

## Finland protects intellectual property rights

A Patent Congress that was organised in connection with the Vienna World Fair 1873 emphatically demanded that inventors be protected “throughout the civilised world”.

On the basis of the demand, preparations for a more intense international cooperation in the patent rights field were started. As a result of these efforts, the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property was signed in Paris 1883.

### **The Paris Convention**

According to the Article 1 of the Paris Convention, the parties to the Convention constitute a Union for the protection of industrial property. In the year of its foundation there were 11 signatory states. In spring 2007, a total of 171 states had acceded to the Convention.

In Finland, preparations for accession to this international industrial property union were started soon after Finland had gained independence. The opinion was that a well-functioning industrial property system would enhance industrialisation, encourage and stabilise the national economy and bring revenue to the state.

Finland joined the Paris Convention in 1921. At that point, two amendments had been made, one in Brussels 1900 and another in Washington 1911.

In accordance with the principle of continuous revision adopted in the convention, the text of the convention is revised and amended from time to time. The Paris Convention is a framework convention. It has been complemented by several international separate agreements in the field of industrial property.

### **The Berne Convention**

In 1886, another international framework convention seeking to protect the rights of artists was concluded: the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.

Also the Berne Convention has been revised and amended when necessary, and several international separate agreements have been made in the field of copyright.

Upon its conclusion in 1886, the Bern Convention was signed by 10 states. In spring 2007, there are 163 member states. Finland adhered to the Convention in 1928.

### **World Intellectual Property Organization WIPO**

For the administration of the Paris Convention, an International Secretariat was established in 1883. The same arrangement was made in 1886 when the Berne Convention was concluded.

Both Secretariats were situated in Berne and controlled by the Swiss government. In 1893, these Secretariats were amalgamated to form a new International Office that administered intellectual property rights and that was known as Bureaux Internationaux Réunis pour la Protection de la Propriété Intellectuelle, or BIRPI.

At the beginning of 1960, BIRPI moved from Berne to Geneva. In the same decade, the member states of these two conventions started preparations for the separation of BIRPI and the conventions administered by it (ten at the time) from the control of the Swiss government. They aimed at creating an international organisation in the field of intellectual property rights which would be controlled by the governments of the member states.

The Convention establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization was adopted in 1967 and entered into force in 1970. Finland was among the first ones to accede to the Convention and to acquire membership in the Organization in autumn 1970.

WIPO, or the World Intellectual Property Organization, administers at the moment 24 international conventions within industrial property and copyright. It has 184 member states. Since 1974, WIPO has held the status of a UN specialized agency.

Thus, WIPO with its history dating back to 1883 and to the establishment of a Secretariat to the Paris Convention is one of the oldest international administrative bodies in the world. It has operated without interruption for over 120 years and Finland has participated in its operations right from her first steps as an independent state.

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Kastehelmi Nikkanen