



European Communities Trade Mark Association

London June 9, 2005

President's Report 24th Annual General Meeting

The year which has passed since we met last year in Funchal has been a very busy one. The activity level has increased due both to external and internal factors. Globalisation, the enlargement of EU, e-business and technological change are all affecting the Intellectual Property field and regulation in many ways, and thus ECTA. The employment of a legal coordinator has also clearly contributed to the increased activity.

There are particularly five things I would like to mention in this respect besides our regular activities. **First** of all the Management Committee conducted a lengthy strategic discussion at its meeting last year in August on the basis of which it was concluded that there is a need for an overall view of the future development of ECTA. As a result of this **Vision and Mission Statements** were presented to and approved by the Council in Copenhagen in October to show the way for future activities and these were subsequently included in the ECTA brochure. **Secondly** a **Position paper** expressing certain basic views on the Intellectual Property Field has also been prepared together with the Advisory committee. It was felt necessary taking into account how many opinions ECTA is rendering on a yearly basis. It is expressing ECTA's general view with respect to some relevant IP issues and it is expected to be approved by the Council either in London or by the latest in Rome. The intention is to renew it on a regular basis. **Thirdly** a considerable amount of work has been spent modernizing the **web site**. We do hope that it serves the membership in their daily work. **Fourthly** quite an effort has been spent on new publications. A **Law Book on Enforcement of IP Rights** was distributed to the members on 5 April this year. The **25th Anniversary book** is available at this conference. The **Design Law Book** has been finalized and will be forthcoming shortly and sent to the members after the conference. Finally the **Trade Mark Law Book** is expected to be printed and distributed as soon as the adoption of the amended CTM Implementing and Fee Regulations allow, most likely in the beginning of next year. Finally and for **the fifth** the **bimonthly** and **special Flashes** should be mentioned. While the other publications serve a long term need, the web site and the Flashes keep the members up to date with the ever-increasing accumulation of knowledge within the field.

The representatives of ECTA have also actively participated in various meetings during the past year. I would particularly like to mention our meeting with the Commissioner, Internal Market and Services, Mr Charlie McCreevy on 1 March in Brussels and our meeting on February 21 with OHIM likewise in Brussels as well as our meeting with WIPO in Geneva on March 21. All three most rewarding and conducted in a very constructive and friendly atmosphere. In addition we have attended meetings with OHIM in Alicante and with sister organisations, i.e. the Joint Meeting hosted by ITMA, in Cambridge and quite a few others.

Last year's conference in Funchal, Madeira, took place on 2-5 June. It was named "Great Expansion - Great Expectations" and the lectures comprised, i.e. views on the EU enlargement,



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the latest trends concerning trade mark and design practice at OHIM, viewpoints on the Madrid Protocol and brand building. The professional contribution was very rewarding, the arrangements were excellent and the island most beautiful. We are very grateful to João Pereira da Cruz, the Chairman of the organizing committee, for a most successful conference.

The autumn Council Meeting took place in Copenhagen on 23-24 October last year. It was a great pleasure to be there. Everything was very well organized by Eva Borgen and Kristiane Vandborg under the supervision of our past President Kaj Henriksen. The Round Table discussion on Friday afternoon on the basis of an excellent lecture delivered by Prof. Jens Schovsbo was especially appreciated. It was the unanimous opinion that this should be continued in the same format.

The committees, which together with the Management Committee are the heart of the Association, have also been quite busy during the past year. The committees have been occupied with rendering opinions on the various changes occurring, e.g. with respect to the CTM Implementing and Fee Regulations.

The Management Committee has convened three times, once in Antwerp last year in November and twice in Helsinki, i.e. in August 2004 and in April this year.

Before I close just a few thoughts about the future. Due to the number of new publications the next Gazette will not be forthcoming. We are also in the process of rethinking the contents of it. A possibility is to connect the contents with forthcoming round table discussions. ECTA could arrange seminars dedicated to special items in various parts of Europe and publish the lectures in the Gazette. The Position paper needs certainly to be revised in due course and maybe enlarged if found useful. The work on keeping abreast with our sister organisations will continue as will our work on understanding the IP field and affecting the regulation of it. There is thus a lot to do. It is quite a challenge, but with your help and the assistance of our excellent members, be it feedback, information or assistance in any other form, I am sure we will be able to meet it.

It is quite apparent that without the great contribution by quite a few people the activity level achieved would not have been possible. I have here in mind the members of the committees and their active chairmen, particularly the advisory committee, which have conducted four meetings working with the Position Paper and the excellent staff of our office, i.e. Keith Havelock, Norman MacLachlan, Sandrine Peters, Sue Van Looy and Cathy Van Vuuren. Sincere thanks to all of you as well as to my colleagues Mireia Curell and Simon Reeves.

Max Oker-Blom
President.