

Munich's European Patent Office may be planning a move to Haar

The European Patent Office in heart of Munich simply won't settle down.

(Photo: dpa)

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- According to SZ sources, the European Patent Office may be planning to transfer a department from Munich's Inner City to Haar.
- The move to new premises, with a floor area of 11,000 square metres, would affect 200 personnel.
- A power struggle has long been raging within the Office, at the heart of which is the President Benoît Battistelli. Critics are concerned about his stringent reforms.

By Bernhard Lohr, Munich/Haar

Plans are clearly afoot at the European Patent Office in Munich to relocate the legal departments. The whole situation needs to be viewed in the context of a major reform of the legal structure, which the Member States of the European Patent Office Organization only decided on in June.

According to ZS sources, the Boards of Appeal, to which appeals can be lodged against decisions taken by the European Patent Court, are to be relocated to Haar. This will involve more than 200 employees, and an office surface area of 11,000 square metres.

[Storm in the Glass House](#)

[The European Patent Office still will not settle down: New internal investigations aimed against staff representatives are causing concern – and upset. Because the Office's own investigation department is overstretched, word has it that crisis specialists from London have been brought in to look into allegations of bullying. Katja Riedel has more ...](#)

No-one will officially confirm what is going on. Staff at the Real Estate Department of the Bavarian Insurance Chamber, which owns the office complex known as "8inOne" in Haar-Eglfing, standing empty now for a good two years, are keeping the name of the incoming tenants very much to themselves. The European Patent Office speaks of decisions which are still pending. The local authorities will only refer to a well-known "non-profit organization" which will be coming to Haar. According to an internal E-mail, which is in the possession of the SZ, this is the European Patent Office.

In the Internet blog Techrights, contributors who are manifestly very well-informed about the inner life of the European Patent Office in Munich, are already engaged in intensive discussion about the move to the edge of the Bavarian capital.

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Stringent reforms, suspensions, defamation: A power struggle is raging in the Patent Office

A power struggle has been raging for a long time within the Patent Office, with its 4000 employees in Munich alone, at the centre of which is the President, Benoît Battistelli. His opponents are opposing the stringent reforms he is seeking to introduce so as to streamline the Office. Battistelli recently suspended a patent judge, who according to the distribution of power should not have been subordinate to him, which in turn caused further upset in the Office. According to an internal investigation, the man is supposed to have used aliases in order to wage a defamation campaign against the President. The accused disputes the accusations.

A possible move to Haar is also being seen by staff members in this light. The word on Techrights is that this is a way of sending disgruntled personnel from the legal departments into “exile”; talk is of money being spent like water, and that personnel without much space should be taking priority.

According to insiders, the move is a done deal

Word has it, too, that staff in the departments affected, which are still sitting in the main building near the Isartor, have already been informed of the forthcoming move to Haar-Eglfing. The search for a suitable location for the Boards of Appeal is said to have involved eleven buildings in the general Munich area.

The closeness to the City and the airport, the actual fixtures and fittings of the building, and the easy access by public transport, are also supposed to have given the address at Richard-Reitzner-Allee 8 in Haar the edge in the search - "in the South-East of Munich", as they say. According to the information on Techrights, the tenancy agreement is supposed to have already been signed as soon as the Finance Committee of the Patent Office approved the plan in October. The move is supposed to take place in July 2017.

[Uprising against the Sun King](#)

[Staff at the European Patent Office in Munich are taking to the streets against their boss, Benoît Battistelli: He regards his people as of little consequence, and could even prevent strikes. And that could mean that he is contravening European human rights. More from Katja Riedel and Christopher Schrader ... Report](#)

This matches up with what a spokesman from the Patent Office has been saying, who of course is not going to let anything slip about the move to Haar. Rainer Osterwalder says that the organization is “currently looking into possibilities for a new service building for its

Boards of Appeal in Munich and the surroundings”. Once the “technical preparations” have been concluded, more formation will be forthcoming. The separate building is supposed to highlight the independence of the Boards of Appeal in the Patent Office Organization.

This issue is also said to have been discussed in the early part of the year with Bavarian Justice Minister Winfried Bausback. He is said to have been convinced that by having a separate building of their own for the Boards, the significance of Munich and Bavaria as focal points in Europe for patent legal procedures can be strengthened still further. On the other hand, it looks as if this positive view is not entirely shared by all the staff at headquarters.