HUNGARY-COUNTRY REPORT

by

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SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

(HOW DOES THE HUNGARIAN PATENT OFFICE PROMOTE THE CULTURE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN HUNGARY – A SURVEY OF THE PRESENT STATUS)

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentleman,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you today at this International Conference on Intellectual Property Education and Training.

According to the topic of this conference, I am going to speak to you about Teaching and Training of Intellectual Property in Hungary.

'The Hungarian Patent Office is the administrative authority for the protection of intellectual property with country-wide competence, which has independent functions and competence under the direction of the Government' (according to a provision of the patent law effective as of January 1, 2000).

At the 1999 January meeting of the Administrative Council of the European Patent Organisation, Hungary was invited to join the European Patent Convention with effect from July 1, 2002. We take this date very seriously. Our part we are making every effort to be ready for accession by this date.

Teaching and Training of Intellectual Property in Hungary is as old as the Office. '*Spreading the word about Intellectual Property*' has always been amongst the most important tasks of the Office. The first independent Hungarian Patent Law, from 1895, already included sections regarding the training of professionals for the office. After issuing a decree in 1957, regular intellectual property training courses began in Hungary. The purpose of these courses was firstly the intellectual property training of professionals at intermediate and advanced level and secondly the exam preparation of patent attorneys. The currently effective provision came into force in 1995 via the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. According to this decree, the Hungarian Patent Office launched intermediate and advanced intellectual property courses independently or in cooperation with other organisations. The decree closely regulates the subjects of the training courses

and their duration. Having completed the courses successfully, participants acquire an intellectual property qualification.

The intermediate training courses provide general intellectual property knowledge for those who deal with questions of the acquisition and preservation of exclusive rights, or with questions of infringement or its avoidance. The authors and inventors can learn how to avoid reinventing the wheel, namely such inventions which have already been invented, and they learn how to claim exclusive rights for their own inventions (the duration of the courses are 60 classes). Among the units of the course are: patent, utility model, design, copyright legislation and the related international conventions, trade mark legislation and the related international conventions, intellectual property information, and finally the intellectual property tasks of enterprises. These intermediate training courses are generally organised in the building of the Hungarian Patent Office. However, if necessary, the experts of the office can organise residential training courses and exams. Over the past few years, intermediate intellectual property training courses have been organised in several towns in Hungary.

The intermediate exam consists of written and an oral papers. An important aim of our office is to increase the number of intermediate intellectual property training courses in order to train as many well educated inventors, technical, economic and legal experts in the field of IP, as possible. The only limit is the capacity of the office.

The *advanced* intellectual property training courses are organised in order to serve the task of the training of IP professionals. Participants of these training courses are those who want to deal with intellectual property as a profession. This course is compulsory for the examiners of the office and for those patent attorneys who represent applicants in intellectual property cases. Those who manage IP businesses or perform IP tasks at firms can also use the knowledge acquired on advanced level intellectual property training courses (the duration of the training course is four semesters, 240 classes in total).

The most important units of the courses are:

- economic and legal basics of intellectual property,
- patent, utility model, trademark and design legislation,
- methodology of examination,
- intellectual property tasks of enterprises,
- legislation of fair competition,
- intellectual property information,
- judicial procedure in intellectual property cases, and last but not least,
- copyright.

The participants of the advanced-level intellectual property training courses write a thesis at the end of the course and defend their thesis before an examination board. The Hungarian Patent Office organises advanced intellectual property training courses independently, or jointly with higher education institutions, which is a development of recent years and their attendance is increasing.

Exam of patent attorneys

The effective Law No. XXXII of 1995 on patent attorneys stipulates the requirements of the patent attorney exam. The advanced intellectual property training course is a condition of the patent attorney exam. So the Hungarian Patent Office can support the patent attorney training courses with the regular organisation of advanced intellectual property training courses.

The total number of lessons for training courses last year was greater than 500 and of these, more than 160 were on advanced courses. The other large field of intellectual property training courses is in giving general information without providing qualifications. Those who do not deal with intellectual property as a profession and students of intermediate and advanced education were unable to acquire this knowledge. Until recently there was no subject at schools and universities relating to intellectual property. To tackle this shortfall the Hungarian Patent Office targeted the education institutions, launching a strong intellectual property training policy. Our aim is to ensure that intellectual property becomes a well-known and accepted subject in intermediate and advanced-level education. Students of the Technical, Legal and Economic universities can not graduate without attending intellectual property courses.

The presence of the Hungarian Patent Office at universities and colleges is increasing. The office offers both 5-10 lesson courses providing general intellectual property knowledge and 30-42 lesson courses as a semester-long subject. These presentations and one semester courses are free of charge. The total number of colleges and universities involved in this training and teaching activity is steadily increasing.

A new iniative of the Hungarian Patent Office was to prepare domestic design centres for new national and international conditions of competition in 2000. In the framework of these activities the Office signed an agreement with the University of Applied Arts. This agreement is concentrated on the teaching of intellectual property and copyright knowledge.

Acquisition of the intellectual property knowledge is very important nowdays. Present students will start their work at that time period, when such intellectual property safety must be assured in Hungary, in common with the European Union. Finally, let us

have a look at distance learning. This new form of intellectual property training is organised for those motivated trainees who live far from the training centers. Participants of the program will receive a distance-learning workbook, a CD comprising a selection from training films, tests for self-check, and detailed literature, another CD containing the patent database, as well as official publications. For the purpose of propagating distance learning, a 20-minute film was also recorded. This film is also included in the package. Distance learning gives a possibility to the participants to acquire a good knowledge of the field and, if participants need to sit an exam. If the exam is succesful a qualification can be obtained. A furter aim of the office is to elaborate the material of the intermediate intellectual property training course. The topic of the first unit of the course is patent legislation, which has already been prepared. In the age of globalisation these materials for distance learning are planned to be made accessible via the Internet. Last month the Hungarian Patent Office and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics signed a three-year cooperation agreement in order to promote the teaching and training of Intellectual Proprety for students and tutors of the university. To demonstrate the importance of using modern methods in education I just mention to you a three-day conference in Budapest on this topic some weeks ago. The number of firms and organisations participating in the field of education and information technology was 34. More than 70 presentations were given, amongst others:

- Experiences of Internet distance education in Hungary,
- Introduction of a consortium in the field of distance education,
- Research-development-education in a multimedia environment,
- Using multimedia in language teaching,
- Challenges of the electronic Europe, eEurope and eLearning projects.

Returning now to my original topic intellectual property teaching and training, the aims in the future could be summarised as follows:

- To increase the number of both the intermediate and advanced level intellectual property training courses.
- To maintain and update the tests of the courses.
- To collect and publish written exam tasks for the patent attorneys' exam.
- To organize the distribution of distance learning packages.
- To complete the collection of textbooks.
- To expand the number of the course trainees.

Conclusion

At this conference we have been discussing the business of intellectual property training courses. I am fully convinced that this is an important and useful issue because it offers a perspective to our everyday work and life. In my presentation I wanted to show you how the Hungarian Patent Office does its best to promote the culture of intellectual property. To finish my talk let me quote now Széchenyi, the greatest Hungarian from the 19th century: "The origin of every development, progress, force, value and luck is finally the civilized human being."

And I think that the better understanding of the secret of success is easy with well educated, well- trained professionals. I am convinced that this conference has contributed to this better understanding to a great extent.

Thank you for your attention.