

Europe-Asia Heads of Intellectual Property Offices Conference held in HK

Heads of European and Asian intellectual property (IP) offices gathers in Hong Kong today (February 1) in a regional conference jointly organised by the Europe Patent Office (EPO) and the Intellectual Property Department to exchange information on the latest developments in IP protection with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and other leading IP organisations.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the conference, the President of the Legislative Council, Mrs Rita Fan, said, “Every region has its own challenges in IP protection. In particular, IP is vital to supporting economic development in Asia.

“Strong IP protection reduces investment risk and thus enhances investor confidence. Attracting investors to develop locally-based research and development as well as creative industries can help Asian economies create a more sustainable base for longer-term economic development. This is one of the benefits of under-pinning our economic development with a strong IP protection regime.

“The EPO and the WIPO are the IP bodies who have the most expertise built up over many years and an understanding of the urgent issues faced every day in the developing world. I hope they will continue to develop technical assistance programmes for our Asian neighbours.”

The President of the EPO, Dr Alain Pompidou, said “Today’s conference will provide a unique opportunity to share information on the latest developments in the European and Asian IP offices and trilateral partners (US, Europe and Japan), exchange views on the challenges that IP offices are facing and discuss how co-operation can help overcome these. It is vital not only to improve coordination in

the field of cooperation but also to build up firm partnerships between IP offices to develop modern and efficient patent systems for the benefit of our respective industries and societies both in Asia and Europe.”

The officiating guests also included the Director General of Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, Ms Liew Woon Yin.

Entitled “Europe-Asia Heads of Intellectual Property Offices Conference”, the two-day conference is being held at the Regal Hongkong Hotel today and tomorrow (February 2).

The conference is a continual regional cooperative event pursuant to the success of the Europe-Asia Heads of IP Offices Conference held in Singapore in 2003. It brings together heads of IP offices from the EPO, the WIPO, the United States, the Mainland, Hong Kong and other Asian regions to a platform for networking and provides a basis for sharing ideas and solving problems.

Heads of IP offices from the EPO, the Mainland, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, France and Hong Kong spoke on recent developments and future trends of their respective IP offices. Asian regional patent offices including Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia exchanged information about challenges faced by their IP offices and discussed how international cooperation can help overcome them. The WIPO, and patent offices of Singapore and Australia shared ideas and followed up on the progress of automation tools and other technical cooperation among IP offices.

Ends/Tuesday, February 1, 2005