



Legal Network International

IP and trade mark news – January 2026

A monthly update on global IP and trademark news from the member firms of the Legal Network International (LNI).



India

Indian Hotels Company (“IHCL”) which operates its well-known and iconic brand Taj Hotels has secured India’s first Sound Mark in hospitality. The sound mark consists of musical notes D,E,E,G,A and E in D Minor with a 4/4 time signature and a tempo of 130 beats per minute.

This registration shall provide IHCL protection by recognizing its sonic sound as a distinct brand asset as well as deepening its consumer markets by providing multi-sensory engagement modes to their customers.



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France

In two judgements dated January 7, 2026, the French Supreme Court held that Airbnb does not qualify as a hosting service provider under Article 6(I)(2) of the French law "LCEN".

Host status, which grants an exemption of liability, is limited to operators acting as neutral and passive intermediaries, whose role is limited to technical storage of content, without knowledge of or control over it.

The Court noted that Airbnb has an impact on the content of offers and on the behaviour of users and promotes certain publications on its platform.

By these actions, Airbnb appears to have an active role and may then be held liable for unlawful subletting carried out via its platform.

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Mexico

IMPI reports record number of patents granted to Mexicans in 2025 and increase in trademark registrations

In 2025, the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) granted 972 patents to Mexican nationals, a historic figure compared to the 700 patents granted in 2024, and the highest number of protection grants recorded since 1995.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Mexico ranked 11th worldwide in terms of patents granted, 11th in trademark registrations granted, and 7th in the number of trademarks currently in force.

Taken together, these figures, along with increased anti-counterfeiting enforcement actions, highlight Mexico’s growing relevance as a jurisdiction for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property. The sustained growth in patenting and trademark activity reflects a more mature and proactive IP agenda, a trend that will be particularly significant in 2026 amid ongoing

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USMCA regulatory alignment and the heightened international visibility associated with Mexico's role as a host country of the FIFA World Cup.



As of December 1, 2025, Italy has given effect to Regulation (EU) 2023/2411, which extends the European Union's system of Geographical Indications beyond agri-food products to include artisanal and industrial goods. Under this new framework, traditional Italian manufactures – such as ceramics, textiles, wood products, leather goods, glassware, and comparable items – may qualify for Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status where their quality, reputation, or other distinctive features are essentially linked to a specific geographical area. This reform represents a major step forward for Italy, acknowledging and safeguarding the country's long-standing heritage of local craftsmanship and territorially rooted industrial production. By offering tailored protection to non-agricultural products, the new regime enhances the valorisation of traditional know-how, supports local economies, and strengthens the international recognition of Italian excellence beyond the agri-food sector.

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In Sweden, the proprietor of a company name enjoys a 'cross-protection' which enables the proprietor to prohibit any third party from using, in the course of trade, a sign that is identical or similar to that company name, and which is used for identical or similar types of goods or services, where there is a likelihood of confusion.

The Swedish Supreme Court has recently granted leave to appeal in a case concerning cancellation of company names. The case raises the question on how the assessment on likelihood of confusion should be made in the context of an action for revocation of a company name.

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