

# **OPENING REMARKS**

**Conference**

## **CREATING MARKETS FROM RESEARCH RESULTS**

**Skopje**

**29 Nov. 2013**

**Wim Van der Eijk,  
Vice-President, Appeals,  
European Patent Office**

**Opening session (29 Nov. 2013 at 10.00 hrs)**

## Introduction

Deputy Minister (to be checked prior to delivery)

Director of the State Office of Industrial Property,

Mr Emruli

Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a great honour and a pleasure for me to speak to you here in Skopje at the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State Office of Industrial Property.
- I am delighted to open this joint conference on “Creating Markets from Research Results”.

**The presence of all national institutions and regional IP Offices here today is a clear sign of how important the topic of this conference is.**

## *The role of universities in national innovation systems*

- The role of universities now extends beyond their traditional definition as centres of creation of new knowledge, of teaching and learning. Their mission of transferring knowledge for generating social and economic benefits is increasingly important too and is a key factor in attracting talented students and scientists as well as research funding. Ensuring the exploitation of valuable research turns into a very real challenge for universities and research institutions.
- All stakeholders - government policymakers, funding agencies and companies, and academic researchers themselves - have an interest in the enhanced ability of universities and public research organisations to disseminate knowledge and commercialise IP. Thus, effective IP management shall become a cornerstone in every university's strategy.
- That is the aim of this Conference: to explore practical ways to encourage universities and public research organisations in this country and the whole region to bring their research results more effectively to the market, to consider workable models of how to integrate IP management into a university's overall strategy.

## Recent developments at the EPO

- But where does the EPO fit into all this?
- Despite the current economic difficulties, the EPO received more patent applications last year than ever before. In 2012 our filings total was nearly 258 000, 5.2% more than the previous year. This, I think, already says something about the underlying conditions for innovation and investment in Europe, which are more positive than they might appear.
- Our Academy has published a Patent Teaching Kit and created an IP Course Design Manual, and it is about to publish, together with OHIM, an IP Teaching Kit. All of these practical materials and guides accompanied by targeted training sessions facilitate the introduction of IP education into higher education curricula. We are also currently supporting the publication of a special issue of the California Management Review in the form of a collection of case studies on IP management.
- The other side of the patent granting system is the fantastic wealth of technical information available in published patent documents that can be accessed free of charge.
- Online tools such as the EPO's Espacenet allow you to perform detailed searches through more than 80 million patent documents and retrieve information about state-of-the-art technology available anywhere in the world.

- The information function of patents cannot be rated high enough. Innovation is a global market, and making patent documents accessible to researchers, scientists and inventors significantly contributes to strengthening the innovation process around the world. By providing patent information and related service, universities and research institutions can access the latest information on applied technology.
- In this respect, I am pleased to mention that the machine translation programme the EPO launched at the end of 2010 is already bearing fruit. In just a few weeks from now, we will make available additional 8 member states languages, including Macedonian, via the machine translation service, called Patent Translate to complete our objective of making translation of all the 28 EPO member states' official languages operational by the end of 2013. Regarding the non-member states languages considered of strategic importance as a source of patent information, Chinese, Japanese and Russian were made available in PatentTranslate. The service uses Google's Translate technology and enables translation from and into English.

- This is a milestone in breaking down the language barriers to patent documentation worldwide. It is a development from which everyone benefits: the global IP community, including of course Europe's universities and research institutes, gains easier access to patent information in different languages; patent examiners have available patent documentation they need for their search without language barriers; and the general public too gets better access to patent and scientific documents, which is so crucial for spreading technological knowledge and fostering innovation.
- This project illustrates clearly the concrete results of our close co-operation with our national partner offices in Europe.

*[On co-operation with your country]*

- This brings me to co-operation with our member states.
- Europe has a two-tier patent system, with the EPO as the single, central authority empowered to grant patents for all its member states, and the national patent offices playing a key role as a local partner for innovative companies.

- Close co-operation between the EPO and all its 38 member states within the Co-operation Roadmap is crucial to improving the quality and efficiency of the European patent system, and thus to supporting innovation in Europe. Only by working together can we make optimum use of the resources and competences available among the whole network of European countries, through the exchange of best-practices, know-how, and tools.
- We can look back at long tradition of excellent co-operation with your country, even long before you became a member state of our Organisation on 1 January 2009. We are committed to further developing our ties for the benefit of the users of the European patent system.
- It is essential that the links between the patent world of technology and innovation and the university-based research and innovation are strengthened. Only through innovation and its successful commercialisation will Europe be able to maintain a competitive advantage in the global knowledge-based economy.

## [Conclusion]

- Ladies and gentlemen,
- The patent system is not a system that exists for its own sake. It is designed to serve the specific protection needs of industry, scientists and researchers and the economy, and, in doing so, indirectly benefits society at large.
- I invite you all to participate actively in the sessions, sharing your unique insight and experience, and taking the opportunity to exchange views.
- I would like to say a special thank you to the team of SOIP colleagues who have been working extremely hard to ensure that the Conference runs smoothly and can serve as an impulse for change in this important area.
- I wish you enriching and thought-provoking discussions during the conference today. I shall follow the results closely and with great interest. Thank you for your attention.