

Original title: [Angst im Europäischen Patentamt: Wer kritisiert, wird entlassen](#)

Patents

Climate of fear at the EPO: Anyone who dares to voice criticism faces dismissal

15 March 2016 by Lara Dovifat

Fear is spreading among the employees in the European Patent Office: house arrest in the case of illness, prohibition on speaking to the press and internal investigations. On top of that, the pressure to grant more and more patents more and more quickly. There have already been a number of strikes at the Munich headquarters. This documentary explains why this is so and what consequences it has for patents on life - and how this could change soon.

[Click here](#) for the complete report about the European Patent Office.

For some time now in Munich at regular intervals the staff of the European Patent Office can be found out on the streets instead of sitting behind their desks. They are demonstrating because of the dismal atmosphere at the Office. Intense pressure and a President who instills fear in everybody. The Office is a supra-national institution and, consequently, German labour law does not apply here.

The Office lives on the horrendously expensive patent application fees of corporations and naturally has an interest in the rapid and voluminous granting of patents. As we have already reported in the context of our campaign "Stop Patents on Life", the structure of the European Patent Office does not foresee any independent judicial oversight or control by international courts.

Profit takes precedence over examination

In particular, the current President Benoît Battistelli is taking this madness to the extreme. He wants to make the Office more efficient and increase its revenues. Labour laws, sickness and representation of the workforce by trade unions are only seen as obstacles in his path. He proudly boasts: "Our productivity increased by ten percent last year, the production by as much as 14 percent." No wonder that the numbers of patented plants, animals and seed are going through the roof. Patent examiners speak of intolerable conditions, internal investigation teams and the summary dismissal of staff union representatives. They also complain that insufficient time is available to examine patent applications properly. This is all the more surprising when one considers the potentially disastrous consequences of patents on life.

The buck stops with Heiko Maas - he has to take action now !

Only the Administrative Council of the EPO can put a stop to this unsustainable state of affairs. The Council is composed of delegates from all of the Member States - including the representatives of the competent [German] Justice Minister, Heiko Maas. The Administrative Council is due to meet on 16 March to discuss the internal conflict and to try to regain control of the Office. This would also be a first step towards restricting the granting of patents on

naturally cultivated plants, animals and seed varieties in the future. So don't waste any time in signing our appeal to stop patents on life for once and for all!