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THE TRADE MARKS AND DESIGNS OFFICE
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EDITORIAL BY MARTTI ENÄJÄRVI, CHAIRMAN – ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

The past year 2006 showed that the OHIM has been a real success story. This is reflected above all in the high numbers of applications in the field of both trade marks and industrial designs. So I wish to extend to both the OHIM's management and its whole staff my warm thanks for a job well done.

Yet the high volumes of applications also bring about challenges. How to organise the work as fluently and flexibly as possible, but at the same time guarantee legal safety and legal safeguards for the clients? A well trained staff working towards clear objectives will certainly be up to this challenge, and a modern Human Resources policy will continue to support their efforts.

The OHIM is further facing many other challenges, such as how to balance its budget; how to build and develop a system in Europe that with maximum efficiency and legal safety will serve European enterprises and citizens; how to serve also applicants from outside Europe as well as possible, since the international agreements call for impartial treatment; how to participate, together with the Commission and the Member States, in the development of international and national trade marks and their integration into the European system; and how to further develop working methods and systems in an appropriate manner. This gives us plenty to consider and develop, by the side of the results already achieved, for the coming years.

To respond to the challenges described above we will need constructive co-operation between the OHIM, the Commission and the Member States, as well as the clients, also in the future. Therefore I would like to thank all those who lately have attended to the development of this strategy. We await with great interest the Commission's statement on the development of IPR activity in Europe.

The past year also saw the organisation by WIPO of the first diplomatic conference in Asia. Several primarily techno-juridical amendments to the international trade mark practice were agreed on at this meeting in Singapore. The differences between the industrialised and the developing countries in respect of the trade mark systems were also a central subject of debate at the meeting. Fortunately, after lengthy negotiations, a joint compromise was achieved at the end. This is a good thing, as trade marks keep increasing their significance all the time, along with the growth of international trade and the general globalisation process.

From the beginning of the year 2007, the number of EU Member States will grow by two new States. I wish Bulgaria and Rumania a warm welcome to the OHIM family and the European Community. I also want to thank all my Administrative Board and Budget Committee colleagues for the work they have done to develop the OHIM and the European trade mark and design right systems.

I wish the staff of the OHIM, the members of its governing bodies, the representatives of the Commission, and all our interest groups all the best for the year 2007.

