



**Mitteilung für die Presse  
Press Release  
Communiqué de presse**

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## **“A Europe of Innovation – Fit for the Future?” - European Patent Conference Convenes**

“Inventions are the raw material of the knowledge society. In Europe, we urgently need more innovations that are designed to meet the challenges of the future. This requires that we provide more effective patent protection”, declared Federal Minister of Justice Brigitte Zypries in Berlin today at the opening of the international conference “A Europe of Innovation – Fit for the Future?” Over 250 participants from government, industry, the justice sector, patent institutions and non-governmental organisations are attending the two-day event, which is taking place within the framework of Germany’s EU Presidency.

“We must provide innovative companies in Europe with a patent system that offers streamlined structures, appropriate costs and efficient procedures. Only in this way will we be able to tap the full innovative potential of our economies”, Ms. Zypries stated. “The German Presidency is ready to work closely with the European Commission and the other Member States to press forward with the reform debate, which has been deadlocked for years. We must not lose sight of our goal, which is to establish an EU-wide patent and uniform patent jurisdiction that deliver genuine added value to the current system”, Ms. Zypries added.

The German Federal Government – supported by German industry – has long demanded a European patent system that costs less and that enhances legal certainty. For this purpose, current procedures at the European Patent Office in Munich are to be expanded. The Federal Government is therefore expressly committed to ensuring that the London Agreement for reducing patent translation costs as well as the cross-border patent litigation system EPLA (European Patent Litigation Agreement) enter into force in the near future. The EPLA can also be broadened to cover a future Community patent. The EPLA and the

London Agreement constitute two supplementary agreements to the European Patent Convention. Through the London Agreement, the high costs of translation will be reduced on average by approximately 50%. The EPLA, in turn, seeks to establish uniform European jurisdiction in order to avoid divergent national rulings in patent proceedings.

The conference is being held at the *Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft* (House of German Business) and is organised jointly by the Federal Ministry of Justice and the Federation of German Industries. With this conference, the German Presidency is providing German and international decision-makers and experts in the field of patent policy with a forum to discuss urgently needed reforms to the patent system in Europe. Additional keynote speakers include Jürgen Thumann, President of the Federation of German Industries; Charlie McCreevy, EU Commissioner; Alain Pompidou, President of the European Patent Office; and Francis Gurry, Deputy Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization. In six forums, participants will focus on key issues including the protection of European inventions against piracy in Asia, the specific problems faced by small and medium-sized enterprises, and patent protection for new and emerging technologies such as biotechnology and information technology. Further information on the conference is available in English at <http://www.bmj.bund.de/patcon>.