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INAUGURAL MESSAGE

«In the last 30 years, university-based science has undergone a substantial change. Boundaries between basic and applied research became increasingly blurred and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are now more and more engaging with industry on specific project bases, such as:

- joint R&D collaborations
- tri-lateral networks (science, industry and government, “Triple Helix”)
- user-driven co-creation in the context of dedicated structures
- start-ups/spin-offs by researchers and students
- consultancy services by faculty

Throughout history, the role of the HEI has expanded from generating and transferring knowledge (through research, education and publishing) to disseminating and applying technology (through development and realization) for the economic and societal betterment (as part of the “Third Mission”).

The increased industry-HEI links described above have also altered the process of scientific discovery and thus, the ownership rights to those discoveries, and have led to a change of legislation and policies in order for the universities to be able to protect their research results and to monetize their IP. This has resulted in a growing number of academic patent filings worldwide. Although the IP field is still dominated by industries, HEI have shown a steady increase in patent filings over the last 15-20 years.

Adequate managerial structures in HEI have been developed to support these activities. University technology transfer offices (TTOs) are now responsible for mediating the interaction between university and industry and recognizing, understanding and managing IP in order to protect their IPR and thereby accelerate their innovations towards commercialization. Worldwide the majority of the TTOs is relatively young and still on a learning curve concerning best practices in patent protection and monetization.

Either as an industry or as an academic partner, interaction between academia and business immediately effects IP and creates the associated need to address all related issues, such as:

- advising on IPR
- filing applications for all industrial property rights
- representing before national and international authorities concerned with industrial property rights
- monitoring and managing IPR

- prosecuting infringements of IPR
- advising and representing on matters regarding employee inventions
- advising on and drawing up collaboration and commercialization agreements
- conducting searches and documentation

As dealing with IP is a “people’s business”, the human aspect becomes increasingly important in the emerging global knowledge economy. This requires a sophisticated education, training and certification for the persons involved, in order to make them able to provide professional services and thus contribute to the strengthening of the (Greek) innovation system».