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Staff Union of the European Patent Office asks Sarkozy for help
Distribution of power in the European Patent Office must be reviewed

In a letter to the current President of the European Council, Nicolas Sarkozy, the Staff Union of the European Patent Office (SUEPO) has issued an urgent request for the EU Council of Ministers to look at the structure of the EPO Administrative Council and to rethink the distribution of power in the European Patent Office.

In particular, SUEPO points out the conflict of interests faced by the delegations on the management body. The Administrative Council delegations are comprised almost exclusively of representatives of the national patent offices. Since many of the national offices are financially dependent on annual fees paid to the EPO, every decision made by the EPO Administrative Council is influenced by national interests and the desire to see as many patents granted as possible, commented SUEPO.

The letter goes on to state that “The conflict of interest inherent in being both head of a member-state delegation and in charge of a national office was identified very early on in our organisation's 30-year history, but is now becoming so serious as to pose a threat to its future.”

The patent examiners suggest to Sarkozy that a study be carried out to identify the financial dependencies and inter-relationships between national patent offices and the EPO, after the Council Chairman has to date refused to propose such a study to the Administrative Council. According to the union, the EPO Administrative Council needs to have a different composition and organisation in the long run.

Union endorses Community Patent

In the letter to Sarkozy, the union also emphasized that it endorsed the efforts undertaken by the EU to create a European Community patent and supported the political control exercised by EU institutions that would result.

Background information – How much money is involved?

The national patent offices receive 50% of the annual fees for all European patents granted by EPO patent examiners.

In 2005, the national patent offices received €269 million from the EPO.

In 2006, they received €280 million from the EPO.

In 2007, they received €300 million from the EPO.

[Finances in the EPO](#)

[Original letter to Sarkozy, with translations into English and German](#)

For more information, visit the SUEPO homepage at <http://www.suepo.org>