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On 18 December 2018, the European Commission launched a public consultation on design protection in the EU. This public consultation aims to gather the views of those affected by design protection in Europe to evaluate the performance of the EU and national systems and identify potential areas for improvement.

The main substantive aspects of national laws on the protection of designs were harmonised at EU level in 1998 by the Design Directive, which also aimed to maintain a system for registering designs for businesses that only operate within one EU country.

Alongside those national protection systems, the Community Design Regulation offers unitary protection across the EU through a single procedure since 2002.

Up to now, no overall evaluation of the existing legislation has been carried out. This consultation should help the Commission to decide on the need for improvement, modernisation and further harmonisation of the existing rules. The results of the survey will also feed into the ongoing evaluation of EU legislation on design protection, building on and following previous research, analysis and targeted surveys carried out as part of 2 studies on economic (2015) and legal (2016) review of the design protection systems in Europe.

The design of a product is often the main reason that consumers chose it over others. Industrial design rights protect the appearance of a product, based on attributes such as its shape, colours or materials. Design-intensive industries play a vital role in the EU economy generating 12.2% of EU employment and 12.8% of EU GDP in 2013. The consultation is open until 31 March 2019. More information [here](#).

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