

PRESS RELEASE

European Chambers criticize lack of progress on EU patent regime

The lack of progress on an EU wide patent regime hinders the innovation potential of SMEs, criticized EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Last week the European Parliament rejected the so-called software patent directive, putting an end to a passionate three year debate about the patentability of 'computer-implemented inventions'. *"Despite a profound analysis of the reasons for this outcome, we couldn't approve a worsening position for SMEs, and now the efforts must be refocused on a general EU patent regime"*, Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES said, *"Businesses must have the opportunity to easily patent inventions at European level, which is a necessary step for access to finance and for marketing inventions. The sooner the EU patent regime enters into force, the better."*

SMEs are discouraged when they try to protect their inventions in the single European market as nearly as many patent systems exist as there are EU countries. Besides, language barriers pose a huge problem.

All efforts must be concentrated on implementing a system that will facilitate patent applications by SMEs, Chambers said. However, EUROCHAMBRES strictly opposes any compromise that would make the application for a European patent more expensive than the existing system.

SMEs need low cost access to a legal protection system

Litigation about patent rights is another critical issue. It implies high costs that can be disproportionate to the capacity of SMEs. An efficient system with low costs for legal protection must be made available in all Member States.

"Voluntary low cost Alternative Dispute Resolution systems - like mediation – could be a solution and should therefore be encouraged", Mr Abruzzini concluded.

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