



Mr Peter ŽIGA  
Minister for the Economy  
Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic  
Mierová 19  
827 15 Bratislava 212

26 September 2016

Dear Minister,

*Dear Mr. Žiga,*

It took nearly 40 years for Europe to agree on the Unitary Patent. EU Member States and the EU institutions finally agreed at the end of 2012. Still the Unitary Patent is not yet a reality for companies and inventors with negative repercussions for innovation, growth and job creation in Europe.

Intellectual Property (IP) protection is at the core of innovation and value creation for innovative businesses. IP-intensive industries account for 1 in 3 jobs and 39% of total economic activity (GDP) in the EU.

Innovation and patent protection in particular are crucial to address the current stagnant growth but also some of the major challenges Europe will be facing in the coming decades (e.g. healthcare and medical technologies for an aging population, fighting climate change, improved sanitation).

This is why innovative businesses need to fully rely on IP protection at a reasonable cost. The new Unitary Patent and Unified Patent Court will finally open a new opportunity for companies to protect their innovations.

Since 2012, EU Member States have been focusing on the technical implementation of the Unitary Patent and Unified Patent Court project. We understand that the final touches to the new system are being put in place. With the necessary ratifications of the Unified Patent Court Agreement having almost been completed, there have been valid expectations from companies that the new system would become operational in the first semester of 2017.

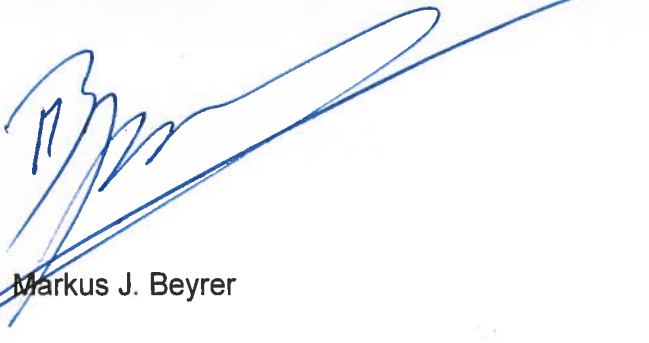
The recent referendum in the United Kingdom jeopardises this major contribution to the industrial renaissance of Europe. To minimise this uncertainty, BUSINESSEUROPE<sup>1</sup> calls on the Competitiveness Council to voice political support for the objective of going forward with the project and finding a mechanism to retain the UK in the system that

<sup>1</sup> This letter is not supported by CEOE, the Confederation of Employers and Industries of Spain.

remains sustainable even after the Brexit. Member States should make all possible efforts to bring the Unitary Patent package into life in 2017 as planned and to immediately start working on any necessary changes or additions to the legislative framework.

We thank you for taking into account our concerns in your upcoming deliberations at the Competitiveness Council meeting.

Yours sincerely



Markus J. Beyrer