

Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks

**Seventeenth Session
Geneva, July 22 to 26, 2019**

PROPOSAL BY THE DELEGATIONS OF ALGERIA, BAHRAIN, EGYPT, MOROCCO, OMAN, SUDAN, THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC AND TUNISIA

1. In a communication dated June 24, 2019, the International Bureau received a proposal from the Delegations of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia concerning the possibility of introducing Arabic as a working language of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks for consideration by the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks, at its seventeenth session to be held in Geneva from July 22 to 26, 2019.
2. The said proposal is annexed to this document.

[Annex follows]

Proposal by the Delegations of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia concerning the inclusion of Arabic as an official language of the Madrid System for International Registration of Marks

1. The Delegations of **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia** propose that Arabic be included as an official language of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks.
2. Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations system. It is spoken by more than 380 million people, of whom 246 million are within Member States of the Madrid System. Arabic is also among the top five languages spoken in the world by the total number of speakers.
3. Arabic is the official language in 22 Arab States, eight of which are members of the Madrid System: **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia**. Arabic is also widely used in a number of countries for various types of economic dealings.
4. International registrations of trademarks under the Madrid System within the Arab Member States has been growing exponentially in recent years, highlighting the extent to which the System is adopted by the business community in the region. However, the Madrid System is still far from reaching its full potential in light of existing opportunities within the region. Indeed, the language barrier remains one of the reasons why the system is not fully utilized, as a large group of economic stakeholders are not able to speak any of the languages currently used under the Madrid System.
5. The inclusion of Arabic as an official language of the Madrid System would facilitate the filing of international trademark applications by Arab applicants, thereby contributing to higher international demand, better international protection and increased use of the Madrid System.
6. The language barrier is one of the most important challenges faced by all Arab countries, especially the 14 countries that have not joined the system or are currently undergoing the accession process. Therefore, the inclusion of Arabic as an official language of the Madrid System would stimulate Arab countries to join the Madrid System.
7. In light of the above, the aforementioned group of States believes that this proposal is underpinned by the necessary substantive and practical motivations. To protect the rights of Arabic-speaking applicants and facilitate their use of the global intellectual property protection systems, we invite the seventeenth session of the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks to consider the proposal to include Arabic as an official language of the Madrid System, and request that it conducts an in-depth study on the implications of the possible inclusion of Arabic in the Madrid System with a view to making a recommendation to the Madrid Union Assembly to consider the proposal.

[End of Annex and document]