

labour law Van Dam: conflict at patent office in Rijswijk continues

- Eppo König

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The company culture at the European Patent Office (EPO), based in Rijswijk, has barely improved. This according to a letter from State Secretary Martijn Van Dam (Economic Affairs, PvdA - Dutch Labour Party) to the House of Representatives. “There is talk of an us and them culture, lack of mutual trust between the management and staff and a lack of shared values,” Van Dam writes. The criticism from the SUEPO trade union, which represents half of the staff, is that the French president of the EPO, Benoît Battistelli, has introduced an authoritarian regime. In breach of a resolution by the Administrative Council, a trade-union official was recently dismissed again in Rijswijk, Van Dam confirms. The Dutch Supreme Court will rule in January on whether the EPO is ‘immune’ to Dutch labour law, as an international organisation. (NRC)