

Brussels, 27 June 2011

Joint Statement of Commissioner Michel Barnier and Minister of State Zoltán Cséfalvay, Chairman of the Competitiveness Council, on unitary patent protection

Today the Council took a crucial step in improving the European patent system. Member States have agreed on the two regulations implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of unitary patent protection.

Securing a breakthrough in this difficult dossier has been a top priority of the Hungarian Presidency. Minister of State Mr. Zoltán Cséfalvay, chairing the Council meeting, stated: "This is the final, critical contribution of the Hungarian Presidency to achieving a simpler, cheaper and more robust patent system in the EU that eluded us for decades. The new system shall help European companies attract investment into their innovative activities by dramatically shortening and simplifying the procedure of obtaining patent protection. Building on the achievements of the Belgian Presidency and the Commission, we went further than expected in a mere six months – from agreement on the enhanced cooperation to closing the first step in the legislative procedure."

Creating a simpler and more accessible patent system is also a top priority of the Single Market Act. Commissioner Michel Barnier said "We are now entering the home straight. Working closely with the European Parliament, the final objective – the creation of unitary patent protection - is within reach. If we maintain our present momentum and cooperative spirit, a unitary patent in Europe could be a reality within the next two years. I pay tribute to the immense and continued efforts of the Hungarian Presidency on this file."

The Presidency and the Commissioner are particularly satisfied that the 25 Member States participating in this process have agreed on the shape and form of the future European unitary patent, including its translation regime.

During the Hungarian Presidency the Council has not only managed to put the enhanced cooperation on track in March, but have also achieved this major political agreement among the Member States. We must also thank the Member States who have shown political commitment and good will, which have made all this happen today.

With the commitment of the Polish Presidency to work hard together with the delegations, the European Parliament and the Commission, a final political agreement can be reached on the patent reform by the end of 2011.