

**Speech for Mr. Thierry Stoll - Acting Director General**

**Public Hearing on Future Patent Policy in Europe**

**Brussels, CHARL Room S3  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2006, 9h15 – 9h30**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this debate on the future of European patent policy.

Today's hearing represents the formal end of a very fruitful consultation period.

The consultation was launched in January, prompted by the continuing lack of progress on the Community Patent, the European Parliament's rejection of the proposed Directive on Computer Implemented Inventions and subsequent calls by MEPs for a debate with the Commission.

Our aim is to collect your views as ' views stakeholders on what measures could be taken in the near future to improve the patent system in Europe and on how the Community can best contribute to creating an IPR environment in which all European businesses can flourish.

The level of participation has exceeded our most optimistic expectations, so I believe it's safe to say that the objective of the consultation has been largely fulfilled. Over 2500 contributions were received, drafted by stakeholders ranging from individuals to

big multinational companies, representing many sectors of industry: from new technologies with many ICT and biotechnology companies and professionals, through to more traditional industries such as the pharmaceutical, chemical or automotive branches.

Interest groups represented among stakeholders include industry, patent professionals, researchers and inventors. This wide range of interests expressed in the consultation responses are of immense help to us, the policymakers, and we could not have hoped for a more comprehensive participation.

Replies came in from all over Europe and beyond and this pan-European interest is also a healthy sign for the patent system. Some Member States, such as the Czech Republic and Sweden organised internal consultations on the basis of our questionnaire, reaching out to many stakeholders who might not have participated otherwise.

We are particularly pleased with the results of a consultation tool developed by our colleagues from DG Enterprise in order to associate more European SME's in this type of exercise. 664 SME's from 17 Member States and the two candidate countries were interviewed and consulted in the framework of the exercise. Their responses complemented those of a large number of other SME's, some of which sent in individual contributions while other expressed support for submissions drafted by associations representing the particular interests of their sector.

The very high participation rate during the written phase, to which many of you contributed, and your presence here today are an

important to us. They underline the desire for a debate on the fundamentals of the European patent system.

It goes without saying that the right framework for patent protection is essential for business. A good patent system stimulates and rewards innovation, leads to the successful development of new products and processes and thus contributes to generating growth and new jobs. Designing a good patent system is a challenge and if we get the legal framework wrong, we run the risk of discouraging investment or distorting competition.

Equally we should not lose sight of the wider impact of IPR and its consequences for society at large – as consumers or patients in need of healthcare for example. For that reason your contributions and your presence here today, representing a wide range of interests, are particularly helpful to us, the policymakers.

As you are aware, the hearing will be based on the main issues raised in the consultation. Thus the debate will focus on four major topics: the principles and values which underpin the patent system; the proposed Community patent; non-Community initiatives such as the London Protocol and the European Patent Litigation Agreement (EPLA) and possible areas for harmonisation at Community level.

With respect to future steps, we will now continue analysing the written submissions together with the results of today's debate. We intend to publish the written responses in full, and a comprehensive and detailed report summarising the outcome of both the written consultation and of today's debate. We expect this report to be ready sometime in autumn. Thereafter, we will

evaluate which policy options will best translate the results of the consultation into practice and Commissioner McCreevy will present them to you as soon as the decision is taken.

Before I leave the floor to you, I would like to thank you for all the time and effort that has gone into your responses and for coming here today. We are looking forward to hearing your views today and without delaying the debate any further, I wish all of you a very fruitful discussion!

Claudia Colla, DG MARKT/D2, ext. 88229  
Grazyna Piesewicz, DG MARKT/D2, ext. 80124