

EPO Conference conclusions - final press release.

Autore: convegno

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Lisbon, October 5, 2006

Patent protection "key to Europe's knowledge economy"

Protecting patents has a central role to play in Europe's knowledge economy and EU competitiveness, European Patent Office President Alain Pompidou told the annual EPO online services conference in Lisbon today.

"If Europe really wants to become the world's leading knowledge economy by 2010, the patent network urgently needs to be developed," Prof Pompidou told more than 350 delegates from all over Europe meeting at the Lisbon Congress Centre.

He told the conference, co-organised by the Portuguese Patent and Trademark Office (INPI), that the EPO warmly welcomed the European Commission's support for an enhanced "patent culture" in the context of 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological, which runs until 2013.

But the public consultation process organised by the Commission clearly showed that the present system needs attention, Prof Pompidou said. One immediate improvement would come with the ratification of the London Protocol on translation of patent applications: "This could significantly reduce the financial burden on patentees."

The second, more ambitious, reform, the European Patent Litigation Agreement (EPLA), is aimed at harmonising patent litigation in Europe. Its provision for a European Patent Court would "significantly enhance legal security for patent owners and the public alike," since it replaced the current system of unharmonised parallel litigation at national level.

"Such a court is the obvious missing element in the present system", Prof Pompidou concluded.

In Portugal itself the government is giving special priority to research and innovation, and more specifically to develop new technologies related to accessing patents. INPI is improving existing and introducing new, online services such as a patent database to allow for searching and accessing all Portuguese-registered patents.

Today's concluding session of the EPO conference broke up into three parallel seminars and hands-on workshops on epoline and esp@cenet, the EPO's online products.

Further information from:

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The EPO conference was held at the Lisboa Congress Centre, Praça das Indústrias, 1300-307.
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Moderator:

Tim Sebastian, Journalist, BBC World, UK

Speakers:

Alain Pompidou, President, European Patent Office

António-Serge Campinos, President, Administrative Council, Instituto Nacional de Propriedade Industrial

Alberto Alessi, inventor

Ana Paula Amorim, Director of technology transfer and entrepreneurship, TecMinho

John Bambridge, Director, **epoline**®, European Patent Office

Kevin Douglas, Director, European Patent Office

Jose R. Salcedo, CEO, MultiWave Photonics, SA

Wim van der Eijk, Principal Director, International Legal Affairs & Patent Law, European Patent Office

Information note:

The European Patent Office (EPO) grants European patents for the contracting states to the European Patent Convention (EPC), which was signed in Munich on October 5 1973, and entered into force on October 7, 1977. It is the executive arm of the European Patent Organisation, an intergovernmental body set up under the EPC, whose members are the EPC contracting states. The activities of the EPO are supervised by the Organisation's Administrative Council, composed of delegates from the contracting states. See <http://www.european-patent-office.org>

The mission of the EPO is to support innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth for the benefit of the citizens of Europe. Its task is to grant European patents for inventions, on the basis of a centralised

procedure. By filing a single application in one of the three official languages (English, French and German) it is possible to obtain patent protection in some or all of the EPC contracting states.

INPI - The Industrial Property Office of Portugal has the purpose to promote and protect the Industrial Property at national and international levels, according to the policy of modernization and enforcement of the entrepreneurial structure of the country and in collaboration with the international organizations that Portugal is member.

INPI is a public law office with administrative and financial autonomy and private patrimony. It is therefore an Office that has the mission to promote the use of the national laws of industrial property, and from Conventions, Treaties, and International Agreements which were ratified by Portugal. The Code of Industrial Property, approved by the Decree-Law no. 36/2003, of 5th March, contains all the basic rules of the Industrial Property Rights.

INPI was created by the Minister of External Commerce in 28 July 1976 - decree-law no. 632, due to the reform of the primordial Department of Industrial Property which ascend of the end of the XIX Century. The principal mission of INPI is to promote and to protect the individual rights of Industrial Property, aimed at the strengthening of fair competition and to combat unfair competition, and also to collect, to manage and to disseminate the techniques and scientific information which was already patented

Created by the INPI but with autonomy, the UIPP (Units for Industrial Property Promotion) are small structures seeking the transmission of information and the dynamization of actions to promote Industrial Property installed in structures - Technological Centres, Universities, Science and Technology Parks and Business Associations - which acquire the competences to support companies and other entities at a professional and decentralised level. Actually, they are 22 and they are localized all over Portugal.

epoline® is the brand name given to a number of electronic products and services developed by the EPO for the users of the European patent system. These products and services provide a secure, integrated environment for electronic communication between the EPO, applicants, their representatives and the national patent offices of the contracting states. Most significantly, **epoline®** services provide for on-line filing, fee payment and management of deposit accounts, file inspection, and Register enquiries. They offer major advantages over traditional, paper-based transactions in that they provide instant feedback in the form of status information and immediate confirmation of communications to the Office while reducing

clerical work and paper handling costs. Online file inspection and the European register of patents are important tools for the interested public and have been designed to increase the visibility of the patenting process in general and the transparency of the European patent grant procedure. For more information see: <http://www.epoline.org>

esp@cenet the "database of ideas" is the European Patent Organisation worldwide free patent information service on the Internet. It provides access, via a simple interface, to more than 60 million documents published by more than 70 patent offices world-wide. For some countries, database coverage goes back to the early 19th century. Specifically, **esp@cenet** offers access to the documentation available to EPO examiners, including European patent applications, and PCT pamphlets published by the World Intellectual Property Organisation. **esp@cenet** is based on a network of servers and provides recent patent applications published by the member states, and also by non-member states and other regional patent authorities.

As an entry level service **esp@cenet** has been designed and positioned to improve awareness of patents and patent information for the general public, but in particular amongst small and medium-sized enterprises and in the academic world. For more information see: <http://www.espacenet.com/>

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