



Centennial of the Belgian Group of AIPPI
Brussels, 10 December 2009

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AIPPI (*Association Internationale pour la Protection de la Propriété Industrielle*) is the most important and oldest worldwide association dealing with intellectual property with a special emphasis on industrial property. It is contemporary of the founding of the Paris Convention (1883), the basic Convention for industrial property matters and has been confirmed and broadened by the TRIPS Agreement. AIPPI has been the privileged NGO partner of WIPO for more than 75 years.

The international Association was founded in Brussels in 1897. The Belgian group commemorated its centennial in 1997 in Brussels in the presence of Prince Philippe, heir to the Belgian throne and the Minister of Economical Affairs in charge of industrial property.

AIPPI, the secretariat of which is located in Zürich, is constituted by national groups from the moment there are at least 20 members of a given country.

Belgium, one of the oldest national groups, was constituted in Brussels in 1909. It is at this opportunity that its Centennial was commemorated in the brand new Brussels meeting centre, SQUARE (previously known as Palais des Congrès).

The commemoration included three parts: the first part was a conference, the second a concert held in the beautiful neighbouring Royal Protestant Chapel and the third a banquet, also held in SQUARE.

The theme of the afternoon programme was a very topical question, namely *Intellectual Property and Sustainable Development*.

After the introduction of the President of the Belgian group, Mr. Leo RYCKEBOER, previously in charge of intellectual property at Bekaert NV, there were two contributions on patents and sustainable development by Prof. Estelle DERCLAYE (University of Nottingham) and Mr. Jean-François SERRIER (Solvay S.A.). Both gave their view on how *green patents* should be encouraged.

This presentation was followed by a more practical intervention by Prof. Paul BELLEFLAMME (UCL) on the economical aspect of patents, which is in fact the basic requirement of the existence of patents. Mr. Tony Tangena from Philips explained the developments at his company, where many years ago the trend was *we search and invent everything*, whilst now this worldwide company has developed a very efficient invention strategy involving different other specialised companies and universities.



After coffee, two interventions on trade marks and signs in the prospective of sustainable development were made. In the first part, Eric DE GRUYSE made a broad revision of all the possible signs, trade marks, labels, geographical indications and other guarantee devices. We ended with a talk by Mr. Frank FAY from DG AGRI (European Commission) who explained the recent efforts that his DG is making to improve the quality of foodstuff, wine and spirits and biological and ecological means. Mr. FAY showed us three draft ecological device trade marks that have been short listed and upon which we had to vote to show our preference. Our democratic vote was immediately transferred by internet to DG AGRI.

Each talk was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr. Ludovic DE GRUYSE, advocate at the Supreme Court and highly specialised in IP, then gave his somewhat philosophical view on the future of IP.

Last but not least, Mr. Vincent VAN QUICKENBORNE, Minister of Economic Affairs, in charge of intellectual property made a very interesting talk. He explained what will happen in Belgium and at the EU level during the coming year as Belgium will have the presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2010. He reminded that the Commission will make proposals to ameliorate and amend the trade mark Regulation and Directive during this period following the current study undertaken by the Max Planck Institute. Truly a most interesting intervention by a very pro-industrial property minister.

The participants were then invited to attend a beautiful concert in the neighbouring Royal Protestant Chapel where they enjoyed listening to the famous Beethoven septuor, which was played by an excellent Belgian group named Kheops.

Finally, and as fitting, a banquet closed the event where Mr. Mollet-Vieville entertained the participants shortly on AIPPI and invited them to attend the next AIPPI Conference in Paris next October.

Annick Mottet Haugaard, ECTA Vice President and Member of the Organising Committee of AIPPI (Belgian Group), took an active part in the organisation of the event.

More than 120 participants were present. The lectures and the slides of this successful commemoration will be available on our website www.aippi.be shortly.