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Swedish companies speak with one voice:

New patent system essential to Europe's competitiveness

The current rules governing patent applications in Europe imply unnecessary costs and administration. According to a survey carried out by the Swedish consulting firm Awapatent, this is the opinion of three out of four research-intensive companies, who demand a new EU-based patent system.

The translation of detailed patent applications as well as the differences between national patent systems are the source of high costs and unnecessary administration. Swedish and European companies blame the current situation on the inability of the EU countries – despite years of negotiating - to agree on a new common patent system.

– Imagine every state in the USA having its own patent authority and its own legislation. It is obvious to everyone that this would be an inefficient system that would not promote entrepreneurship. In Europe we cling to precisely this type of system. Our survey shows that companies are very critical of the inability of the political leadership to reach an agreement on this matter, says Stefan Hjelmqwist, Marketing Manager at Awapatent.

The survey covered 55 Swedish and European companies in the areas of biotech and telecom. Asked if a Community or EC patent would have a positive or negative impact on the company, 75 percent said it would have a positive impact, 22 percent were not sure and only 3.6 percent believed it would have a negative impact. The advantages of the EU Commission proposal for a Community patent, as seen by the surveyed companies, were lower costs (64 percent), less administration (49 percent), increased competitiveness (28 percent) and shorter processing times (22 percent).

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For pictures and other press information concerning Awapatent visit: www.awapatent.com

Awapatent AB is one of Europe's leading consulting companies in Intellectual Property Rights issues (patents, design registration, trademark protection), IT law and bio-science law. Clients include Swedish and foreign industrial companies. Awapatent has approximately 250 employees and reported sales of SEK 368 million for 2001. The company's head office is in Malmö, Sweden.