

Lack of EU Patent is Impeding Innovation

A recent study prepared by leading European Academics has found that the fragmented EU patent system is impeding innovation - which is undermining the EU's goal of becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. It is particularly challenging for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). However, there is reportedly hope that an EU Patent may be agreed by the end of 2009.

Currently, filing an EU patent can take twice as long as it does in the US or Japan, the cost being five times higher than in the US and three times that of Japan, with many companies resorting to bypassing the European system altogether and targetting the US and/or Japan. The study finds that to have any chance of catching up with the US and Japan, a single patent protection must be put in place.

The EU offers an EU Trademark and Design. Although there have been efforts for over twenty years to achieve an EU Patent, the realisation of it has proven elusive. This can largely be attributed to language issues. However, there is still hope for the community patent.

Incoming presidencies will take the case forward

It was high on the agenda for the French presidency, and while they failed to reach agreement during the term, the Czech Presidency is taking the case forward. Talks are also ongoing with the Swedes who will take over the presidency in the second half of 2009. Jonathan Zuck, President of the Association for Competitive Technology(Act) representing over 3,000 SMEs, is hopeful of a Community patent by the end of the Swedish Presidency in 2009.

For more on this see: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/study-fragmented-eu-patent-system-impedes-innovation/article-177887>

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/zuck-incomplete-single-market-puts-eu-competitors/article-177899>

The study can be found here <http://www.actonline.org/library/04-12-08.pdf>