



European Communities Trade Mark Association

June 2009 – June 2010

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Simon Reeves*

The year under review has seen ECTA consolidate its presence in Brussels and we have already seen the advantages that this has brought in terms of easier access to European Commission officials, increased opportunity for lobbying on behalf of the Association and increased visibility in particular for our Legal Co-ordinator, Anne-Laure Covin, who has taken full advantage of the opportunities to put into effect her considerable networking abilities to develop key professional relations at the Commission on behalf of ECTA. Anne-Laure, Cathy van Vuuren and Petra Haenitsch have responded very well to the challenges which this year has presented to them. Our website, the window through which we are seen by the outside world, has been considerably improved during the past year. Special thanks to Cathy for her extremely valuable contribution providing the very backbone of ECTA's administration during a period of considerable change and to Petra for her work in relation to the setting up of an accounting system.

In terms of internal organization I believe that the findings of the Project Groups we set up to look at various aspects of the Association have begun to bear fruit. In particular, the action plans we have published and continue to update for the Management and all Committees help us keep track of progress against key priority issues. One specific output from that project group work led to the compilation of a clear 'Benefit of Membership' statement which is included in the Conference Brochure. With such a choice of professional associations in the field of IP this "statement" defines the distinctive features of ECTA of which we can be rightly proud and should encourage new members to join us.

Focusing now on external activities, a delegation representing ECTA met with Margot Fröhlinger, Director of Direction D Knowledge-based Economy at DG Internal Market and Services in September 2009. The Association has also been represented in regular meetings with officials from DG MARKT, DG TAXUD, DG TRADE, DG AGRI and DG INFORMATION within the Commission. We held our annual meeting at WIPO on 7 May 2010 where we were again privileged to have a face-to-face meeting with the Director General, Francis Gurry, at which we were able to communicate ECTA's position with respect to a number of strategic trade mark and design related issues.

At OHIM, the customary meeting with OHIM officials took place in the context of the OHIM Link committee which is a privilege which ECTA continues to enjoy. In a significant development, ECTA was appointed as one of only five Associations to attend the Administrative Board and Budget Committee Meetings at OHIM. It is a great tribute to Anne-Laure Covin and the quality of the professional relationships she has developed with OHIM officials that ECTA was an automatic choice to enjoy the privilege of attending these meetings. It has indeed proved to be a very interesting time in which to be present at and contribute to those meetings, given the ongoing discussions relating to the Study on the overall functioning of the Trade Mark System in Europe and the deliberations around OHIM's proposals to deal with the Office surplus.

Our Committees, which are, of course, the engine room of our Association, have been very busy and we have added to their number with the creation of the Geographical Indications Committee in response to the increase in focus and developments in this area. The main brief of the Law Committee, in particular, has been to submit position papers and comments in connection with the Study of the EU Commission on the functioning of the Trade Mark Systems in the EU where appropriate and in order to maximize the impact of our



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input, we have been able to formulate and submit common positions in collaboration with the 4 NGO Observers at the OHIM Administrative Board and Budget Committee (AIM, BUSINESSEUROPE, INTA and MARQUES). No fewer than eight position papers or observations have been submitted to date. The work has been challenging and demanding in terms of scope and time constraints. I take this opportunity to highlight and thank Fabio Angelini as the Chair of the Law Committee for his dedication and skilful collaboration with his committee and other ECTA committees to draw together and collate the very high quality of material which has been submitted on behalf of ECTA.

The Internet Committee has forged a very effective collaborative partnership with the MARQUES Cyberspace Committee and again no fewer than 8 joint papers have been submitted to ICANN during the period we are reviewing, on a number of wide ranging issues.

Another significant initiative arose from the discussions we had with Margot Fröhlinger. In order to further contribute to the debate on the overall functioning of Trade Mark System within the EU, ECTA, with the full support and participation of the Commission, OHIM and the National Patent and Trade Mark Offices, has been organizing a series of Round Tables designed to provide stakeholders with a better understanding of the effective impact of OHIM's activities and the CTM system in the different Members States. Three such Round Tables have already taken place this year - in London (February), Brussels (March) and Paris (April) and a further three have been planned - in Riga (July), Helsinki (September) and Cracow (October). The Round Table in Brussels, in particular, was designed to benchmark the the European Trade Mark System with the US, Trade Mark System and Lynne Beresford, Head of the US Trade Mark Office was able to provide her input into this debate. Special thanks to Annick Mottet Haugaard and Anne-Laure Covin whose enthusiasm and commitment to this initiative saw this series of Round Tables come to fruition and enjoy a very successful reception from those who have attended the events to date.

Finally, it remains for me to say that it has been such a privilege to act as President of the Association over the past two years and to work in particular with such a committed and supportive Management Committee. It remains only for me to thank them all personally, Keith Havelock, the Secretary General, Jaroslaw Kulikowski our Treasurer, Domenico de Simone our Second Vice President and, last ,but not least, Annick Mottet Haugaard our First Vice President who will lead the Association going forward.

It is wonderful to see so many of us here at this conference in Barcelona - I believe we number some 1000 in total – a record attendance!

I wish you all a very good conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Reeves', is written over a horizontal line.

Simon Reeves  
ECTA President