



# Beware of misleading invoices:

## Act smart against scammers!

Krisztián TOTH, Legal Department, EUIPO  
Stephane ROBINOT, EUROPOL  
24 May 2022

## PROGRAMME

**45'**  
**Presentation**

- 1 - What is a misleading invoice?
- 2 - How to identify a misleading invoice?
- 3 - What to do if you spot a misleading invoice?

**10'**  
**Questions and answers**

# 1 What is a misleading invoice?

## What is a misleading invoice?

Seemingly realistic letter that demands payment from IP system users:

- for **unsolicited or fictitious services** or
- to obtain or maintain 'registrations' in **unofficial or fictitious databases**

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- payment reminders with **imitated EUIPO logo and names of officials**

## What is a misleading invoice?

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## When can you be targeted by a scammer?

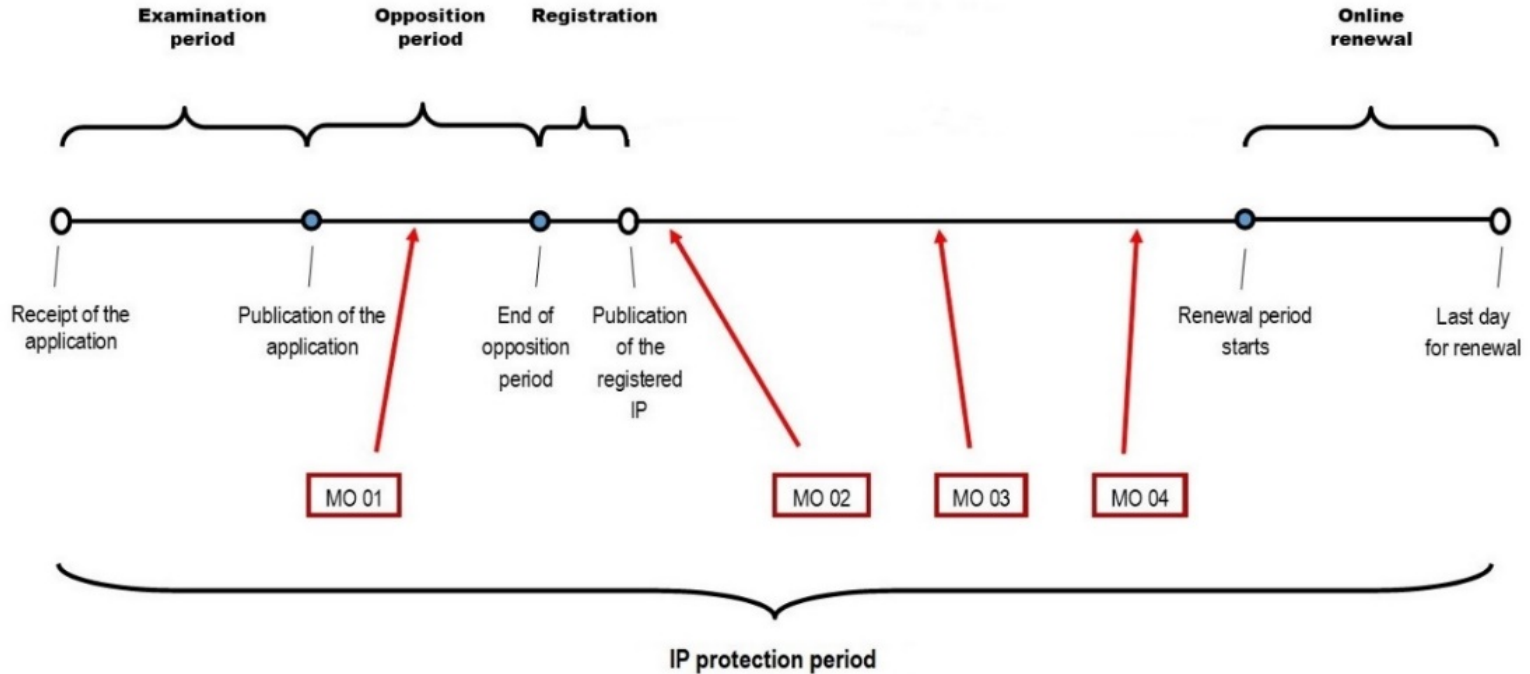
- All along the trade mark / design application and registration process and before renewal

## When can you be targeted by a scammer?

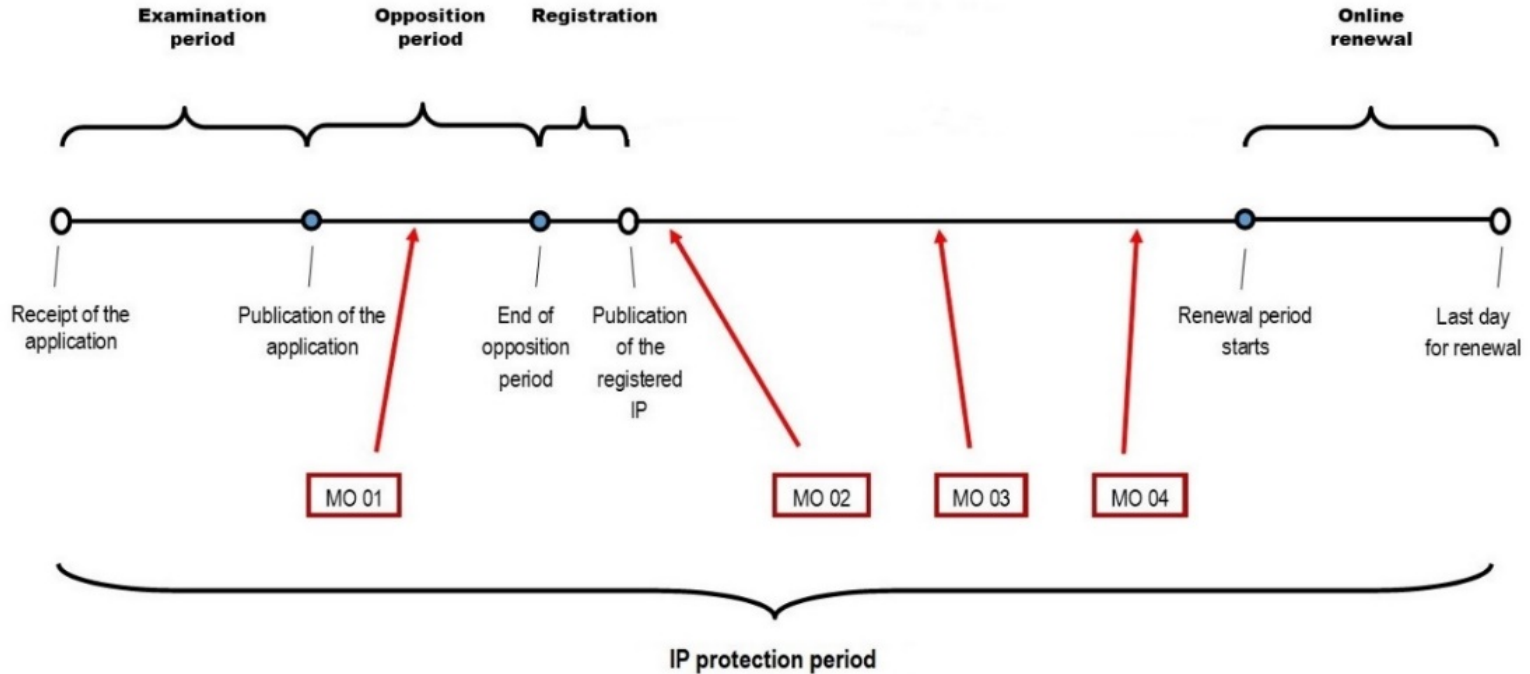
- All along the trade mark / design application and registration process and before renewal
- Four major moments** need to be strongly considered



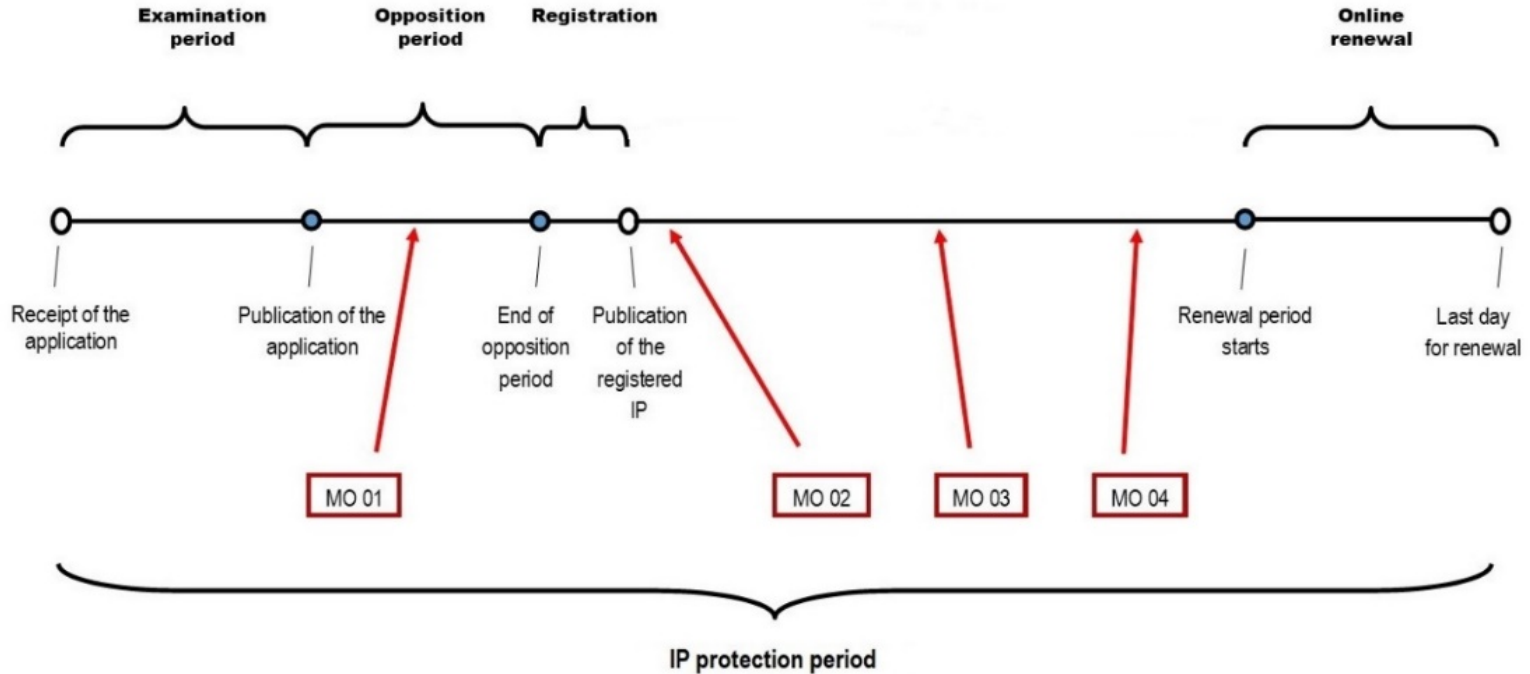
## When can you be targeted by a scammer?



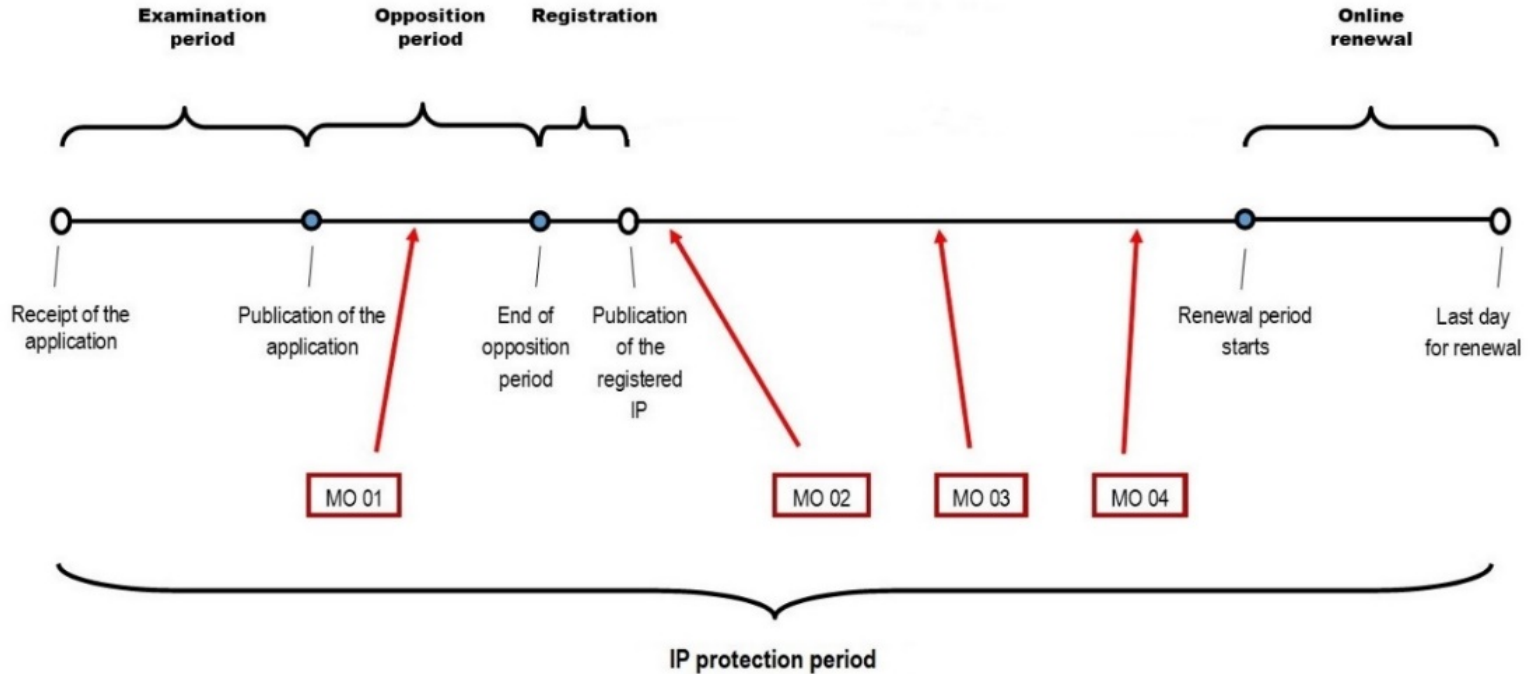
## When can you be targeted by a scammer?



## When can you be targeted by a scammer?



## When can you be targeted by a scammer?



## 2 How to identify a misleading invoice?

## Key things to keep in mind

- ❑ The EUIPO **never sends invoices or payment requests** to users
  - ➔ even if your filing number is on the invoice, it does not come from us

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  - ➔ different amounts and bank accounts in a letter are suspicious

## Key things to keep in mind

- ❑ The EUIPO never sends invoices or payment requests to users
  - ➔ even if your filing number is on the invoice, it does not come from us
  
- ❑ Check the EUIPO fee structure, payment methods and bank accounts
  - ➔ different amounts and bank accounts in a letter are suspicious
  
- ❑ **Identify the purpose of the letter** and ask yourself if it is useful for you
  - ➔ pay attention to references to private registration, unsolicited monitoring or renewal



## What are the warning signs of a misleading invoice?

I <sup>3</sup> PRO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION OFFICE		REGISTRATION COMMUNITY TRADE MARK APPLICATION REMINDER	
<b>IMPORTANT</b>		[REDACTED]	
PAYMENT PENDING			
Date: 27/07/2021			
Reference Number: [REDACTED]			
Contract: [REDACTED]			
<b>REPRODUCTION OF YOUR COMMUNITY TRADE MARK</b>			
[REDACTED]			
Application Filing Date	Application Filing Number	Date of Publication	
08/07/2021	[REDACTED]	26/07/2021	
<b>AMOUNT DUE: EUR 2255,90</b>			
Item	Description of your registration	Currency	Amount
001	Registration fee	EUR	2255,90
002	Service charge	EUR	0,00
003	Value Added Tax	EUR	0,00
<b>004</b>	<b>APPLICATION FILING AND REGISTRATION TOTAL FEE</b>	<b>EUR</b>	<b>2255,90</b>
<b>PAYMENT DETAILS:</b>		<b>STATUS: PAYMENT PENDING</b>	
Beneficiary:	I <sup>3</sup> PRO-OFFICE KFT.	Please pay <b>WITHIN 8 DAYS</b> using bank details listed	
Bank:	K&H BANK		
IBAN:	HU 70 1040 0559 5052 6987 7890 1012	<b>Always quote your reference number: [REDACTED]</b>	
SWIFT/BIC:	KIKH-BHUH-33XX		
Ref-number:	[REDACTED]		
<b>STATUS: PAYMENT PENDING - AMOUNT DUE: EUR 2255,90</b>			

Dear Madam/Sir,  
We inform you that the reproduction of your Community Trade Mark, Application Filing Date, Application Filing Number and Date of Publication. Your Community Trade Mark application has been submitted to the European Union Intellectual Property Office to be taken under legal protection on the territory of the Member States of the European Union. We also refer to our General Terms and Conditions on our website [www.ipro-services.com](http://www.ipro-services.com). The publication is no affiliation with the official Community Trade Mark publication and is not a publication of a government entity. It is a non-official invoice. This invoice is valid under no obligation to pay this amount, unless you accept the offer. The contract period starts when your payment has been received. Entry is valid for one year. The contract will be automatically renewed, if you not terminate the contract three month prior to the contract expiration. Offered by: European Office/International Office: I<sup>3</sup>PRO-INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION OFFICE Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 15, 1000 Bruxelles-Belgium.

## What are the warning signs of a misleading invoice?

Check the name and logo

REGISTRATION COMMUNITY  
TRADE MARK APPLICATION  
REMINDER

**IPRO** INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY  
REGISTRATION OFFICE

**IMPORTANT**  
PAYMENT PENDING

Date: 27/07/2021

Reference Number: [REDACTED]

Contract: [REDACTED]

**REPRODUCTION OF YOUR COMMUNITY TRADE MARK**

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**PAYMENT DETAILS:**

Beneficiary: IPRO-OFFICE KFT.  
Bank: K&H BANK  
IBAN: HU 70 1040 0559 5052 6987 7890 1012  
SWIFT/BIC: KIKH-BHUH33XXX  
Ref-number: [REDACTED]

**STATUS: PAYMENT PENDING**  
Please pay **WITHIN 8 DAYS** using bank details listed

**Always quote your reference number: [REDACTED]**

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


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## What are the warning signs of a misleading invoice?

Check the name and logo

Is it really important?

Payment pending?

Where is the VAT?

**I PRO** INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION OFFICE

REGISTRATION COMMUNITY TRADE MARK APPLICATION  
**REMINDER**

**IMPORTANT**  
**PAYMENT PENDING**

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Reminder ?

More red fonts

Urgency

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


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EUIPO?

## What are the warning signs of a misleading invoice?

Check the name and logo

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The most important thing is in the small print

**I PRO** INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY REGISTRATION OFFICE

REGISTRATION COMMUNITY TRADE MARK APPLICATION REMINDER

**IMPORTANT**  
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Urgency

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EUIPO?

## Which are the possible safeguards?

- Internal procedure to **validate a wire transfer**

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## Which are the possible safeguards?

- Internal procedure to validate a wire transfer
- Information sharing between accountancy and legal unit
- Training / awareness raising
- Technical measure to avoid phishing emails / emails with misspellings in the domain name (‘typosquatting’)
- EUIPO User Area** - a secure channel through which you can pay and receive notifications from the EUIPO

# 3 What to do if you spot a misleading invoice?

## What to do if you spot a potential misleading invoice?

- Contact your **legal adviser**



## What to do if you spot a potential misleading invoice?

- Contact your legal adviser
- Check out the EUIPO **misleading invoices webpage** and the searchable database of samples on our website at:

<https://euipo.europa.eu/misleading-invoices>



## What to do if you spot a potential misleading invoice?

- ❑ Contact your legal adviser
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- ❑ Check other open sources on the internet



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- ❑ Check other open sources on the internet
- ❑ If you **paid** a misleading invoice, **contact your bank** to alert them and to obtain information on your possibilities to get refund





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- ❑ **Report the case to local law enforcement authorities** if you consider you were fraudulently led into payment



## What to do if you spot a potential misleading invoice?

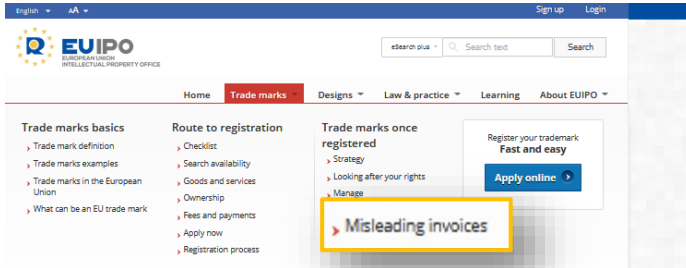
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- ❑ Report the case to local law enforcement authorities if you consider you were fraudulently led into payment
- ❑ **Report your case to EUIPO** to: [information@euipo.europa.eu](mailto:information@euipo.europa.eu)

## EUIPO misleading invoices page – how to find it?



English | AA | Sign up | Login

**EUIPO**  
EUROPEAN UNION  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

Home | **Trade marks** | Designs | Law & practice | Learning | About EUIPO

**Trade marks basics**

- Trade mark definition
- Trade marks examples
- Trade marks in the European Union
- What can be an EU trade mark

**Route to registration**

- Checklist
- Search availability
- Goods and services
- Ownership
- Fees and payments
- Apply now
- Registration process

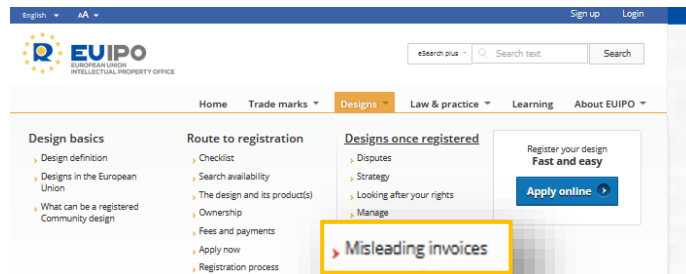
**Trade marks once registered**

- Strategy
- Looking after your rights
- Manage

Register your trademark  
**Fast and easy**

Apply online

**Misleading invoices**



English | AA | Sign up | Login

**EUIPO**  
EUROPEAN UNION  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

Home | Trade marks | **Designs** | Law & practice | Learning | About EUIPO

**Design basics**

- Design definition
- Designs in the European Union
- What can be registered
- Community design

**Route to registration**

- Checklist
- Search availability
- The design and its product(s)
- Ownership
- Fees and payments
- Apply now
- Registration process

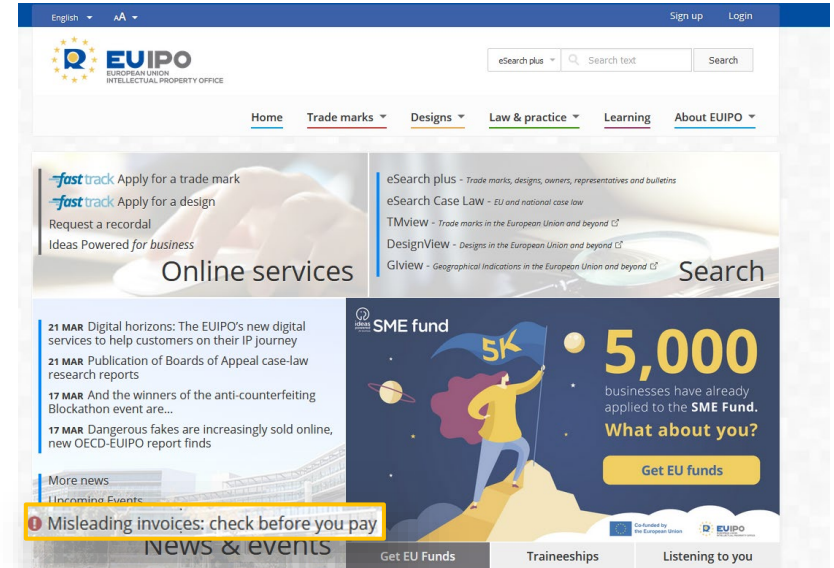
**Designs once registered**

- Disputes
- Strategy
- Looking after your rights
- Manage

Register your design  
**Fast and easy**

Apply online

**Misleading invoices**



English | AA | Sign up | Login

**EUIPO**  
EUROPEAN UNION  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

Home | Trade marks | Designs | Law & practice | Learning | About EUIPO

**fast track** Apply for a trade mark  
**fast track** Apply for a design  
Request a recordal  
Ideas Powered for business

Online services

eSearch plus - Trade marks, designs, owners, representatives and bulletins  
eSearch Case Law - EU and national case law  
TMView - Trade marks in the European Union and beyond <sup>CT</sup>  
DesignView - Designs in the European Union and beyond <sup>CT</sup>  
GView - Geographical Indications in the European Union and beyond <sup>CT</sup>

Search

**21 MAR** Digital horizons: The EUIPO's new digital services to help customers on their IP journey  
**21 MAR** Publication of Boards of Appeal case-law research reports  
**17 MAR** And the winners of the anti-counterfeiting Blockathon event are...  
**17 MAR** Dangerous fakes are increasingly sold online, new OECD-EUIPO report finds

More news  
Upcoming Events

**Misleading invoices: check before you pay**

**NEWS & EVENTS**

**SME fund**  
5K  
5,000 businesses have already applied to the SME Fund.  
What about you?  
Get EU funds

Get EU Funds | Traineeships | Listening to you



<https://euipo.europa.eu/misleading-invoices>

## What does the EUIPO misleading invoices page offer?

- More than 300 suspicious invoice samples reported by users
- Further useful information for users
- New: Europol situation report on misleading invoice fraud

Do not miss it!

More than 50 000 user visits a year

More than 50 000 pdf downloads by users a year

# Follow EUIPO warnings in the social media

EUIPO - European Union Intellectual Property Office  
71.866 seguidores  
8 meses · 

Have you ever received this invoice or a similar one? It is a scam. The EUIPO never sends demands for payment of money to users. If you receive one, it does NOT come from us. Learn more about misleading invoices: <https://lnkd.in/eA-MvYx>

Ver traducción

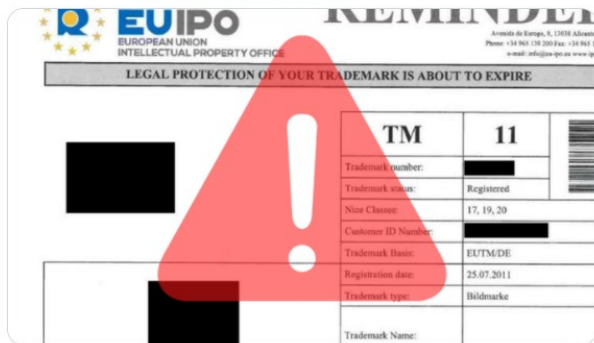


European Union Intellectual Property Office   
@EU\_IPO

Have you ever received an invoice featuring EUIPO's logo and letterhead?



Don't pay! It's NOT from us. It could be scam and you should report it



Find out more about misleading invoices  in circulation: [ow.ly/i5mq30q7qIU](https://ow.ly/i5mq30q7qIU)

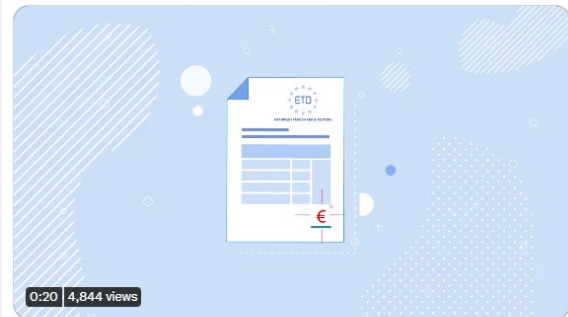


3:25 PM · Mar 12, 2021 · Twitter Media Studio

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Keep an eye out for misleading invoices! Do not pay  until you double check. 

You can get in touch with us   if needed. Information and examples here: [ow.ly/SUJV50DvzU9](https://ow.ly/SUJV50DvzU9)



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## What else does the EUIPO do to help users?

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- ❑ Engagement with National IP Offices, User Associations and international IP offices and other stakeholders, including Europol
  - ➔ 'Anti-Scam Network'
- ❑ EUIPO supports users to make a criminal complaint / sign a sworn statement that they were misled
  - ➔ Law enforcement usually considers the users to be injured party, not the EUIPO





**ANY QUESTION?**

## Keep in touch with EUIPO Academy



**Beware of misleading invoices:**

**Act smart against scammers!**



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**THANK YOU**