

Institut der beim Europäischen  
Patentamt zugelassenen Vertreter

Institute of Professional Representatives  
before the European Patent Office

Institut des mandataires agréés près  
l'Office européen des brevets

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## Centenary Celebration of Dutch Patent Law

Participants in the 125<sup>th</sup> AC Meeting were cordially invited by the Director of the Dutch Patent Office to celebrate one hundred years of Dutch Patent Law. The event took place in The Hague in a fine building which houses the Public Library, a fitting venue for such an event. A memorable evening was enjoyed by all the participants, who witnessed presentations of a book celebrating the centenary to both Mr Battistelli and Mr Kongstad. Each participant was also given a copy at the end of the function. The occasion is summarised in the following press release, kindly provided by the Dutch Patent Office:

### **A century of patents in the Netherlands**

The year 2010 marks the 100th anniversary of the Dutch Patent Law. Several initiatives have been taken to celebrate this special year. On October 26th 2010 the English version of the jubilee book 'A century of patents in the Netherlands' was presented in the Public Library in The Hague.

Chris Buijink, Secretary General of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, presented the first two copies of the book to Mr Battistelli, President of the European Patent Office (EPO), and Mr Kongstad, Chairman of the Administrative Council of the EPO.



*Chris Buijink, Benoît Battistelli, Jesper Kongstad & Guus Broesterhuizen*

*photo: Ellen Grootes*

In his opening speech, Chris Buijink stated that patents more and more help spread knowledge, and that patents and licenses have become drivers of open innovation. As an example Buijink mentioned the SonoDrugs project led by Philips. This is a European R&D project involving fifteen companies, university medical centres and universities from all over Europe. R&D projects like SonoDrugs would benefit tremendously from an affordable

single European Union patent. Buijink stressed, that the Netherlands believe the single EU patent should complement the national patents and should be released as soon as possible. It should include a harmonised system to settle disputes. Buijink said he was confident that the EPO is well-equipped to meet the challenges it faces in the future.

The Chairman of the Administrative Council of the EPO, J. Kongstad, as well as the President of the EPO, B. Battistelli, underlined the important role of the Netherlands Patent Office in the patent world. This role becomes evident not only in the number of patent applications (20 000 annually) and granted patents. The Netherlands have always promoted cooperation on a European level. Also, the Netherlands was one of the founding members of the EPO and its predecessor, the IIB. In his speech, Benoît Battistelli mentioned that the city of The Hague was chosen for establishing the IIB for having an excellent library of patent documents. With Jesper Kongstad, the EPO Président also recalled the role of Bob Van Benthem, the first president of the EPO and one of its architects.

Among the invitees of the book presentation were heads of delegations of the member states of the EPO; Ms van der Wel-Markerink, the mayor of Rijswijk where the EPO has several offices and Mr Berger and Mr Geijzers, former heads of the NL Patent Office. Mr Guus Broesterhuizen, director of the NL Patent Office, hosted this event.

The book is one of the steps to mark the 100th anniversary of the Dutch Patent Law (Rijksoctrooiwet). In 1817, the first Patent Act came into force in the Netherlands. In 1869, the Act was abolished once again and the Netherlands acquired the image of a free-spirited nation. The new act did not enter into force until 1910, the Patent Act 1910.

The authors, various members of the Dutch patent community, give their vision on the past, present and future of patent law. The book reflects the value of intellectual property and shows how a patent law from 1910 can still be of high value in the 21st century. The Dutch version was presented on October 7<sup>th</sup> to a gathering of professionals from the Dutch patent community.

As part of the celebrations of one hundred years of the Dutch Patent Law, TNT issued a special series of stamps featuring 10 unique Dutch inventions. Furthermore the Patent Parade, an interactive exhibition of Dutch inventions, is on a one year-journey travelling through the Netherlands. The exhibition visits the libraries of ten large cities in the Netherlands, thereby reaching around 1.2 million people.

NL Patent Office is part of NL Agency which is a department of the newly formed Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. NL Patent Office grants patents in the Netherlands, informs about the patent system and represents Dutch interests in European and international organisations.