

Fear in the European Patent Office: Criticism, and you're fired

15. March 2016 by [Lara Dovifat](#)

Fear stalks among the employees at the European Patent Office: House arrest if you fall ill, muzzled when it comes to the press and internal investigation procedures, and, added to that, the pressure to approve ever more patents, ever more quickly. Strikes have been repeatedly called at the Munich headquarters. Why this is so, what consequences this has on patents and on life itself – and how all this could soon change, is revealed in this document.



This involves the complete [report on the European Patent Office](#).

For some time in Munich the sight of the staff of the European Patent Office on the streets instead of sitting behind their desks has become a regular event. They are demonstrating because of the wretched atmosphere within the Office. Extreme pressure and a President whom they have all learned to fear. The Office is an institution outside state control, and German labour law accordingly does not apply here.

The Office earns its livelihood from the horrendous fees paid for patent applications by the big corporations, and naturally therefore has an interest in the rapid and widespread issue of patents. As we have already reported as part of our campaign “Stop patents on life”, [the structure of the European Patent Office does not provide for any independent monitoring or control by international courts](#).

Profit instead of professionalism

The current President Benoît Battistelli in particular is pushing this lunacy to new heights. His aim is to make the Office more effective – and more money-making. Labour law, illness, and representation of the workforce by staff unions are only there to irritate. His proud boast is that: “Our productivity last year went up by ten percent, and production by as much as 14 percent”. **No wonder that the numbers of patented plants, animals, and seed materials have also skyrocketed.** Patent examiners report on intolerable conditions, internal investigation teams, and the dismissal without notice of staff union representatives. And they are also complaining that there is hardly any time for patents to be examined properly. [Inevitably, the catastrophic consequences of patents on life are starting to make themselves felt.](#)

Heiko Maas has it in his power – now he needs to act

This intolerable practice can only be stopped by the Administrative Council. This is made up of representatives from all the Member States – and also the envoys sent by the Justice Minister concerned, Heiko Maas. The Council are meeting on 16 March, to debate the internal tensions and demand that control be exerted over the Office once again. That would be a first step towards restricting in future the issue of patents for naturally grown plants, animals, and seed materials. **So hurry up and sign our petition, to put an end to patents on life, once and for all!**