BLOGS

The Paris Convention Explained

Adtiya Aryan · 02 Jan 2026

The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property was tested in CLAT PG this year, which clearly shows how important international intellectual property law has become for the exam. For many aspirants, topics like international conventions feel intimidating. But once you understand the basics, the Paris Convention is actually very logical and scoring.

Let us break it down in simple language and also understand why CLAT PG increasingly tests such topics.

What Is the Paris Convention?

The Paris Convention is one of the oldest and most important international treaties on intellectual property rights. It was adopted in 1883, long before the WTO or TRIPS Agreement existed.

Its main purpose is to protect industrial property across countries. Industrial property includes:

- Patents
- Trademarks
- Industrial designs
- Trade names
- Indications of source and appellations of origin
- Protection against unfair competition

India is a member of the Paris Convention, which means India has agreed to follow its basic principles while framing and applying its domestic IP laws.

Why Was the Paris Convention Needed?

Before the Paris Convention, inventors and businesses faced a major problem. If they protected their invention or trademark in one country, that protection did not automatically exist in another country. They had to start the process again, often losing priority or facing copying.

The Paris Convention was created to solve this problem and to make sure that foreign nationals are treated fairly when they seek IP protection in another country.

Key Principles of the Paris Convention

CLAT PG questions usually test the **core principles**, not deep procedural details. There are three principles you must clearly understand.

1. National Treatment

This is the **most important principle**.

Under the Paris Convention, each member country must give **nationals of other member countries the same protection** that it gives to its own citizens.

For example, if an Indian inventor applies for a patent in France, France must treat the Indian inventor the same way it treats a French inventor. There should be no discrimination.

This principle ensures equality and fairness in international IP protection.

1. Right of Priority

The **right of priority** is another heavily tested concept.

It means that if a person files a patent, trademark, or design application in one member country, they get a **time window** to file the same application in other member countries and still claim the original filing date.

The time limits are:

- 12 months for patents
- 6 months for trademarks and industrial designs

This is extremely helpful because it allows inventors and businesses to plan international filings without losing their rights.

For CLAT PG, you should remember: Priority date matters because it decides who gets the right first.

1. Independence of Protection

This principle means that **IP rights granted in one country are independent of rights granted in another country**.

So, if a patent is cancelled in one country, it does not automatically get cancelled in another country.

Each country decides the fate of IP rights based on its own laws, even though the basic principles come from the Paris Convention.

Protection Against Unfair Competition

The Paris Convention also talks about **unfair competition**, which makes it broader than just patents and trademarks.

Unfair competition includes:

- False claims about productsi
- Misleading consumers
- Creating confusion with competitors' goods
- Dishonest business practices

This shows that the Convention is not only about registration, but also about **fair market behaviour**.

Paris Convention and Indian Law

India's IP laws are largely aligned with the Paris Convention. For example:

- The Patents Act, 1970
- The Trade Marks Act, 1999

Both recognise:

- National treatment
- Priority claims
- Protection of foreign applicants

Because India is also a member of the **TRIPS Agreement**, many Paris Convention principles now operate through TRIPS as well. This overlap is important for exam questions that mix international law with Indian statutes.

Why Is the Paris Convention Important for CLAT PG?

The fact that the Paris Convention was tested this year tells us a lot about the **direction of CLAT PG**.

1. Focus on Core Concepts, Not Memorisation

CLAT PG is no longer about memorising sections. It tests whether you understand **why a rule exists**. International conventions like the Paris Convention are perfect for this because they are principle-based.

2. Growing Importance of Intellectual Property Law

IP law has become increasingly relevant due to:

- Startups
- Technology
- Global trade
- Digital economy

CLAT PG reflects this shift by testing foundational international IP frameworks.

3. Integration of International Law with Domestic Law

Questions are often framed to see whether you understand how international conventions influence Indian law. The Paris Convention is ideal for such questions because it directly shapes domestic IP regimes.

4. Passage-Based Analytical Questions

Instead of asking direct facts, CLAT PG often gives a passage describing a dispute involving priority, foreign applicants, or trademark rights. If you understand the Paris Convention, such

passages become much easier to solve.

How Should CLAT PG Aspirants Prepare Such Topics?

- Focus on core principles
- Understand why the rule exists
- Link international conventions with Indian statutes
- Practice applying concepts to short problem situations
- You do not need to read the entire convention word by word. What matters is conceptual clarity.

Conclusion

The Paris Convention is a foundational pillar of international intellectual property law. Its principles of national treatment, priority rights, and independent protection continue to shape how countries protect innovation and business interests.

For CLAT PG aspirants, this topic is important not just because it was tested this year, but because it represents the exam's shift towards **conceptual, application-based learning**. Understanding such conventions gives you an edge, especially in passages that blend international law with Indian legal frameworks.