

PATENT VALUATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION
Making the most of patents for business

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CLOSING REMARKS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have reached the end of our seminar on Patent valuation and commercialisation in this wonderful location and it is my task to provide some closing remarks. It is a sad task, because we shall be closing the door on lively and stimulating debate, as well as bidding farewell to friends and associates. However, it is also a privilege and an honour to be entrusted with such an undertaking, at a gathering of 126 professional people representatives from national offices and business from 22 European countries.

During the past two days our minds have been assailed by a torrent of ideas, information, statistics and visions on making the most of patents for business and it will probably be a day or two before we can sift through them all and consolidate our personal perspectives. There is, indeed, plenty to reflect upon and, if this in any way enhances our individual and collective efforts to create value from our patents, then this seminar can truly be adjudged a success.

As we have heard over the past two days, the economic benefits of the patent system are derived from its roles in promoting innovation, and encouraging investment, economic growth, knowledge sharing and the efficient use of resources. A patent is a legal title granting its holder the exclusive right to exploit his invention in a limited area and for a limited time period. By offering protection in exchange for disclosure, the patent system creates incentives to invest in research and development and it fosters technical innovation, which is crucial to competitiveness and overall economic growth. The European Patent Office supports innovation, competitiveness and economic growth across Europe through a commitment to high quality and efficient services delivered under the European Patent Convention.

Numerous positions and points of view have been outlined and many messages have been derived the last two days, covering a broad spectrum on patent valuation and commercialization methods and principles. I would briefly like to review some of main points aired during our seminar:

- In our knowledge-based economy patents are an essential instrument for innovation and competitiveness. They create value. The patent system is not a goal in itself it is an economic tool to promote innovation. The duty of any Intellectual Property Office

is to perform in such a way that this economic tool remains efficient. This means finding a balance between the needs of right-holders and third parties, as well as between the quality of granted patents and the costs and the duration of the patent procedure.

Innovation and competition are now global phenomena. We Europeans must, more than ever, rise to the challenge and pursue our interests in a united and coherent manner.

- Businesses in general use patents in a variety of ways, not just to protect their inventions but to generate revenue and competitive advantage via licensing, to attract capital and to improve their competitive positions. New parties are entering the IP world and raising the need for effective methods of patent valuation.
- Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) have a key role to play in the future development of the European economy and are important drivers in releasing the knowledge based economy envisioned in the Lisbon Strategy. Patenting is very important for technology SMEs as it opens the door to raising external capital, something that is not possible if the black box approach of keeping innovations as trade secrets is followed.
SMEs realize a considerable part of their revenues with products which are introduced into the market. Bringing products onto the market is a central event for the process of innovation. There are obviously a lot of difficulties and extremely high costs in order to develop a new product and to launch it. Intellectual property rights and especially patents act as a protection mechanism of investment at the beginning of an idea. Later, in the phase of commercialization IPR are protecting the product against imitation. Furthermore, through licensing their IPR the SME can profit through additional income. At last marketing of innovative products is linked with tremendous efforts and difficulties. Strategies for commercialization which have been thoroughly planned enable SMEs to introduce own products on the market in an efficient and profit-oriented way.
- Countries with small economies like Greece do not have a large national market therefore companies in these countries have to be export oriented. This implies that they have to focus on protecting their inventions in countries outside their national territory. In this respect a system such as the European patent system is even more beneficial for small countries than for large ones, as it assures a remarkable knowledge transfer and opens the gateway to large markets.
- The exploitation of IP has become an important success factor for companies in the modern economic environment. Technology based IPRs like patents are the most common form of these assets and they often reach a substantial part of company value.

Finally, I should like to thank the management of the Hellenic Industrial Property Organization for their hospitality and the provided support as well as the moderator and all other speakers and panel members. Their contribution has been invaluable and without any doubt, has helped make the event a great success.