

Grundlag for erhvervs- og vækstminister Ole Sohns velkomsttale ved EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD, den 14. juni 2012, Skuespilhuset, København

[Kun det talte ord gælder]

Your Royal Highnesses,

Mr President of the European Patent Office,

Representatives of national parliaments and the Commission,

Ambassadors,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to welcome you all to the European Inventor Award 2012 here at the Royal Danish Playhouse in Copenhagen.

Here in Denmark, we refer to this award as the patent world's Oscar.

That is why I am very pleased to see so many business people and stakeholders have chosen to join us and honour the inventors here today.

The drivers behind innovation are inventors. Today's award ceremony honours those that are passionate about exploring the unknown, finding solutions and making new discoveries that benefit our society.

The success and improvement of our society is dependent on inventors. I hope that today's award ceremony will inspire more inventors and companies to invest in innovation.

Innovation creates progress and prosperity which benefits all of us.

Innovation has for example a key role in finding new ways to solve some of the global challenges which we are facing today, for example in regards to climate, healthcare and social inclusion.

In the current times of economic crisis, the demand for new solutions and new innovations is even more important.

Today, more than ever, we need to focus on ways to encourage growth.

Innovation and knowledge is the most important raw material that Danish and European companies have at their disposal. This raw material can be exploited to help businesses grow and create new jobs that are needed across Denmark and Europe.

For instance, we know in Denmark that the companies that are active within the area of intellectual property rights accounted for 49 per cent of Danish sales in 2009 and that they employ over 40 per cent of the total Danish workforce.

In order to help companies take advantage of their innovations, the effectiveness of the patent system is crucial in order to ensure a return on their investment.

The patent system provides the protection of new ideas that acts as an incentive to invest further in innovation and progress.

We are at the moment working hard to reform the European Patent System.

An agreement on reforming the European patent system would strengthen European business in the face of global competition.

According to the Commission it costs up to 36.000 euro to take out a patent in the EU, while the corresponding price in US is as low as 2000 euro. In China the price is even lower - 600 euro.

Looking at these numbers it doesn't take an expert to conclude that this makes it far less attractive to innovate in the EU than elsewhere.

We must change this, if we want the EU to get back on the growth track.

There is one last outstanding issue – the question of where the central division of the courts first instance should be located.

As I told my colleagues in the Council a couple of weeks ago; “if you can't get the one you love you must love the one you get”. This is also the case in relations to the location of the central division

We need to find a solution and I am confident that all the participation member states will respect the deadline which has been set by the heads of state; to find a solution before the end of this month.

As Danish author and architect, Poul Henningsen, once said: “The future comes by itself, progress doesn't”.

Today’s inventors and the business they represent will all benefit from the progress which will be achieved if we find a solution to this last outstanding issue in the European Patent Reform.

With these words I am looking forward to learn more about today’s nominees, and I congratulate in advance the winners. Thank you.