

INCENTIVE

INCREASE IN COMPETITIVENESS OF ENTERPRISES BY ABSORPTION OF INVENTIONS IN EUROPE

An importance of consolidated movement of inventors in new EU member countries

prepared by

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Technology is the key to competitiveness of businesses and to economic growth of nations. Therefore, absorption of new inventions and innovations is of crucial importance for the development of national economies in the new EU member countries from the Central and Eastern European region. For the efficient absorption, it is necessary to have the internal intellectual potential of the countries available. This potential consists of creativity, competence, proficiency and commitment of a large number of inventors, innovators and rationalizers active in particular countries.

The technical progress based on new technologies and products is indispensable for increasing the competitiveness of industrial production and decreasing the unemployment, especially by founding local and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The availability of foreign technologies and products to national SMEs is substantially limited today, because of the extremely high prices of licenses under actual economic conditions in the new EU member countries. In this respect, the local supply of inventions can make a considerable basis for the technical and economic progress in this area. Therefore, the exclusive groups of populations, consisting of inventors and innovators, have to be motivated to a permanent creativity and supported in their efforts.

As the financial means and the logistic support given by the local administrations in the new EU member countries to science and technology are inadequate to meet the needs, inventors have to unite themselves in doing their jobs, independently of their professional status and opportunities. Founding inventors' associations is the simplest way to promote collective activity. The individual inventiveness can become multiplied when common (mutual) help is available!

Role and tasks of the inventors' associations in new EU member countries

In the in-transition countries, the inventors' associations play not only the role of an "inventors' trade union" but also have more general tasks, such as:

- influencing the development of science, technology and economy of particular countries,
- supporting the pro-innovative actions in the national economies and developing the technical creativity,
- initiating the improvement of legal, financial and tax regulations stimulating the inventiveness,
- popularization of inventive achievements as well as promotion of inventions all over the country and abroad,
- advising the inventors both in elaboration, application, marketing, implementation and industrial use of inventive projects,
- validating the inventions and innovations (by certified experts),
- representing inventors before the administration offices and courts,
- acquainting the inventors with the patent law and free market rules and with to-day technical achievements and trends, as well as
- bringing the inventors together to give them an opportunity for a meaningful exchange and for dealing with their Colleagues.

The above tasks are quite complex and need sometimes many measures to be accomplished and fulfilled. In particular, the inventors' associations have to:

- carry out research studies, analyses and assessments in the area of domestic inventiveness and lay respective desiderata before the state administration necessary for improving the competitiveness of the national economy ,
- initiate and organize innovative competitions, exhibitions and fairs all over the country and abroad,
- cooperate with central and local administrations, business organizations as well as other scientific and technical associations and societies in the area of supporting inventiveness as well as promotion and implementation of inventions,
- publish catalogues of inventions, guides for inventors, conference and seminar proceedings as well as journals (bulletins) devoted to inventiveness,
- initiate and aid the foundation of innovative SMEs both based on individual inventions and spin-of from research and university institutes, and finally,
- help inventors and innovative SMEs to get access to EU structural fond for development and investment .

To be able to fulfil the above statutory tasks, the associations have to incorporate not only inventors but also both highly skilled and experienced experts in each area of technology and economy (as personal members) as well as research and university institutes, innovative SMEs and industrial enterprises (as supporting members). The member fees are the solid source of the association income but some payments connected with inventive services, studies and assessments (especially for the administration), experts' reports and publications can be also accepted.

Experience of the existing inventors' associations as a base for founding the associations in new EU member countries

In the new EU member countries, the inventors' associations are to-day active in Poland and Hungary only. A good experience was gathered in the countries. This experience, together with the long-term experience of the inventors' associations in some old EU member countries (*e.g.* in Germany, France and Switzerland), can be advantageously used for successful foundation of inventors' associations in the remaining new EU member countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia). In the perspective, some future candidate countries (Croatia, Romania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria and even Turkey or Israel) have also to be involved in the project in the next step.

The inventors' associations have to be based on voluntary work rendered by elected members of the national councils (or steering committees) including positions of the president, vice-presidents, secretary general, treasurer and other members of the managing staff. This is necessary both for the political and economic independence of the associations and their efficiency.

It has to be stressed that substantial mentality differences observed between populations in the old and new EU member countries have to be taken into account. In particular, no general necessity for democracy and no public conviction to be efficient have to be expected in the new EU member countries. The circumstances can be hardly accepted by the West European citizens.

The inventors' associations in the new EU member countries will accept the necessity for training the domestic inventors how to deal under the free-market economy conditions, to protect the inventions efficiently, to search the markets, to license and transfer the technologies and, finally, to make profits. An extended educational program will be prepared. The lectures have to be delivered by invited professors and the workshops have to be carried by experienced experts. In particular, case studies containing examples of successfully completed projects will be demonstrated. The special techniques recommended for designing inventions and supporting creativity (*e.g.* TRIZ method) have also to be included in the training programs.

The technical, organizational and legal states of inventiveness in particular new EU member countries will be analyzed to find the best ways for convincing the most creative individuals to join the national inventors' associations. The local specific issues (*e.g.* women-inventors, young persons graduated in technical or natural sciences) will be also take into consideration, to activate particular social groups of a high level of unemployment.

Selected issues of foundation of the new inventors' associations

Some logistic difficulties have to be overcome at the first stage of the foundation of the new inventors' associations. The only opportunity to have contact with many inventors can be done only through national Patent Offices in

all new UE member countries. The primary consultations with the Offices made during the Invention Exhibitions at Geneva, Nuremberg and Budapest in 2004 are fully optimistic. Official letters to the particular Patent Offices (including informational materials on AEI) are necessary to ask the Offices for preparing first meetings of locally active inventors and innovative SMEs. The representatives of the Ministries for Economy have to be invited to take part in the meetings. The members of the AEI Steering Committee will participate in the meetings and convince the inventors as well as representatives of governmental bodies for grounding the national inventors' associations in all over the countries. In particular, model examples of statutes, member declarations and proposals of activity programs will be supplied to the organizers. Temporary national councils of the associations have to be elected during the meetings by member-establishers and the temporary statutes have to be adopted. As the second step, general assemblies (meetings) of the national inventors' associations have to be convoked.

Parallely, seminars and workshops will be prepared and carried out either for individual countries or for groups of countries gathered according to language similarity criterion, for example. Highly skilled lecturers will be necessary for the events. In this connection, a qualified informational material has to be also prepared for the participants. All over the questions and problems arising have to be explained and clarified both during the preparatory meetings, seminars and workshops and on the correspondence way as well.

After the preliminary preparations are completed, a Congress of AEI (Association of European Inventors) has to be arranged optionally in one of the new EU member countries, where participation costs are relatively low. The host country has to participate in the congress costs (10 %). The plenary lectures have to be delivered by invited lecturers. Not only successful inventors but also experienced entrepreneurs and patent attorneys employed in Patent Offices (including the European Patent Office) as well as members of administration (responsible for the inventiveness and economical progress in particular countries and in European Commission) have to be invited as lecturers.

The AEI Congress will give an opportunity for incorporation of the new inventors' associations to AEI.

SCHEDULE

Start of the INCENTIVE Project: 1st March 2005

No.	Item	Deadline, end of	Remarks
1	Preparation of informational material	June 2005	writing and printing
2	Contacts with national Patent Offices	June 2005	correspondence
3	Working visits	November 2005	2 AEI delegates each visit
4	Establishing national associations (national conventions)	March 2006	2-3 AEI delegates each convention
5	European AEI Congress	June 2006	200 participants
6	Report	September 2006	

Budget preliminary

No	Item	Assumptions	Cost, EUR	Remarks
1	Preparation of information material	100 pages in English and Russian, 500 pieces	9 000	including royalties of translators
2	Contacts with National Patent Offices	correspondence, phones, faxes, e-mails	1 200	
3	Working meetings, seminars workshops	6 countries, 3 days, 2 AEI delegates, 2-3 lecturers	19 600	travel, accommodation
4	Establishing national associations (conventions)	6 countries, 4 days, 3 AEI delegates	18 400	travel, accommodation
5	European Inventors` Congress	4 days, 10 lectures, 200 participants, congress book	144 000	50% of accommodation, full costs for 16 persons only
6	Detailed report	results of the project	6 800	with conclusions
7	Overheads		49 000	less than 25% of the total costs
Total			248 000	say: two-hundred-forty-eight-thousands EUR