

Malta joins DesignClass

January 22, 2020 [European Trade Mark and Design Network](#)

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The Commerce Department and Intellectual Property Office of Malta ([CD-IPRD](#)) is now part of the Common Harmonised Database on Product Indications (HDBPI) in DesignClass.

The integration was carried out with the support of the EUIPO's European Cooperation Projects and in close collaboration with the CD-IPRD. As a result, the complete set of Maltese translations is now available to all users through the [DesignClass](#) tool using the Locarno Classification, which consists of 32 classes (headings) and 219 subclasses (subheadings).

DesignClass allows users to easily navigate the harmonised database of product indications to **search for a specific translated term in 27 languages** and find the class they are in before applying for design protection.

The HDBPI is constantly updated so it evolves with the market and user needs. The integration of the Maltese Intellectual Property Office into the "Harmonisation community" is another step forward for this cooperation project.

The EUIPO and its stakeholders are currently collaborating on five major [European Cooperation](#) Projects. The projects aim to **benefit users across the EU** by providing modern, state-of-the-art tools and services for intellectual property offices.

Article – Pet trafficking: measures against the illegal puppy business



Many pets are traded illegally across the EU generating high profit at a low risk, often providing a profitable source of income for criminal networks.

To clamp down on the illegal trade in pets, the [environment and public health committee](#) called for an EU-wide action plan, tougher sanctions and mandatory registration in a [resolution](#) adopted on 21 January.

Europeans care about animals

Dogs and cats are the most popular companion animals in the EU and many of us consider them as part of the family. Most EU citizens care about the well-being of their furry friends: [74%](#) believe that companion animals should be better protected.

Trafficking can lead to poor breeding conditions, puppies and kittens being separated from their mothers too early and long journeys under stressful conditions, often without food and water.

It can also pose risks to public health as illegally bred pets are often not vaccinated and can spread rabies, parasites and infectious diseases to humans and livestock. Consumers attracted by low prices often buy companion animals online without being aware of the risks associated.

Measures

Parliament called for a compatible EU system of pet registration in a [resolution adopted in 2016](#). The resolution adopted on 21 January call on the European Commission to come up with a proposal for an EU-wide mandatory system for the identification and registration of cats and dogs, more controls and tougher sanctions against those supplying false pet passports. It also calls for a common EU definition of puppy and kitten farms , as differences in animal welfare standards lead to price differences that can be exploited by illegal breeders.

In addition EU breeding rules for pets are needed while EU countries should be encouraged to put in place registers of authorised breeders and sellers. People should be encourage to adopt, rather than buy, companion animals.

MEPs are expected to vote on the resolution in February.

Spain: EIB provides Arteche Group with EUR 27 million to finance its innovation and digitalisation strategy



- **RDI investments will enable Spanish multinational to expand production and improve its competitiveness.**
- **Climate action: project will contribute to energy transition by fostering development of safer and more efficient electrical systems.**
- **Employment impact: investments will be carried out in Spain and help to create quality jobs.**
- **Agreement is supported by the Investment Plan for Europe.**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing the Artech Group with EUR 27 million to finance its innovation strategy focusing on the development of new technologies, solutions and products for the electric power industry, and other investments to expand its productive assets. The agreement is supported by the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) and was signed in Madrid by EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro and Artech Group CEO Alexander Artetxe.

The RDI investments financed by the EIB will be carried out over four years, up to 2023, at the company's centres in Bilbao, Vitoria-Gazteiz and Madrid, and will help Artech to grow its business by implementing an ambitious innovation programme aimed at developing innovative solutions that meet the challenges of transforming the electric power industry. Specifically, the company will develop new electronic solutions geared to digitalising the power grid and integrating renewable energy generation into the network.

The agreement will also support the company's innovation strategy focusing on the design and manufacture of its range of products and solutions (instrument transformers, relays, reclosers, ACP), boosting efficiency, reliability and sustainability. These investments will enable the Artech Group to modernise its digital infrastructure and innovate in the 800kV electric power sector, a segment in which very few companies operate at a global level.

The project will have twofold climate action benefits. Firstly, it will enable the Artech Group to improve the efficiency and quality of its production processes. And secondly, the new solutions and products developed by the company for the electric power sector will help to adapt electricity infrastructure to facilitate renewable energy generation, a key step in the transition to a low carbon energy model. To implement its RDI strategy, the Artech Group works permanently together with more than 15 universities, laboratories and technology centres in Europe.

The Artech Group will benefit from the favourable conditions of EIB financing in terms of both maturity periods and interest rates thanks to the Investment Plan for Europe, dubbed the Juncker Plan, which enables the EU bank to offer increased support for investments fostering innovation, economic growth and jobs. Specifically, this project will help to create quality jobs in the group's plants in Spain.

During the signing ceremony in Madrid, **EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro, who is responsible for the Bank's operations in Spain**, said: *"Supporting innovation and digitalisation is key to the transition to a new low-carbon economic model. As Europe's climate bank, we are working to ensure that our companies have the necessary resources to invest in RDI strategies that foster this transformation while enhancing the productivity of our economies*

and boosting wealth and job creation. We are therefore delighted to lend our support to a Spanish company that will be able use this backing to strengthen its competitiveness and contribute to Europe's leadership in the electric power sector".

Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for the Economy, said: *"The electric power industry has a crucial role to play in the green transition, and that demands innovative solutions. That's why the European Union is supporting Arteché in its efforts to develop safer, more efficient electrical systems. This investment will also help to create high-quality jobs in Spain".*

"The electric power sector is in a period of transition, and in the Arteché Group we are putting our money on innovation as one of the keys to meeting the challenges facing us", said **Arteché Group CEO Alexander Artetxe**. *"The growth in electricity demand, the electrification of the economy, the drive for renewable energy and digitalisation are transforming power grids throughout the world. This is a time of great opportunities, and to take advantage of them we are dedicating major efforts to a range of R&D projects that we are not tackling alone".*

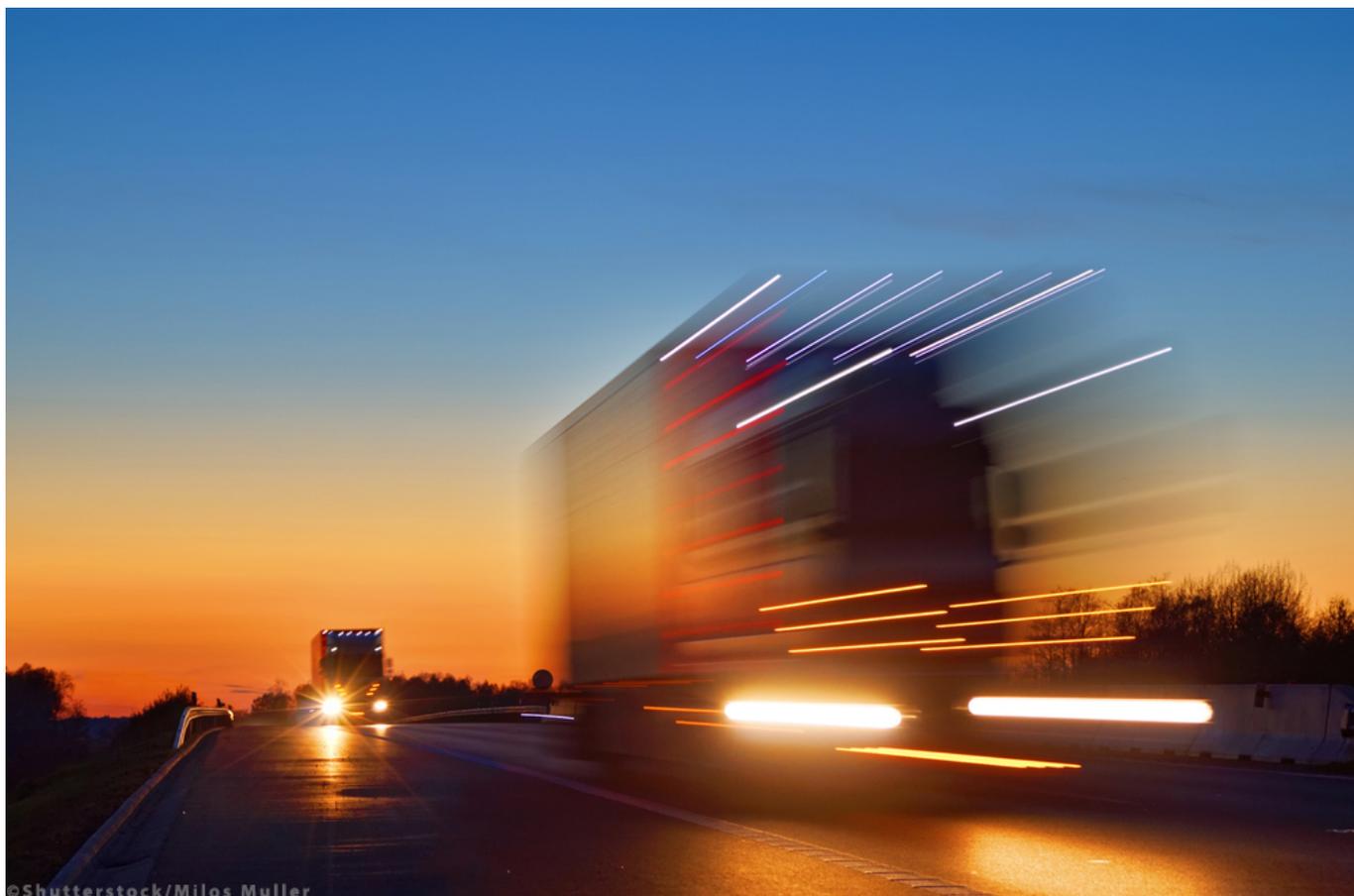
The EIB-Arteché Group agreement was signed under the Loans for Mid-caps in Spain and Portugal programme, a dedicated EIB financing facility for mid-caps (firms with up to 3 000 employees). Thanks to the backing of the Investment Plan for Europe, this credit line enables the EIB to support investment in projects that have a higher risk profile, owing to their structure or nature, but contribute to boosting growth and employment.

About the Arteché Group

With nearly 75 years of experience in the electric power industry, the Arteché Group offers high-tech solutions and equipment, including the full range of instrument transformers, auxiliary relays, protection, measuring and control equipment, substation automation systems, energy quality and smart grid solutions. The company has a turnover of EUR 300m and 1 800 employees.

Arteché, which is headquartered in Bilbao and has a presence in 13 countries, is an international benchmark in the sector, with teams operating in more than 150 countries focusing on generation, transmission and distribution grids, and companies in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Oceania.

**[Press release – Mobility package:
Transport Committee backs deal with EU
Ministers](#)**



The revised rules for posting of drivers, drivers' rest times and better enforcement of [cabotage](#) rules (i.e. transport of goods carried out by non-resident hauliers on a temporary basis in a host member state) aim to put an end to distortion of competition in the road transport sector and provide better rest conditions for drivers.

Fairer competition and fighting illegal practices

The agreement keeps the existing limits to cabotage (three operations within seven days), but in order to tackle fraud, vehicle tachographs will be used to register border-crossings.

To prevent "systematic cabotage", there will also be a "cooling-off period" of four days before more cabotage operations can be carried out within same country with the same vehicle.

To fight the use of letterbox companies, road haulage businesses would need to have substantial activities in the member state in which they are registered. New rules will also require trucks to return to the company's operational centre every eight weeks.

Since operators increasingly use vans to provide international transport services, those operators (using light commercial vehicles of over 2.5 tonnes) would also be subject to EU norms for transport operators and would need to equip the vans with a tachograph.

Clear rules on posting of drivers

EU-wide rules on posting of drivers will give a clear legal framework, so that these rules can be easily applied in the highly mobile transport sector, to prevent differing national approaches and ensure fair remuneration for drivers.

The agreed rules stipulate that [posting rules](#) apply to cabotage and international transport operations, excluding transit, bilateral operations and bilateral operations with one extra loading or unloading in each direction (or zero on the way out and two on return).

Better working conditions for drivers

The agreed text also includes changes to help ensure better rest conditions for drivers and allow them to spend more time at home.

Companies will have to organise their timetables so that drivers in international freight transport are able to return home at regular intervals (every three or four weeks depending on the work schedule).

The mandatory rest period at the end of the week, known as regular weekly rest, cannot be taken in the truck cab, the agreed text says. If this rest period is taken away from home, the company must pay for accommodation costs.

In exceptional cases, new rules will allow drivers to exceed the driving time under strict limitations to reach home to take their weekly rest, when they are very close to the home base.

The provisional agreement on posting of drivers was approved with 27 votes in favour, 22 against and no abstentions.

The provisional agreement on the drivers' rest times was approved with 27 votes in favour, 17 against and 5 abstentions.

The provisional agreement on market access and cabotage was approved with 32 votes in favour, 17 against and no abstentions.

Next steps

The deal will now need to be approved by EU ministers and then by the Parliament as a whole to enter into force.

The rules on posting will apply 18 months after the entry into force of the legal act. The rules on rest times, including the return of drivers, will apply 20 days after publication of the act. Rules on return of trucks and other changes to market access rules will apply 18 months after the entry into force of act on market access.

EMCDDA and CICAD give seal of approval on latest joint work programme activities

EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel is in Washington today where he will meet Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of the [Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission \(CICAD\)](#). The purpose of the visit is to discuss ongoing EMCDDA–CICAD cooperation and review the topics to be addressed under the joint work programme (2020–2024). Respectively, the two organisations lead the regional drug information systems of Europe and the Americas and, in so doing, make a valuable contribution to evidence-based information on drugs at global level.

The EMCDDA collaborates with CICAD under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with its parent body, the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2000. In the context of the MoU, the two bodies hold regular coordination meetings to fine-tune work programme activities and assess progress.

This is Mr Goosdeel's first visit to CICAD since taking up the post of Director in January 2016. Ambassador Lamm visited the EMCDDA in March 2019 to discuss perspectives of the new work programme, which will be formally signed this week.

During the visit, the EMCDDA delegation will meet CICAD staff, including: Angela Crowdy, CICAD Assistant Executive Secretary; Farah Urrutia, Secretary for Multidimensional Security; and Marya Hynes, Chief of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs.

Strategic objectives outlined in the work programme include: strengthening regional and international monitoring systems (including early-warning systems on new psychoactive substances/NPS); harmonising and developing indicators in the areas of drug supply and demand; and supporting the establishment of national drug monitoring centres and drug information networks. In the respective geographical areas of the two bodies, the programme also foresees information exchange on regional and national drug strategies, legislation and developments in drug production and use.

A significant component of the EMCDDA–CICAD partnership to date has been the publication of a [joint handbook](#) on building national drug observatories. Released in 2010 and now available in 10 languages, this practical guide supports the establishment and development of national drug monitoring centres in Europe – including non-EU countries – and Latin America. The meeting is expected to look at the current format of the handbook and potential updates.

During the two-day meeting, the Directors will present an overview of their respective organisations' activities. Roumen Sedefov, EMCDDA Head of unit for Risks to public safety and security, will present the 'making of' the [2019 EU](#)

[Drug Markets Report](#) and the EU early warning system on NPS. Gonçalo Felgueiras, EMCDDA Head of unit for Reitox and external partners – joining the agency's delegation as its contact point for the implementation of the work programme – will discuss synergies with his counterpart Marya Hynes.

The EMCDDA and CICAD support UN and EU efforts to strengthen information systems on drugs. They are two key contributing institutions to the EU's Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies (COPOLAD). This programme aims to improve the coherence, balance and impact of drug policies between the regions, through the exchange of mutual experience, bi-regional coordination and the promotion of coordinated responses. [COPOLAD II](#), which kicked off in 2015, will draw to a close in June this year and its continuation is currently being discussed at EU level.

Previous work programmes: