level will be felt much sooner – from **March of this year**.

From March, brand owners will benefit from a raft of changes making it quicker, cheaper and easier to obtain EU-wide trade mark protection. Not least, brand owners will make **significant savings** on new European Union Trade Mark registrations and renewals. From March, these fees will be reduced. It will be possible to register a European Union Trade Mark in just one class for a reduced fee of €850 (a saving of €50 on the current fees). Renewal fees will also be reduced from the current €1,350 to €850 for renewal in one class.

These fee reforms should make the European trade mark system genuinely accessible for smaller businesses, and they should take this opportunity to gain registered trade mark protection. Larger businesses that already have registered trade marks should review their portfolios to assess whether Europe-wide trade mark protection may be more cost-effective than maintenance of their existing national registrations.

For more information on maximising protection for your brand at reduced cost, please contact one of the lawyers listed in this publication.

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