

# CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION WELCOMES HUNGARIAN LAWYERS

The phrase international intellectual property is a mouthful in almost any language—but it translates almost universally into patents and trademarks. Laws differ from country to country, however, and it was a desire to learn more about those differences which brought Andras Szecskay to Canada. The 42-year old patent lawyer from Budapest recently spent three months on a work-study internship with Smart and Biggar of Ottawa, one of Canada's oldest and largest exclusive patent and trademark law firms.

Szecskay was one of 13 Hungarian lawyers studying under the Canadian Bar Association's Canada-Eastern Europe Lawyers' Internship Program, funded in part by the External Affairs Department's Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe. He is among the oldest of the visiting Hungarian lawyers. He is also one of the most experienced. Szecskay—who speaks Hungarian, Russian, German and English—spent five years studying law in the southern Hungarian university city of Szeged, before joining one of the largest patent law firms in his country. Since then, his work has taken him to many parts of Europe, as well as Canada and the United States.

"Patent law is similar, but not quite the same," he says, "and the organizations are certainly different. In Hungary, for now, the lawyers are allowed to work only in the framework of a lawyers' cooperative. It is not a partnership, but from the beginning of next year, we will be allowed to have a private practice or to create partnerships." Another difference, he says is the way lawyers are treated. They are much more respected in Canada, he discovered, than in Eastern Europe.

"The most interesting thing I've seen is the office configuration, which is much more developed in Canada," says Szecskay. Higher technology was restricted in Hungary, he went on, although the restrictions will soon be lifted; "We will have bigger and better developed capacity in computers. We have word processing

machines and some smaller capacity computers, but what we lack is these huge mainframes."

In Canada, he points out, a lawyer doing a search for a company can connect his computer to the registration office through a modem. "If you are searching for a trademark, you don't have to leave your room. It saves a lot of work," he says. "The end result of the search is more complete."

Szecskay was impressed with other ways technology can lighten a lawyer's workload: "For instance, how they produce the results of a hearing or a trial: In Hungary you can get the minutes after

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"The establishment of legal institutions  
and processes is crucial to democratic  
development, and the West can assist."

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Rt. Hon. Joe Clark

about a month—maybe the fifth or sixth carbon copy—and often you can't read it at all. Here, in two or three days you can get a complete set of the minutes on floppy diskette, which you can put into your computer. You don't have to read thousands of pages looking for a certain part of the minutes."

Szecskay was shepherded by one of Smart and Biggar's senior partners, Tom Kelly, who sees the mutual benefits: "Our firm is very much into international business and it is important that we develop relationships with law firms all over the world," says Kelly. "We need to know people in Hungary, for instance, to secure Hungarian patents for our Canadian clients. We get to know and trust a firm there, someone we can work with. They get to know and trust us, and depend on us to obtain Canadian patents for their Hungarian clients. It works both ways." ■