



European Communities Trade Mark Association

## **ECTA 29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE, BARCELONA 15-19 JUNE 2010**

*Reported by Keith Havelock, ECTA Secretary General (GB)*

The venue for ECTA's 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, celebrating the Association's 30<sup>th</sup> year of existence, was the Olympic city of Barcelona.

The Organising Committee comprised Past Presidents Mireia Curell and Luis-Alfonso Durán and Council member Luis de Larramendi.

Due to the interesting programme, the anniversary, the good weather and the attractions of the host city, as well as the combination of this particular conference with a Seminar of one of ECTA's sister organisations, ASIPI, the conference proved to be a record breaker, attended by 733 ECTA delegates. Including accompanying persons, speakers and other guests and the 76 delegates who attended the ASIPI conference only, the total number of attendees, 1040, was a record for the Association.

Following the ASIPI Seminar, Council and Committee meetings were held on the first day as well as a workshop entitled "*Protection of Products through Design Law, Copyright and Unfair Competition*", chaired by Josep Maria Monguet, BCD Barcelona (ES), at which the speakers were Erling Borchert, Kromann Reumert (DK), Nathalie Dreyfus, Dreyfus & Associates (FR), Antonio Selas, Cremades & Calvo-Sotelo (ES), Giovanni Casucci, SL Casucci (IT) and Grégoire Bisson, WIPO (CH).

In the evening, a Welcome Reception was held at the main Conference Hotel, the Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I. A speech of welcome by Simon Reeves, AstraZeneca (GB), President of ECTA, was followed by an exhibition of synchronised swimming and rumba music by Los Manolos, all enjoyed by 750 attendees.

On the next day, proceedings commenced with the Association's Annual General Meeting. Newly elected members of Council were: Karol Fajnor (SK), Pierre Kihn (LU), and Hélène Lecornu (FR).

The Conference was formally opened with speeches of welcome from the President Simon Reeves, Alberto Casado, Director General of the Spanish PTO, and the members of the Organising Committee. A Round Table followed this, chaired by the retiring President of OHIM, Wubbo de Boer, who took the opportunity to present his thoughts on the future of Trade Mark practice in Europe. The session was entitled "*Protection of IP – Trade Marks and Designs – Are we going in the Right Direction?*" The panellists, Binying Wang, WIPO (CH), Alberto Bercowitz, Alberto Bercowitz Abogados (ES) and Alan Ragueneau, Kraft Foods Europe GmbH (CH) presented stimulating, but differing, perspectives on the subject.



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Next came sessions on the OHIM proposal for a methodology to consistently evaluate the risk of confusion of trade marks, chaired by Wouter Verburg of OHIM, at which the other contributors were Bénédicte Linden, Gevers & Partners (BE) and Berenika Depo, LDS Lazewski Depo & Partners (PL); and on the Enforcement of Community and National Trade Marks in the EU, chaired by David Pellisé, Pellisé Abogados (ES), where the speakers were F. Peter Müller, Müller Schupfner & Partner (DE) (newly elected Second Vice-President of ECTA), and Anna Carboni, Powell Gilbert LLP (GB).

That evening the social entertainment took place at the Pueblo Espanol, built in 1929 on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition, as a typical Spanish city square (Plaza Mayor), which proved an ideal setting for the large number of attendees. All enjoyed an al fresco buffet dinner and ethnic fusion music from the Camut Band.

On the final day of the Conference, proceedings began under the watchful chairmanship of Alberto Casado, making a welcome second appearance on stage, with contributions from Olivér Várhelyi, European Commission (BE) and Mihály Ficsor, Hungarian PO (HU) on the subject of “*Global Assessment of the European Trade Mark Systems: Viewpoint of the Administrations*” – some fiery views were expressed.

Next came the viewpoint of the professions on the same subject. The chair was taken by António Campinos of the Portuguese INPI (PT) (the nominated next President of OHIM) with Annette Kur, Max Planck Institute for IP (DE) as Moderator. The speakers were Max Oker-Blom, Hanken School of Economics (FI), Shane Smyth, FR Kelly (IR) and Gerhard Bauer, Daimler (DE) (the nominated next President of INTA). Because of the nature and topicality of the subject and the respective roles of the participants, this session proved to be a lively one, with opinions expressed in diametric opposition to each other – just what is needed for a successful conference.

Finally, calm was resumed during a thoughtful session on “*Trade Marks and Geographical Indications*” chaired by Marcus Höpferger, WIPO (CH), with speakers Francis Fay, European Commission (BE), Scott Gerien, Dickinson Peatman & Fogarty (US), Emmanuel Baud, Jones Day (FR) and Massimo Vittori, OriGIn (CH).

After concluding words from Annick Mottet Hugaard, Lydian (BE), the Conference business sessions came to an end.

In the evening, a Gala Dinner was held at the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, located in the majestic Palace on Montjüic, close to the Pueblo Espanol and the Olympic Stadium. Delicious fare was served to 800 participants in the superb Sala Oval, followed by Pep Bou’s presentation of a soap bubble show and music from the Barcelona Jazz Orchestra, who featured great instrumentalists and a wonderful female jazz singer. The night was a fitting highlight in an excellent social programme.

On the Saturday, golf and soccer tournaments took place (the latter for the first time), as well as a tour for participants of the Conference to the Miro Foundation on Montjüic (delegates were becoming familiar with the area, with its wonderful views over Barcelona) and the Picasso Museum in the old City.

So concluded ECTA’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference. The 2011 Conference will take place in Stockholm, Sweden from 8-11 June 2011.