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Covid-19 and post-Brexit Britain – Sandris Laganovskis on challenges of new EUIPO role

- Sandris Laganovskis joins EUIPO after leading Latvian Patent Office for seven years
- In exclusive interview with *WTR*, he reveals opportunities and challenges of role
- States that post-Brexit cooperation with UK will be a “short-term challenge”

In an exclusive interview with *WTR*, the new EUIPO deputy director for international cooperation, Sandris Laganovskis, reveals the opportunities and challenges that he foresees in the role – and what trademark practitioners can do to help.

Last month, the EUIPO announced that Laganovskis, the former director of the Latvian Patent Office (LPO), had taken up the position of deputy director for international cooperation in its Department for International Cooperation and Legal Affairs. He began the role on 16 January 2021. In a letter to staff at national IP offices across the European Union, EUIPO Executive Director Christian Archambeau described Laganovskis as having “vast experience and an extensive background in the field of intellectual property”, adding that he “possesses a profound knowledge of the functioning of both national and European public administrations”.

Much of that experience comes from Laganovskis’ time as head of the LPO – a position that he held from 2013 until 2020. A highlight of his tenure was reaching an agreement on the EU Trademark Regulation, created within the framework of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which created a new legislative reality in the country. Another major focus for Laganovskis was the expansion of the LPO’s public educational outreach. As a result, the agency now conducts events throughout Latvia in order to raise awareness of intellectual property. Back in 2019, an LPO representative [wrote exclusively for WTR](#) about how the registry was also increasing the quality of its service through the implementation of the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

During his time at the LPO, Laganovskis became widely respected for his cooperation with outside organisations, including holding positions at the European Patent Office, WIPO and the EUIPO. Talking to *WTR*, Laganovskis says that he is “excited to join the EUIPO” because it will allow him to use this experience of cooperating with other stakeholders to advance the agency’s agenda. “The strong support and collaboration with the EUIPO were instrumental to the success of key reforms of the Latvian IP Office,” he says. “On top of that, having been posted twice as a diplomat in Brussels to work with the EU institutions, I have gained an in-depth understanding of how our EU stakeholders work and cooperate. This experience gives me unique insights and first-hand understanding of what our users need and expect, and therefore be able to propose better and more tailored solutions in my new role.”

On the role itself, Laganovskis tells us that his focus has been shaped by the EUIPO’s 2025 Strategic Plan, which envisages an “interconnected, efficient, and reliable IP system for the Internal Market”. Therefore, he says, international cooperation “will play an instrumental part in achieving this goal by building on the sustainable collaborative network for the benefit of users, even closer cooperation with EU institutions and bodies, as well as enhanced engagement with global partners for the extension of common tools and practices”. A key opportunity in this regard will be “making smart use of AI tools to make the work of IP professionals more efficient and decisions even more predictable for the end user”.

Turning to the challenges that Laganovskis foresees, the most significant is no surprise. “Covid-19 is affecting economic operators in general and specifically regarding intellectual property,” he explains. “It has also changed the way we work, cooperate and interact. This will require out-of-box thinking and a creative and agile approach – for instance, the constant improvement of the working methods through the virtual networks and the launch of new collaborative services.”

Other upcoming challenges include the implementation of the EUIPO’s new SME support fund and delivery of the EU Commission’s IP action plan. Finally, there is the familiar ‘B’ word that has added to workloads on both sides of the Channel. “A short-term challenge will be establishing cooperation with the United Kingdom in the post-Brexit context,” he notes, with the EUIPO [continuing to provide updates](#) on how the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union will affect trademark and design owners. With ‘international cooperation’ as his remit, it is no surprise that ensuring the EUIPO remains on good terms with the European Union’s newest (and one of its largest) trading partners will be a top priority.

Going forward, Laganovskis urges all EU trademark practitioners to interact with the EUIPO to ensure that their voices are heard. The needs, expectations and involvement of users are at the centre of the EUIPO’s core tasks and the heart of its operations, he concludes. “Therefore, participation in our working groups for European cooperation projects, regular and open dialogue with user associations and representatives is very important for the office.”

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