



Int'l community highly praises China's efforts in IP protection

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BEIJING, March 1 (Xinhua) – With growing efforts in intellectual property (IP) protection, China has ranked first in the world for several consecutive years in terms of the number of patent and trademark applications it holds, winning high praise from the international community.

Statistics show that by the end of 2019, China had registered the world's largest number of invention patent applications for the ninth consecutive year, and the largest number of trademark registration applications for the 18th consecutive year.

According to data from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) from 2017 and 2018, China was the second largest applicant for international patent applications submitted through the Patent Cooperation Treaty, and the third largest for trademark registration under the Madrid System.

Hailing the rapid development of IP cause in China as remarkable, WIPO Director General Francis Gurry said the country has recognized that IP protection is critical to improving economic competitiveness and has made IP an important driving force for innovation.

Renata Righetti Pelosi, president of the International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property, pointed out two reasons for the rapid development of IP cause in China.

On the one hand, the needs of economic operators in China have increasingly overlapped with those in the world, and the two sides have reached more consensus on IP protection, Pelosi said.

On the other, China has many IP talents with a global vision, who are leading the rapid growth of this sector, she added.

Bastiaan Koster, former president of the Bureau of Federation of International IP Attorneys, said it is not easy to make such great achievements in IP in a large country like China.

"Given the success story of the IP system in China and the very short time it was obtained, I am confident that the IP system will continue to improve at its current pace. The rest of the world can be assured that their IP rights will be well protected and enforceable in China," Koster added.

Beate Schmidt, president of the German Federal Patent Court, said China has achieved great development in the field of IP since it established its own intellectual property system in the 1980s.

No other country embraced the idea of IP protection and its importance for economic development so quickly and consequentially as China did, Schmidt said.

Since the first ever Chinese patent act came into force in 1985, China has continuously developed and improved its IP protection, said Joseph Straus, a professor of law at the University of Munich, adding that its efforts can stand scrutiny compared with the development of IP in some developed countries.

Natiduan MacEwen, president and CEO of Ballard Power Systems, a leading hydrogen fuel cell provider.

Around 12 million university graduates are produced every year in China, providing a very large educated workforce, MacEwen said at the 2020 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January, adding that the country ranks among the top countries for the number of international patent filings, as well as annual research and development expenditures.

In addition, China is now enjoying a highly entrepreneurial environment in terms of the number of incubator companies and companies that are moving to high scale volumes in a relatively short period of time, he noted.

Some media and professional organizations believe that China's effective efforts in IP protection have created a favorable business environment, making the country a magnet for global innovation.

In an article titled "China's Record on Intellectual Property Rights Is Getting Better and Better," U.S. news magazine Foreign Policy wrote last October that China's IP regime has made significant strides in just a few decades.

"China's world leadership in patent quantity signals its commitment to develop a robust innovation ecosystem at home. Minimum damage payouts for violations have continually increased, as have durations of patent protection," the magazine said.

Harvard Business Review, a general management magazine, wrote that "in some ways China's IP regime is actually more optimal for IP-intensive businesses – including foreign ones – than the IP regimes in prominent rich nations."

The waiting time to grant patents in China is shorter than those in European and American countries, and invention patent examination appears to be of higher quality in China than at some national offices in Europe, it added.

In the 2019 Global Innovation Index rankings published by the WIPO and other institutions, China rose from 35th in 2013 to 14th in 2019, and ranked first among middle-income economies. It also has the fastest progress in the world in this regard.

According to the 2019 China Business Environment Survey, released by the U.S.-China Business Council, 58 percent of U.S. companies believe that China has strengthened IP protection in the past year, the highest level since the survey was launched in 2011.

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