

# EPO congratulates Latvian patent office on its 20th anniversary

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**Speaking at an international conference on intellectual property in Riga** to mark the 20th anniversary of the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia (LPO), the President of the EPO, Benoît Battistelli paid tribute to the achievements of Latvia in modernising its patent system for the benefit of the national and European economy. Mr Battistelli also met with the President of Latvia, Andris Bērziņš, Latvian Minister of Justice Gaidis Bērziņš, and Education and Science Minister Roberts Kīlis to discuss how Latvia and the EPO could co-operate to further strengthen the country's intellectual property system.



President Battistelli with President of Latvia Andris Bērziņš

"Latvia is an innovation-driven country, and there is a keen awareness of the economic significance of patent protection here," said Mr Battistelli in his keynote speech at the conference. "The Latvian government and the Latvian Patent Office should therefore be congratulated on their successful efforts to promote IP protection among local companies," he said.



President Battistelli with Reinis Bērziņš, Director of the Latvian Patent Office

Mr Battistelli also highlighted the importance of co-operation between the EPO and Latvia, which became a member of the Organisation on 1 July 2005. "Close co-operation between the EPO and its 38 member states is crucial to improving the quality and efficiency of the European patent system, and thus developing Europe's innovative capacities. Only a good and coordinated combination of regional and local efforts will best serve this goal," he said.

One area where this co-operation has borne fruit recently is the machine translation of patents, Mr Battistelli said. The EPO recently launched a new free online patent translation service, called Patent Translate, together with search engine Google, aimed at improving access to technological information around the world. The first set of seven languages was launched in March, and the other languages — including Latvian — are expected to be made available by the end of 2014.

The EPO will implement a range of activities with the LPO in all areas covered by the EPO's new "co-operation roadmap" with its member states, including professional training, the strengthening of university networks, development of patent-related services and tools, and patent information awareness and services.