

Wim Van der Eijk appointed Vice-President of the EPO

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The Administrative Council has appointed Wim Van der Eijk to the position of Vice-President of the EPO. The 54-year-old Dutchman will be in charge of the EPO's Directorate-General Appeals. He succeeds Peter Messerli of Switzerland, who retires at the end of November. The appointment is for five years from 1 December 2011.

Mr Van der Eijk has been Principal Director of Patent Law and Multilateral Affairs at the EPO since 2005. In 2009 and 2010, he also served as Vice-President of Directorate-General Legal and International Affairs. Before joining the EPO, he was chief legal officer of the Netherlands Patent Office and manager of its Patent Division. He also worked in the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands, as well as serving as an honorary judge at the District Court of The Hague, which is responsible for patent litigation. Mr Van der Eijk has chaired both the Patent Law Committee of the European Patent Organisation and the working party that drafted the European Patent Litigation Agreement.



Peter Messerli is one of the longest-serving Vice-Presidents in the history of the EPO. In his 15 years at the helm of DG Appeals, the EPO boards of appeal took a very active role in shaping law and practice in many important areas of the European patent system, including biotechnology and computer-implemented inventions. Under his leadership, the boards of appeal have been a highly respected independent judicial body and a point of reference for the EPO's member states. In April 2011, Mr Messerli's contribution to intellectual property was recognised when he was selected to receive Managing IP magazine's Outstanding Achievement Award.

The Administrative Council, made up of delegations from the member states, is the European Patent Organisation's legislative body. It is responsible for supervising the activities of the EPO, approving the budget and appointing senior managers, including the President and the Vice-Presidents of the EPO.

Directorate-General Appeals is made up of the Enlarged Board of Appeal, the 27 technical boards of appeal, the Legal Board of Appeal and the Disciplinary Board of Appeal.