

alleged, inter alia, that further actions of the respondent (third party) could last for at least a further six years. The board found that the fact that litigation in the Belgian legal system was extremely long until the final decision is reached could not influence the outcome of the appeal proceedings, because it was unclear how long these proceedings would actually take and what consequences these would have for the parties.

The board held in **T 146/82** (OJ 1985, 267) that if, in accordance with R. 13(3) EPC 1973, the EPO set a date on which it intended to continue the proceedings for the grant of the European patent, the date might be varied or the order staying the proceedings might be discharged at the subsequent request of the applicant or of the third party who applied for the order.