Trade marks

at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

The Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) is responsible for developing international trade mark law. Switzerland, represented by a delegation from the IPI, actively participates in the work of this committee. The IPI also represents Switzerland in the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks and in the Committee of Experts responsible for amending the Nice Classification.

The Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications

The Standing Committee is a body of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Bringing together experts from around the world, the committee is tasked with setting standards in the field of international trade mark law. It also encourages the harmonisation of national laws. Examples of its work include the joint recommendation on the protection of well-known marks (1999) and the joint recommendation on the protection of marks on the internet (2001) (pdf). The SCT has also drawn up the Singapore Treaty (2006), which aims to harmonise the procedure for registering trade marks. The Singapore Treaty is an extension of the Trademark Law Treaty of 1994 (TLT).

Switzerland is actively committed within the SCT to improving protection of country names on an international level. To this end, Switzerland supports the proposal tabled by Jamaica in 2014 (SCT 32/2) and has co-sponsored the joint proposals SCT 39/8 Rev.3 and SCT 41/6.

The Madrid System

The Madrid System is administered by WIPO. It is a simple system for the international registration of trade marks which allows an applicant who has filed a trade mark application in their own country to request that the mark also be
protected in other member countries of the system by filing a single application with WIPO. With this centralised application system, applicants do not need to apply in each individual country for their trade mark to be protected in that country. The legal framework is primarily established by the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks.

The Working Group of the Madrid Union is responsible for the legal development of the system. It discusses potential amendments to the rules and the instructions necessary for the development of the system.

**The Nice Classification**

The Nice Classification is an international classification of products and services for the purposes of trade mark registration. It essentially consists of a list of classes, as well as an alphabetic list of goods and services with the corresponding classes indicated. The Nice Agreement, which is also administered by WIPO, provides the legal framework. All states party to the Nice Agreement participate in the meetings of a committee of experts established by the treaty. The committee has been meeting once a year since 2012 to decide on the changes to be made to the Nice Classification, which are then published in the form of new editions every five years and new versions every year.

**The Vienna Agreement**

WIPO also administers the Vienna Agreement Establishing an International Classification of the Figurative Elements of Marks. Switzerland has not ratified this treaty and does not apply this system of classification.

**DOCUMENTS & LINKS**

- Trade marks at WIPO
- Standing Committee (SCT)
- Singapore Treaty
- Madrid System
- Madrid System in Switzerland – international procedure
- Madrid System – legal texts
- Global Brand Database