



Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe
Union des Confédérations de l'Industrie et des Employeurs d'Europe

Company Affairs Department
DFH/JPC/nd/5.1/4/1

8 January 1999

Mr Sean Fitzpatrick
Chairman of the Administrative Council
European Patent Office - EPO
Erhardtstraße 27
D-80298 München

Dear Mr Fitzpatrick,

RE: ENLARGEMENT OF THE EPO

UNICE is following closely the discussions on enlargement of the EPO. In UNICE's opinion, the current decision-making process in the EPO needs to be reviewed before any new country joins the organisation. Otherwise, UNICE fears that the Administrative Council of the EPO will be paralysed on many important subjects, because of the one-state one-vote rule.

A similar position has been adopted by UNICE in the context of European Union enlargement.

UNICE therefore welcomes the announcement by France that it intends to organise an intergovernmental conference in the coming months. This will be a golden opportunity to discuss and resolve the question of the EPO decision-making process prior to admission of new Member States.

UNICE therefore urges you not to take any decision on admission of new Member States before the intergovernmental conference takes place. We understand that this subject should be discussed at the next meeting of the Administrative Council meeting on 29 January 1999 when we hope to be able to use our observer status to voice our position on this.

Yours sincerely,

Dirk F. Hudig
Secretary General