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ADVANCING THE BUSINESS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GLOBALLY



## Let's Innovate— Imagining LESI For The Future

By Audrey Yap, President, LES International



**A** bright and happy New Year 2021! It gives great joy to be amongst the first to greet you as your LESI President given the revised timing of our Global News!

A New year gives rise to novel opportunities, allowing me to think and dare to imagine LESI for better, for growth, for prosperity, for success. If anything, the pandemic has taught us the necessity to be innovative and imaginative as history is accelerating and moving at a remarkable rate. With this, the need to understand the increasing complexity of the world we now live in takes on more importance as we see changes across science, economics, geopolitics, legal and business. Trying to remain in the linear way of thinking or in the forms we were comfortable with in the past, like physical national society visits, is too static and appears almost antiquated today. This is not to say the desire for human interaction diminishes. To the contrary, the faster we react and evolve with the changing realities, the stronger we will emerge in the new normal after the health crisis recedes. That is my desire as president in COVID-19 times.

The year 2020 has flown by and so much has happened since I took office in May 2020, it seems like it has been longer than seven months!

### LESI Online Activities

I am pleased to report that by year-end 2020, LESI, together with national societies, has organized over 80 webinars since May. These transpired across the various time zones and different regions. I also had the pleasure of welcoming participants at two major virtual regional conferences in the last quarter of last year: the LES USA-Canada Annual Meeting and the LES Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, both held in October. We also provided commentators to speak at WIPO events (myself included!) for WIPO's Workshop on IP strategies, and collaborated with INAPI and LES Chile for an online Workshop on 1 December 2020, where I gave the opening speech on IP licensing. In addition, there have been many national society level activities that didn't make it to our shared calendar but created much buzz within national societies.

One of the activities organized was the inaugural *les Nouvelles* live! for the June edition, an innovative webinar to allow interaction with the authors of *les Nouvelles* and our editor David Drews. The response was remarkable. We have since had another for the September *les Nouvelles* thus starting a trend that will likely continue.

An interim report on the progress of The President's Let's Innovate Challenge was given on 19 November 2020 at the second Committee Leadership meeting which I chaired, attended by 66 LESI leaders (amazing turnout!). 26 events have been listed currently as high scores. There is still time for final tabulations before the closing in February 2021, so I encourage all committees and national societies to keep up this great effort to organize virtual events!

We achieved this much without incurring significant costs, living well within our limited resources, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, and we are only about halfway through this presidential term. To me, it is not about being fearful about having limited resources but finding innovative ways to deal with our current challenges. I believe in seeing the rainbow through the rain.

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Dear Friends of LESI,

It is my great honor and privilege to invite you to join our LESI Virtual Annual Meeting being held on 27/28 May 2021.

If you didn't have the hassle of commuting, loss of time or jet lag, how would you maximize your energy, hours and opportunities?

In the spirit of the tagline "Let's Innovate" we are planning a unique and innovative experience—so power up for a 24-hour Marathon event! As the world rotates and illuminates it with great speakers, engaging panels, unique networking opportunities and social programs. Don't forget to save the date!

Please join us in this virtual world, where an LESI friend or a great talk is just a touch away!

With very best wishes,  
Audrey Yap, LESI President

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### Quick Links:

[www.lesi.org](http://www.lesi.org)

[www.lesi.org/les-nouvelles](http://www.lesi.org/les-nouvelles)

[www.lesi.org/les-societies](http://www.lesi.org/les-societies)

[www.les-europe.org](http://www.les-europe.org)

[www.les-asiapacific.org](http://www.les-asiapacific.org)

### Call For Content

We request contributions from all societies and individuals about important events, changes in the law in your country or region, conferences, annual meetings, board changes, and the like from your society. You can submit articles or announcements to the editor or use the form on the website at the following address: [www.lesi.org/les-societies/les-global-news/submission-form](http://www.lesi.org/les-societies/les-global-news/submission-form).

Deadlines: December 1, March 1,  
June 1 and September 1

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### Collaborations

It was with much pleasure and pride that President António Campinos and I signed our first joint WorkPlan between LESI and EPO on 16 November 2020 (see special segment for full report <https://www.lesi.org/about/epo-workplan>). This is an important milestone for LESI to be acknowledged as a significant partner to catalyze value extraction from IP for SMEs and businesses globally. What is key is that this encourages greater cross-network exchanges between the two organizations. The HGE Task force was constituted as the coordinating LESI Task Force consistent with Article 4.1 of the EPO-LESI MOU and will liaise with the relevant LESI Committees to organize and conduct activities. I acknowledge the hard work of the HGE Task Force core team members who made this happen—Thomas Bereuter, Ichiro Nakatomi, Chiew Yu Sarn and Juergen Graner. I am also delighted to say that as LESI monitors its key statistics in digital engagement, our announcement of this collaboration saw a distinct spike across the various social media, with an increase of 83.8 percent in profile visits to our website, the top tweet in November on Twitter, and an increase in new followers in *LinkedIn*.

During my term as President, we have not only pursued and moved forward with our relationship with EPO as evidenced by Workplan 2020/2021, but we have also had numerous engagements with WIPO at various levels and across different departments, including the WIPO Arbitration Centre, the SME resource unit, and the WIPO Academy. I have personally reached out and corresponded formally with the new Director General of WIPO, Mr. Daren Tang, who is supportive of progressing our relationship. I am optimistic we will see a renewal of the WIPO-LESI collaboration soon.

We have also signed a Collaboration with the Moolman Institute for Financial Modeling courses <https://www.lesi.org/events/financial-modeling-courses>. As reported earlier, we entered into an MOU with UniSmart/University of Padua and the Korean incubator Venturus. We are also collaborating with the ASEAN Young Scientist Network to run courses through the efforts of the LESI IUGT Committee.

Moving forward, we are in the process of identifying more cooperation opportunities with various IPOs as initiated by national societies. Such collaborations bring value to national societies and enhance the LESI brand as the association of choice in the field of licensing and the business of IP. Indeed, watch this space as we expect exciting news to bring to you!

### Engaging National Societies

Recognizing I had to pivot and be innovative in my approach to national society visits as LESI President during the pandemic, given travel is not a feasible option, I initiated and launched regular virtual National Presidents Council meetings. To date we have had four very successful meetings with an average of 75-80 percent attendance rate of national presidents. This has allowed national presidents to directly share information taking place around the globe within the LES family. Likewise, it enabled me to not only provide timely updates on developments and my activities, in particular progress made by the President's Task Force, but also a channel for the LESI board and committee leaders to reach out to discuss matters taking place at the international level. Responses from the national presidents have been enthusiastic, as seen by the high attendance rate. Feedback includes comments that they have never felt more connected as an LES community and the ability to dialogue directly with the LESI President on a regular basis was much appreciated.

### Engagement

My approach has been to harness the energy of as many of our over 8,000 members worldwide as possible. It is amazing to see the energy unleashed when we involve more LES members and leaders at all levels, and lead and empower them to take action. It is this optimism and energy of "grassroots LES" that have brought us this far.

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I have also introduced a policy of greater engagement between LESI and its national societies. For a long time, the LESI board has been asking the question what do national societies want from LESI. In my term I have progressed this by responding specifically to national society requests for support of national activities where possible, in particular in their local outreach where the significance of being part of an international organization is compelling. I am optimistic these will bear fruit in the short to medium term.

COVID-19 stormed into my term uninvited and unwelcomed. But it allowed me to strategize for new approaches and test the determination of our collective leadership to do more with less, to recognize within the indomitable quest to not only survive

but thrive, given the opportunity, with the right direction. It sounds simple but it has had its challenges. This surge of activity reported above has far-reaching value to our organization LESI and I believe relevance on the international IP commercialization landscape. Although there are naysayers who prophesied a lot of gloom for this term, I count myself blessed that after the initial struggle, the radical changes I had to make in my approach to the Presidency has had a beautiful result.

Here's to an amazing 2021! May it bring light and joy to the LESI family. ■

Audrey Yap

President, Licensing Executive Society International

## EPO And LESI Strengthen Their Cooperation

**O**n November 16, 2020, the European Patent Office (EPO) and LESI signed the first joint workplan in furtherance of a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed last year. Workplan 2020/2021 was signed by LESI President Audrey Yap and EPO President António Campinos during a video conference.

Both organizations developed the workplan under the Memorandum of Understanding entered into in Miami in January 2019, which focuses on IP training and resources for high-growth technology businesses and their stakeholders, including investors, research institutions and advisors. The main purpose is to raise awareness of IP and help innovators around the world make better use of the European patent system. It aims to foster innovation globally, making IP the underlying asset driving commercial success and growth.

Core initiatives will be coordinated around future joint events following the success of last year's EPO-LESI High-growth Technology Business conference. The increased importance of digital events and resources has been given due prominence in the workplan.

During the meeting, President Campinos emphasized the importance of strengthening the co-operation with LESI in helping businesses overcome the current economic crisis by investing in R&D and making the best possible use of patented inventions and the IP system as a whole. Special attention was given to the role of IP in path-breaking innovation and high growth among small and medium-sized enterprises.

LESI President Audrey Yap concurred, stating that in these unprecedented times many inventions and new technologies have been and continue to be created by SMEs. This is consistent with the LESI President's theme to catalyze a movement to educate, strengthen, support and encourage enterprises to use IP for business growth, *i.e.*, her Let's Innovate! initiative.

The cooperation covers over 30 activities including conferences, trainings, seminars and joint publications. During the video conference Telmo Vilela, Principal Director, International Cooperation and Patent Academy EPO described LESI as the best partner for this endeavor. This was supported by Xavier Seuba, Director of the European Patent Academy & EQE.

The EPO-LESI workplan encourages cross-network exchanges and lists new areas to foster sharing of knowledge, particularly in getting patented technology into the marketplace. The increased importance of digital events and resources has been given due prominence in the workplan as a consequence of COVID. We believe many of these activities planned to be delivered online will spread such information faster and more widespread as we deploy digital means and technology to proliferate this knowledge and share resources. In this regard PatLib 2.0 would continue to be a valuable hub for sharing of information across its centers in Europe and globally.

LESI President Audrey Yap touched on the alignment of common goals between the organizations, in particular with EPO's Strategic Plan 2023, which sets out to effectively coordinate with international organizations like LESI. LESI also aims to assist in furthering knowledge of IP with a view toward its optimum employment on a worldwide basis. The signing of the workplan is therefore a significant milestone for LESI as it reflects the implementation of the collaboration to serve these purposes.

John Paul, President-Elect LESI, also in attendance at the virtual event, stated after the signing of the workplan that it's great that LESI and the EPO will be working closely together on technology commercialization initiatives in the coming year.

Other LESI Leaders in attendance included Ichiro Nakatomi, incoming President-Elect and Co-Chair, HGE Task Force, now established under the Workplan 2020/2021 as the coordinating team, and Francisco Valesco, Chair, LES European National Presidents Council and national president for LES Spain and Portugal. ■



LESI President Audrey Yap and EPO President António Campinos signed a Workplan 2020/2021 during a video conference.