



Paris, 21 April 2016

Ref.: PC/AF/169

Minister,

We wish to draw your attention to the importance of the decisions taken at the last meeting of the Administrative Council of the European Patent Office.

We are pleased to note that a resolution was voted through, resulting from a compromise in order to obtain a majority. It has therefore been possible to focus on the social conflict and the imposition of sanctions and disciplinary procedures against EPO staff members. We welcome the role played by France, which, by your mediation, has accepted its responsibilities and mobilised its partners with regard to these issues.

We are now calling for the greatest vigilance on your part with regard to the effective implementation of the measures arising from this resolution. In our view it is essential that the persons concerned are given the opportunity to make recourse rapidly to an outside authority to re-examine the issues and act in arbitration with regard to the sanctions which may have been imposed on them, and that this be put into effect without any further delay.

The present immunity of the management of the EPO with regard to management of the staff and the choice of strategic attitudes adopted by the Office is a matter of great concern. It is arousing concern with regard to the future of this organization, and the development of innovation in Europe. The nationality and the status as a French executive of the President impose a particular responsibility on our country in the present situation. It is for this reason that in our view it is imperative that France, by way of its official representative on the Administrative Council, takes action such that a major change in the management of the Office can come into effect rapidly.

At the present time, the two staff union representatives who were dismissed in Munich have not been reinstated, and the degrading abuses of the statutes of the Office continue. Some staff members at the Hague are still under investigation. One of them in particular has been deprived of any treatment as a result of failure to take account of his stopping work due to illness, giving rise to fear of possible dismissal. We therefore believe it to be essential that our own citizens, who are victims equally with the other staff members of the repressive managerial policy adopted by the President of the Office, be fully and continuously supported during this ordeal.

We are at your disposal to discuss these matters with you. More than ever, we are convinced that a major reform of the management of the EPO is essential, and we are eager that our country should commit itself to this end, without any shortcomings.

We remain, Minister, yours faithfully

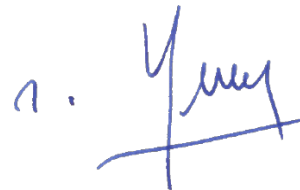
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