

FRENCH REPUBLIC



Mr. Jean-Yves Le Déaut
Deputy, President of the OPECST
National Assembly
126 Rue de l'Université – 75355 Paris 07 SP

Paris, 12 July 2016

Dear Deputy, *Dear Jean-Yves,*

Jean-Yves LECONTE

*Senator representing
French citizens
established outside
France*

In the capacity of President of OPCEST (Parliamentary Office of Scientific Evaluation and Assessment), you recently travelled to The Hague at the head of a delegation of French parliamentarians in order to visit the European Patent Office there and to meet its President Benoît Battistelli. On this occasion, in particular, you awarded him the “Medal of the National Assembly”.

I am surprised that you have not taken account of the political risks which this visit might incur at a time at which the management of the President is the object of virulent criticism, such as has been made known by us to Mr. Emmanuel Macron, the Minister with responsibility for relationships with this Office (see the two letters enclosed herewith). The most significant of these bears on the decision by the current Executive of the Office to give priority in the registration of patents to “major accounts” from the Anglo-Saxon world, which, while generating substantial income, in particular is also incurring long delays for a large number of French “start-up” companies and small and medium-sized businesses. This issue was raised in particular by Ms. Axelle Lemaire, Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, at a public event which she attended in June 2015 on the occasion of the award of the “European Innovator Prize” organized by the EPO.

As well as this, the present management of the staff is the source of a very great deal of social tension, the most evident signs of which are the suicides of five persons, the sanction procedures, even to the extent of dismissal, imposed against persons who should enjoy protection (staff union representatives), and massive and regular strike actions both at The Hague and in Munich.

The appended note will provide you with more exhaustive details of the reasons for which we have been prompted to request that the Ministers of the Economy, Industry, and Digital Affairs set about the mobilisation of our representatives on the Administrative Council of the EPO, in order for them to obtain, as rapidly as possible, a reorientation of the approach adopted by its President.

I am at your disposal to discuss the points raised in the note, and, in anticipation of this, I remain



Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'J. Y. Leconte', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jean-Yves Leconte

Copy:

- The Members of the Parliamentary Office of Scientific Evaluation and Assessment

Enclosures:

- My letter of 21 September 2015 to the Minister of the Economy, Industry, and Digital Affairs;
- My note of 24 November 2015 regarding the situation at the EPO;
- A letter signed jointly by my parliamentary colleagues of 21 April 2016, sent to the Minister of the Economy, Industry, and Digital Affairs.