



AIPPI 2014: Battistelli accuses EPO union of defamation

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Benoît Battistelli, the president of the European Patent Office (EPO), has accused the office's staff union of organising a "defamation campaign" against him.

In an exclusive interview with *WIPR* at the AIPPI World IP Congress in Toronto yesterday (September 16), [Battistelli](#) said the office's staff union "has been contacting the media throughout Europe" to complain about issues such as transparency and governance.

There has been "a campaign of defamation by the trade union, which has sent letters all over Europe", yet "the result has been that my mandate has been extended", Battistelli said.

He added that his modernisation plan for [the EPO](#) is going very well despite some resistance. "The staff haven't resisted the technical changes [that have been introduced] but some of them are resisting changes in the social relationship between management and staff.

"The trade union has had a monopoly in staff representation. They were more or less controlling the office. You can't manage an office like that. We need to make reforms, and these are clearly explained in what we call our road map," Battistelli said.

Asked if there should be wider representation on the European Patent Organisation's Administrative Council, he said that its members represent the sovereign states contracted to the EPO. "Mostly they are heads of the national offices but many other professionals are there as observers," Battistelli said.

As for transparency, "since I became president I've proposed the publication of most council documents," he said. "Not many public organisations are doing so much in terms of transparency."

Battistelli said that because the union accused him of "non-accountability, non-transparency and dictatorship", that did not make the allegations true. "Their aim was to destabilise me, force me to resign or get me fired. But the opposite has happened. My mandate has been prolonged by four years," he said.

Turning to the Unified Patent Court, the proposed common patent court for all signatories to the unitary patent, the EPO president urged all states to act. "It's a very important decision after long years of discussion. We think the preparatory work must be done. It's complicated for countries to work on such a project but some have to be more active," he said.

The [conference](#) finishes today (September 17).