



AIPPI's 125th Anniversary Celebration in Belgium

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Almost to the day, 125 years after the Constitutive Assembly of AIPPI was held in Brussels on 8 May 1987, the Belgian Group of AIPPI was honoured to launch a jubilee year of celebrations, by hosting a full day hybrid conference on 13 May in Brussels. This major international AIPPI event was jointly organised with AIPPI International and enjoyed the full support and cooperation of the International Bureau. The prospect of expert lectures and lively debates on the global and challenging theme of intellectual property & common welfare (health and environment) sparked the interest of almost 300 attendees. A nice opportunity to look beyond our day-to-day practice and place ourselves in a more global perspective indeed!



The morning session started off with a (historical) introduction to our current day intellectual property system, followed by a lecture regarding the wish for a balanced intellectual property system in view of the pressing, global issue of common welfare. During the second part of the morning, the attendees split up into smaller groups and took a deeper dive, either (i) into patent and trade secret protection, focussing on the specific dynamics surrounding pharmaceutical innovation and (compulsory) licensing, or (ii) into the intellectual property protection of

distinctive signs, which may have to deal with issues of public interest as well, as was shown through concrete examples.

The afternoon began with the session about intellectual property & health, where two keynote speeches, one by a representative of WIPO, the other by an academic researcher, gave the participants a global picture of the problems and complexities of health policies and the role of intellectual property rights (patents in particular). These presentations were particularly complete and balanced, including some ideas for possible fine-tuning certain aspects of such policies. The ensuing debate between these two keynote speakers and three further panellists, two from the industry and one from the European Parliament, was particularly lively and triggered quite some reactions from the audience.

The second-afternoon session touched upon the relationship between intellectual property and environmental / sustainability issues. Our keynote speakers in this session came from the European Commission and academia, both of which stressed the opportunities related to innovation and collaboration when addressing such important and global issues. A point that was also endorsed during the subsequent panel discussion, where the initial presenters were joined by panellists sharing some views from industry and also WIPO.



The study day ended with a presentation of the First Deputy Reporter general of AIPPI. He reminded the audience of our association's working methods, before focusing on various resolutions where AIPPI - often with a very relevant sense of anticipation - proposed balanced solutions in domains where intellectual property may have an impact on issues of common welfare.

A festive dinner and a performance by a Belgian music band in a theatre nearby the conference venue topped off this day of celebrations, which the organising committee hopes will have created a fond memory in the minds of those present, echoing what Eugène Pouillet, the first president of AIPPI, already had said in 1897:

"Let us this day set down the bases of an association which, founded in Brussels by a few men of goodwill, will spread slowly but surely throughout the universe and, when mature and powerful, will forever recall with gratitude its place of birth."

The Belgian group is looking forward to continuing the celebrations with all colleagues also later this year, *inter alia* during the upcoming international conference in San Francisco! See you there!



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