

European Patent Office: Battistelli steps down, Campinos steps up



António Campinos in his role as Director of the European Union Intellectual Property Office 2013 in Bangkok.

Boss of the European Patent Office, Benoît Battistelli, is going. During his time in office some of his staff had dubbed him the Sun King – more of a reign. Maybe António Campinos, a Portuguese, can calm things down at the EPO.

Former chief executive of the Portuguese Patent Office, António Campinos will be the new boss of the European Patent Office. As the Munich-based authority revealed today, Wednesday, the 38 members of the EPO Administrative Council elected Campinos at their meeting directly at the first vote. Campinos is not heir to an easy throne. Campinos is due to succeed Battistelli on 1 July 2018, whose second term in office which is limited to three years will then terminate in the proper manner, according to the EPO.

Proven expert

Still ruling President of the EPO, over the past few years Benoît Battistelli has made some bitter enemies in his own institution due to a rigorous policy of economy measures and a contentious routine of monitoring his staff. He dismissed employees from the ranks of the in-house staff union Suepo who demonstrated their willingness to strike. Some of these [have since then lodged proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights in support of their right to strike](#). At the end of last year Battistelli even [fired the chief staff representative at The Hague](#).

Campinos will be the first person representing a southern European country to head the EPO. As former chief executive of the Portuguese Patent Office he is a proven expert in the field, and was well known to the members of the Administrative Council after representing Portugal on the Council for a number of years.

Campinos's present job as Managing Director of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) was plainly viewed by the EPO Administrative Council as

proof of his qualifications to lead an international authority. This was lacking with the only other candidate, a judge put up for the position by Italy. Initially Campinos had had no competition at all. Battistelli himself is no longer standing for election.

Fears that he is too close to Battistelli

The EPO is emphasising above all the smoothness of the election and the seamless handover of the reins of office in the summer. By contrast, before Battistelli was elected in 2009/2010, the Member States on the Administrative Council were for months unable to agree on a candidate.

At the same time, JUVE, the publishing house for legal information, was reporting on [mixed feeling](#) among the members in the light of Campinos's election. Some of them are afraid that Campinos is too close to Battistelli, who rapturously congratulated his successor. Nevertheless, "some of the Administrative Council clearly trust" Campinos "to resolve the conflicts with some of the staff and with the unions", so say the experts.