

Staff Profiles

TABLE OF CONTENT

Ann De Clercq, PhD	4	Lieve Coenegrachts, PhD	24
Liesbet Paemen, PhD	6	Verónica Rojas de la Parra, PhD	25
Sakina Bounaga, PhD	8	Jacek Kepa, PhD	26
Andrej Michalík, PhD	10	Ann Viaene, PhD	27
Koen Vanhalst, PhD	12	ir. Krista Nerinckx, PhD	28
Jeffrey (Jeff) Gyi, PhD	14	Filip Van Lysebetten, PhD	29
ir. Caroline Hennin, PhD	15	Anne-Lore Bex, MSc	30
ir. Kris Pappaert, PhD	16	ir. Yannick Ureel, PhD	31
ir. David Lesthaeghe, PhD	17	Tom Liessens	32
ir. Hans Goesaert, PhD	18	Joost Muylle	33
Sarah Thysen, PhD	19	Thomas Baudewijn	35
Giel Vandemoortele, PhD	20	Wiebeke De Wachter	36
ir. Sven Bogaerts, PhD	21	Nathalie Gailliaert	37
ir. Delphine Debruyne, PhD	22	Emily Van Mulders	38
Annelies De Clercq, PhD	23		



TEAM

De Clercq & Partners is a team of experienced and highly motivated European and Belgian Patent Attorneys, Benelux and European Trademark & Design Attorneys and legal counsels, backed up by trainee patent attorneys and dedicated administrative assistants.

The combination of high level scientific skills and strong expertise in intellectual property law enables us to provide you with the highest standards of service. We have strong scientific, technological, legal and industry backgrounds, particularly in respect to:

- Life Sciences and Biotechnology
- Software including AI, and Electronics
- Engineering and Materials
- Chemistry, Pharmaceuticals, Agrochemicals, Polymer
- Chemistry, Industrial Chemistry and Process Engineering
- Medical Technology and Medical Devices
- Food and beverages, FMCG

Our experts have strong academic and technological credentials with PhD degrees in science and/or LL.M. degrees in intellectual property law, and in some cases industry and MBA experience as well.

Because of our fluency in languages, including English, French, Dutch, Slovak and Spanish, we offer a full range of intellectual property services to clients around the globe.

The firm has offices in Sint-Martens-Latem, Leuven and Hasselt (Belgium), all very close to Europe's capital city of Brussels. De Clercq & Partners is as such situated in the center of Europe within short travelling distance of the two main European Patent Offices in Munich and The Hague.

Over the years, De Clercq & Partners has gathered many accolades such as MIP's Belgian Prosecution Firm of the Year 2025. The World Trademark Review (WTR) considers us a Leading Belgian Trademark Firm.

Moreover, the firm is ranked in the top tier by the IAM Patent 1000 Guide as well as by Managing Intellectual Property (MIP).



Ann De Clercq, PhD

**FOUNDING PARTNER
EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE**

Ann De Clercq holds a Licentiate in Biology (Zoology) and PhD in Plant Molecular Biology from the University of Ghent, Belgium at the Laboratory of Genetics, Department of Plant Molecular Biology (under supervision of Prof. Van Montagu and Prof. Joel Vandekerckhove) carried out in collaboration with Plant Genetic Systems (PGS). After her PhD she worked as a substantive examiner at the European Patent Office in Munich, Germany. She afterwards headed the Patent Department of Innogenetics NV, (Belgium) a biotech company active in human healthcare. She is a qualified Belgian (2000) and European Patent Attorney (1995). In 2023, Ann successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the Politecnico di Milano. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

End 1998, she founded Ann De Clercq & Co BVBA and as from 2001 De Clercq & Partners CVBA.

Managing Intellectual Property (MIP) singled out Ann every year as Leading IP Star from 2017 to 2025. Moreover she was listed in MIP's Top 250 Women in IP for the last eight years and was named as Global Leader repeatedly in the last six editions of the IAM Patent 1000 Guide.



“ Ann De Clercq is a nationally renowned visionary, and her encyclopaedic command of biotechnology and life sciences, and their intersection with patent law, has cemented her place as a leading expert.

IAM PATENT 1000 (2025)

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of Belgian patent applications as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Legal IP advice on Belgian patents
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Validations of European patents in Belgium as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Filing and prosecuting SPC's in Belgium and advising on SPC's in general
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- IP litigation experience in Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Japan
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

Ann was elected Deputy Secretary General of the Institute of Professional Representatives before the European Patent Office (epi), BE epi Litigation Committee member and epi council member for Belgium for the term 2023-2026.

Furthermore, Ann is a board member of the Flanders' Chamber of Commerce and industry East Flanders (VOKA), a member of LES and AIPPI and a member of the AIPPI Standing Committees Patents and Biotech International. Ann has lectured on several IP related topics and is one of the authors of 'European SPCs Unravelling: A Practitioner's Guide to Supplementary Protection Certificates in Europe' (Second Edition).

LANGUAGES

Ann is a native Dutch speaker and is very fluent in English and fluent in French and German.

COMPETENCES

Ann has extensive patent practice experience in all fields of biotechnology and related life sciences as well as mechanical engineering inventions. For instance, Ann has worked in the fields of biochemistry, molecular and cellular biology, biopharmaceuticals and chemistry. She has particular knowledge and expertise in the area of recombinant, microorganisms, genetically modified plants and animals, protein chemistry, stem cells, regenerative cell therapy, diagnostic assays, proteomics, biomarkers, diagnostics including nucleic acid- and protein-based diagnostic and screening assays, pharmaceuticals, genome editing, food processing, medical kits, veterinary products and others.



IAM GLOBAL LEADER 2025 & 2026 AND RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



PATENT STAR 2025



TOP 250 WOMEN IN IP



LAWYER OF 2025 – PATENT



Liesbet Paemen, PhD

PARTNER
EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Liesbet Paemen holds a PhD in Animal Biology from the University of Leuven, Belgium. She has several years of postdoctoral experience at the Department of Neuroimmunology at the State University of New York and at the Department of Molecular Immunology of the REGA Institute (University of Leuven, Belgium).

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in 2008, Liesbet worked as a patent counsel in the Intellectual Property Department of Bayer Cropscience NV and headed the biotech IP department in the firm Bird Goën & Co.

In 2010 Liesbet became a partner to the firm and is head of the Leuven Branch of De Clercq & Partners. She is a qualified European Patent Attorney. In 2023, Liesbet successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the Politecnico di Milano. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

Liesbet was repeatedly praised in the IAM Patent 1000 and was named Global Leader for the last eight years for her skills both as a Patent Attorney and as lecturer.



“Liesbet Paemen is a key asset to the firm’s IP offering, enriching it with unparalleled in-house counsel experience for global leaders in industry and serving as an IP expert entrusted by the Belgian courts.”

IAM PATENT 1000 (2025)

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Acting as an independent expert for the Belgian courts in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts in intellectual property matters
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

Liesbet often lectures on several IP related topics at conferences and is a lecturer at the University of Leuven, the University of Antwerp and the CEIPI course (ie.net in Antwerp). She is a member of LES and AIPPI.

LANGUAGES

Liesbet is a native Dutch and English speaker, she is fluent in French, and has knowledge of German and Spanish.

COMPETENCES

Liesbet has experience in handling intellectual property issues in different fields including medical devices, biomedical, agricultural and industrial biotechnology, plant molecular biology, modified plants and animals, biologics, cellular therapy, genome editing, screening systems and diagnostic methods, and renewable energy.

IAM
GLOBAL LEADERS

**IAM GLOBAL LEADER 2025 & 2026
AND RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL**



Sakina Bounaga, PhD

PARTNER
EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Sakina Bounaga holds a PhD in Bioorganic Chemistry from the University of Huddersfield, UK. She has a Master of Advanced Studies in Chemistry of Bio-molecules from the University of Montpellier, France, and holds a Master in Plant Chemistry and Biology from the University of Perpignan, France.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners, Sakina was a Senior Scientist and Project Leader at Cropdesign N.V., a leading Belgian biotech company.

Sakina joined De Clercq & Partners in 2001 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2006. She became a partner in 2010. In 2023, Sakina successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the Politecnico di Milano. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

Sakina has been praised repeatedly in the IAM Patent 1000 as an extraordinarily skilled Patent Attorney in Chemistry.



“ A striking litigator who brings invaluable academic prowess and specialist knowledge of science and technology to secure patrons’ business needs; she’s making great strides where intellectual property meets organic, polymer and pharmaceutical chemistry.

IAM PATENT 1000 2024

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- IP due diligence and advice on licensing and
- IP acquisitions
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

Sakina often lectures at conferences and she is a member of LES and AIPPI.

LANGUAGES

Sakina is a native French speaker and she is fluent in English. She also has working knowledge of Dutch and German.

COMPETENCES

Sakina has scientific experience in various fields of technology including chemistry, life sciences, material sciences, as well as mechanical engineering inventions, and in particular in organic and inorganic chemistry, polymer chemistry, small molecules, pharmaceutical chemistry, agrochemistry, food processing, molecular and cellular biology, biochemistry and biotechnology.

 **IAM**
1000
RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



Andrej Michalík, PhD

PARTNER
EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Andrej holds a Master of Science degree in Chemistry and Biochemistry from Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, as well as a PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Antwerp, Belgium, under the supervision of Prof. Christine Van Broeckhoven (Flemish Institute for Biotechnology, VIB).

He joined De Clercq & Partners in 2004 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2008. In 2017, Andrej became partner to the firm. Two years later in 2019, he successfully obtained the Diploma on Patent Litigation in Europe, a course coordinated by CEIPI at the University of Strasbourg. Andrej has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

IAM Patent 1000 recommends Andrej for his skills as a patent attorney.



“ A mastermind of all things pertaining to biotechnology, biochemistry and pharmaceuticals, Andrej Michalík is entrusted with dealing with the fine details and complexities of patent matters affecting medicine and medical technology, owing to his reputation as “an excellent and highly responsive patent attorney”.

IAM PATENT 1000 (2025)

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General and strategic advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

Andrej holds professional mandates within epi, including Belgian full member of the European Practice Committee (EPPC). Furthermore, he is a member of LES. Andrej has often lectured at conferences on several IP related topics and he is also a lecturer at the CEIPI courses (ie.net in Antwerp) and the Advanced Master in Biotech and MedTech Ventures of Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, and the BioBusiness Accelerator Programme of HELIS Academy for patent attorney trainees.

LANGUAGES

Andrej is a native Slovak speaker, is very fluent in English and fluent in Dutch and Czech. He also has a working knowledge of German.

COMPETENCES

Biotechnology, biochemistry, molecular and cellular biology, biopharmaceuticals and chemistry including organic chemistry and pharmaceuticals. He has particular knowledge and expertise in the area of recombinant microorganisms, genetically modified plants and animals, stem cells, regenerative cell therapy, in vitro cell-based assays, proteomics, peptides, glycoproteins, biomarkers, genome editing, diagnostics including nucleic acid- and protein-based diagnostic and screening assays, immune cell therapy, vaccines, organic chemistry and pharmaceuticals, food processing and personal care products.

IAM
1000
RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



Koen Vanhalst, PhD

PARTNER
EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Koen Vanhalst holds a PhD in Biotechnology from the University of Ghent, Belgium, at the Department of Molecular Biomedical Research, Molecular Cell Biology Unit under Prof. Dr. F. Van Roy of the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB). Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in 2007, Koen worked for 4 years as an Examiner in the European Patent Office (The Hague Branch), where he was involved in both Search and Substantive Examination of patent applications in the field of Biotechnology in general and Medical Diagnostics in particular.

He qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2009 and qualified as a Belgian Patent Attorney in 2011. In 2017, Koen became partner to the firm. In 2023, he successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from Politecnico di Milano and has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

Koen has been repeatedly praised in the IAM Patent 1000 since 2018 and was named as Global Leader in IAM Strategy 300 from 2023-2025. In 2019, Koen was an MIP rising star and since 2020, he is also named MIP IP Star.



“ A life sciences all-rounder, Koen Vanhalst is celebrated as “a formidable practitioner who gets the science across quickly and applies his comprehensive knowledge of European patent law to get the best results possible”.

IAM PATENT 1000 (2025)

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of Belgian patent applications as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Validations of European patents in Belgium as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Filing and prosecuting SPC's in Belgium and advising on SPC's in general
- Legal IP advice on Belgian Patents
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management and general strategic
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

Koen is a member of the Flemish Advisory Council for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and of the Belgian Council for Intellectual Property. He is also a Board member of AIPPI Belgium and a member of the Standing Committee Biotech of AIPPI International. Koen was elected as BE member of the Institute of Professional Representatives before the European Patent Office (epi) Biotech committee for the term 2023-2026 and in 2021 as Vice-President of the Council of the Institute of Belgian Patent Attorneys. Since 2015, Koen is a guest professor at Ghent University where he lectures Intellectual Property to Master students in Plant Biotechnology.

LANGUAGES

Koen is a native Dutch speaker. He is also very fluent in English and French and has a working knowledge of German.

COMPETENCES

Koen is active in all areas of life sciences including for example: biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, genome editing, pharmaceutical formulations, medical technologies, bioinformatics, agricultural food and nutritional technologies, green energy, clean-tech, and water, soil and waste treatment.



Defensive patent aggregation, IP management consultancy, Legal, Licensing, Technology transfer





Jeffrey (Jeff) Gyi, PhD

**EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE**

Jeff has a degree in Biochemistry and Chemistry from the University of Sheffield, UK, and a PhD in Pharmacy (Biophysics in medicinal chemistry) from the University of Manchester, UK. He gained postdoctoral experience in biophysical molecular modelling, systems and programming from the MRC National Institute of Medical Research, London, UK.

Jeff joined De Clercq & Partners in 2002 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2010. Jeff successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from Politecnico di Milano. He has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

Jeff was named MIP Rising Star in Intellectual Property in 2019 and is since years recommended in the IAM Patent 1000 directory of legal and attorney firms and individual practitioners for his work in mechanical, engineering, software and chemistry industries. Since 2020, Jeff is named MIP notable practitioner.

“ Very dedicated and professional with highly competent, efficient, excellent service and advice, and unique ability to unravel the most complex inventions.

IAM PATENT 1000 2024

“ Jeffrey Gyi’s technical prowess knows no bounds, with patrons heralding him as “responsive and professional, with high scientific and technical competence.

He is beyond helpful, insightful and an all-round excellent patent attorney.”

IAM PATENT 1000 (2025)

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, arbitration, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- IP due diligence and advice on licenses and
- IP acquisitions
- Litigation advice
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters

Jeff regularly lectures on aspects of intellectual property, and has written several published articles. He is a member of LES.

LANGUAGES

Jeff is a native English speaker, with a working knowledge of Dutch, French and German.

COMPETENCES

Jeff has scientific experience in various technologies covering mechanical engineering, software, biotech and chemistry fields. Application areas include medical and hospital technologies, software, machine learning, wearables, digital markers, robotics, vehicle transmission systems and general mechanical devices. Clients are drawn from many sectors including engineering, healthcare/hospitals, chemistry, consumer goods and products, diagnostics, transport, and electronics.



NOTABLE PRACTITIONER



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



ir. Caroline Hennin, PhD

EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Caroline Hennin holds a Master's degree in Bio-Engineering Sciences (Agronomy - option Crop protection) from the University of Ghent, Belgium, and obtained a PhD in Applied Biological Sciences (Agricultural Sciences – Biotechnology) from the University of Ghent, Belgium, at the Department of Crop Protection under Prof. Dr. ir. Monica Höfte, and in collaboration with Aventis CropScience (Bayer CropScience).

Caroline joined De Clercq & Partners in 2001 and qualified as European Patent Attorney in 2008 and as Belgian Patent Attorney in 2019. In 2023, Caroline successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from Politecnico di Milano. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC). In 2010 she joined the IP department of CropDesign NV, an Affiliate of BASF Plant Science, as Senior Patent Counsel, and became head of the IP Department of CropDesign in 2011. Caroline re-joined the team of De Clercq & Partners in July 2016.

For several years, she has also been recommended in the IAM Patent 1000, which highlights leading patent firms and individual practitioners for their outstanding work.

“ A striking litigator who brings chemistry, catalyst technology, and chemical and process engineering. invaluable academic prowess and specialist knowledge of science and technology to secure patrons' business needs; she's making great strides where intellectual property meets organic, polymer and pharmaceutical chemistry.

IAM PATENT 1000 2024

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing, and prosecuting Belgian patent applications as qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Drafting, filing, and prosecuting European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting, filing, and prosecuting national patent applications worldwide
- Opposition and Appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination, opposition, and appeal proceedings
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement, and validity of intellectual property rights
- Providing legal IP advice on Belgian patents
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Advising on protection strategies and portfolio management of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Advising on licensing and infringement matters; providing support in contract negotiations
- General and strategic advice in IP matters
- Validations of European patents in Belgium as qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

Caroline is actively involved in the IP community and holds professional memberships within several IP organisations, including member of the international Cooperation Committee of the Belgian Institute and also a member of the Belgian Examination Board. She is also a member of LES Benelux.

LANGUAGES

Caroline is a native Dutch and French speaker. She is also very fluent in English and has a working knowledge of German.

COMPETENCES

Caroline has scientific and patent experience in various fields of life sciences, chemistry, and engineering sciences; including (plant) biotechnology, crop protection, phytopathology, (agro)chemicals and biologicals, enabling technologies, molecular biology, feed and food technology, pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications, polymer chemistry, catalyst technology, and chemical and process engineering.



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



ir. Kris Pappaert, PhD

JUNIOR PARTNER
EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Kris Pappaert holds a Master's of Science in Bio-engineering Sciences and a PhD in Applied Sciences (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, Transport Modelling and Analytical Separation Science group, Department Chemical Engineering), under Prof. Dr. ir. Gert Desmet.

After two years as a postdoctoral researcher at the same department, Kris joined the team of De Clercq & Partners in 2007. In 2011, he qualified as a European Patent Attorney. In 2023, Kris successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the University of Maastricht. He has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

In 2019, Kris was recognised as an MIP Rising Star in Intellectual Property and has been listed as an MIP Notable Practitioner since 2020. For several years, he has also been recommended in the IAM Patent 1000, which highlights leading patent firms and individual practitioners for their outstanding work.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and filing of European and PCT patent applications
- Worldwide prosecution of national patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Drafting, filing and prosecuting oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Tailored 'Patent Landscape' studies for detailed reviews of R&D trends, technology scouting or strategic portfolio alignment
- IP due diligence
- Expert before the Belgian court in IP proceedings (including descriptive seizure proceedings)
- Litigation before Belgian civil courts in intellectual property matters
- General and strategic advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

Since 2014, Kris is a guest lecturer on Intellectual Property at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) where he introduces Intellectual Property matters to students in Master of Science in Bio-Engineering Sciences.

LANGUAGES

Kris is a native Dutch speaker. He is fluent in English and French, and has knowledge of Spanish and German.

COMPETENCES

Kris has a general scientific and working experience in various fields of technology including life sciences, chemistry, food technology and engineering and, more specifically, application in biotechnology, pharmacology, analytical (bio)chemistry, diagnostic and prognostic methods and tools, medical devices and micro- and nanotechnology but also chemical engineering and processing, catalyst technology, mechanical engineering and construction.



NOTABLE PRACTITIONER



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



ir. David Lesthaeghe, PhD

JUNIOR PARTNER
EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

David Lesthaeghe holds a Master of Science in Engineering Physics and a PhD in Engineering from Ghent University, Belgium. He performed his research at the Center for Molecular Modeling (CMM), in collaboration with the Laboratory for Chemical Technology (LCT).

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners, David worked for three years as a postdoctoral researcher at the same department, which included a research stay at the Unité de Catalyse et de Chimie du Solide, Université Lille 1, France. He joined De Clercq & Partners in September 2010.

David qualified as a European Patent Attorney in July 2014. In 2017 he qualified as a Belgian Patent Attorney, and was registered as a qualified representative before the French Patent Office (INPI). In 2023, he successfully obtained the Diploma on Patent Litigation in Europe at the University of Strasbourg (France), qualified as a European Patent Litigator, and registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

From 2020 to 2025, David was named Rising Star in Intellectual Property by Managing IP (MIP). For several years, he has also been recommended in the IAM Patent 1000, which highlights leading patent firms and individual practitioners for their outstanding work.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of Belgian patent applications as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- IP due diligence
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination, opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement, and validity of intellectual property rights
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Portfolio management, advice, and strategy
- General and strategic advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

David regularly lectures on various aspects of intellectual property and holds professional mandates within IP organisations, including Effective member of the Disciplinary Committee, Chairman of the PR Committee and member of the Education Committee of the Institute of Belgian Patent attorneys. He is also a member of LES, AIPPI and FICPI.

LANGUAGES

David is a native Dutch and English speaker, and is very fluent in French.

COMPETENCES

David has scientific experience in various fields of chemistry, physics, material science, computer science, and engineering; and is specialised in multidisciplinary inventions that span several fields of science and technology. More specifically, he is mainly active in fields such as mechanical devices, medical devices, machinery, automotive, electronic devices, photonics, physical chemistry, petrochemistry, polymer chemistry, catalysis, nanomaterials, computer-implemented inventions, software, artificial intelligence, mathematics, and others.



RISING STAR



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



ir. Hans Goesaert, PhD

EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Hans Goesaert holds a Master of Science degree in Bio-engineering Sciences and a PhD in Applied Biological Sciences. He performed his PhD research at the Food & Microbial Technology research group at the Catholic University of Leuven, under supervision of Prof. Dr. ir. Jan Delcour, and continued his (applied) scientific research for 6 years as a postdoctoral researcher at the same department.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in August 2015, he worked for almost 7 years in the IP and patent domain, as an IP officer at the Technology Transfer Office of the Catholic University of Leuven, and as a patent counsel in private practice.

In 2015, he qualified as a European Patent Attorney. As of January 2015, Hans is a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney as well. In 2023, Hans successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the University of Maastricht. He has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of Belgian patent applications as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Filing and prosecuting SPC's in Belgium and advising on SPC's in general
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and op position before the Boards of Appeal
- IP due diligence
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- Validations of European patents in Belgium as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- General and strategic advice in IP matters

Hans is a member of AIPPI and is one of the authors of 'European SPCs Unravalled: A Practitioner's Guide to Supplementary Protection Certificates in Europe' (Second Edition).

LANGUAGES

Hans is a native Dutch speaker, and he is also fluent in English and French.

COMPETENCES

Hans has general scientific and working experience in various fields of technology including chemistry, food technology and engineering and life sciences, such as applications in biotechnology and (bio)chemistry, chemical engineering and processing and catalyst technology, but also material science, analytical and pharmacological (bio)chemistry, and mechanical engineering.



Sarah Thysen, PhD

EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Sarah Thysen holds a Master's degree and PhD in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Leuven, Belgium. She performed the research for her Master's thesis during a 6-month stay at Tsinghua University, China, and for her PhD thesis at the Skeletal Biology and Engineering research center, University of Leuven, Belgium.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners, Sarah worked for one year as a scientific collaborator at the same research center.

She joined De Clercq & Partners in October 2015. Sarah obtained a Master's in Intellectual Property Rights and ICT law at the University of Leuven, Belgium, in 2016 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2019 and as a Belgian Patent Attorney in 2021. In 2023, she successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from Politecnico di Milano, qualified as a European Patent Litigator, and registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

In 2025, Sarah was named Rising Star in Intellectual Property by Managing IP (MIP).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of Belgian patent applications as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Legal IP advice on Belgian patents
- IP due diligence
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- Validations of European patents in Belgium as a qualified Belgian Patent Attorney
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

LANGUAGES

Sarah is a native Dutch speaker and is very fluent in English. She also has a working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Sarah has scientific experience in various fields of life sciences, including biotechnology, biochemistry and molecular and cellular biology – in particular, recombinant gene techniques, genetically modified plants and animals, regenerative cell therapy, in vitro cellbased assays, signal transduction cascades, proteomics, biomarkers, diagnostics including nucleic acid- and protein-based diagnostic and screening assays, immune cell therapy, pharmaceuticals, small molecules, peptides, dietary supplements and personal care compositions.



SHORTLISTED: RISING STAR – IP



RISING STAR



Giel Vandemoortele, PhD

EUROPEAN & BELGIAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Giel Vandemoortele obtained a Master's degree in Biomedical Sciences, majoring in immunology and infection in 2013 at Ghent University, Belgium. His Master's thesis was centered on characterizing protease substrate specificity and was conducted under supervision of Prof. Dr. Kris Gevaert (VIB-Ghent University). Subsequently, Giel obtained a PhD at the VIB Center for Medical Biotechnology under supervision of Prof. Dr. Sven Eyckerman and Prof. Dr. Kris Gevaert. Entitled 'Towards a genome engineering toolbox for proteomics', the aim of the thesis was to explore the opportunities recent advances in the genome engineering field (i.e. CRISPR/Cas9) entail for mass spectrometry analysis of proteins and protein-protein interactions at endogenous expression levels.

Giel joined De Clercq & Partners in 2019 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2022, followed by his Belgian Patent Attorney qualification in 2023. That same year, he also obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the Politecnico di Milano. He is additionally registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of Belgian patent applications
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination, opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Legal IP advice on Belgian patents
- IP due diligence
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- Validations of European patents in Belgium
- Acting as an expert for the Belgian courts or parties in descriptive seizure proceedings
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters

LANGUAGES

Giel is a native Dutch speaker and is very fluent in English. He also has a working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Giel obtained scientific experience in several life science fields such as molecular biology and biochemistry - especially in discovery proteomics, targeted proteomics, precise gene editing in mammalian cell lines using different techniques, proximity-labeling technologies, immunology and cell biology in general.



ir. Sven Bogaerts, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Sven Bogaerts holds a Master's degree in Bioscience Engineering (Crop Protection) from the University of Ghent, Belgium, a Postgraduate in Cellular Biotechnology from the University of Leuven, Belgium, and a PhD in Biotechnology from the University of Ghent, Belgium, at the Department for Molecular Biomedical Research under Prof. Dr. F. Van Roy (Flanders Institute for Biotechnology, VIB).

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in 2008, Sven worked for four years as a postdoctoral researcher in the Laboratory for Molecular Cancer Biology at VIB, under Dr. Jean-Christophe Marine.

Sven qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2013. In 2023, Sven successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the Centre for International Intellectual Property Studies (CEIPI) in Strasbourg, France.

🚩 AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition, and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Tailored 'Patent Landscape' studies for detailed reviews of R&D trends, technology scouting or strategic portfolio alignment
- IP due diligence
- Litigation before Belgian civil courts in intellectual property matters
- General and strategic advice in IP matters

Sven is a guest lecturer with the Bio-engineering students at Ghent University.

🌐 LANGUAGES

Sven is a native Dutch speaker, is very fluent in English and has a working knowledge of French and German.

🎯 COMPETENCES

Sven has scientific experience in various fields of chemical, engineering and biological technologies, including food science, pharmacology, and life science – in particular biotechnology, biochemistry, cell biology, cancer biology, immunology, microbiology, molecular biology, plant molecular biology, genetically modified plants and animals, gene editing, genetics, and microarrays; as well as agricultural and environmental sciences – in particular crop protection and pest control.



ir. Delphine Debruyne, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Delphine Debruyne holds a Master of Science in Bioscience Engineering: Cell and Gene Biotechnology and holds a PhD in Medical Sciences both from the University of Ghent, Belgium. Her PhD was obtained at the laboratory of Experimental Cancer Research under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Marc Bracke.

Delphine joined De Clercq & Partners in 2010, and in July 2014, she qualified as a European Patent Attorney. Delphine successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from Politecnico di Milano. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General and strategic advice in IP matters

LANGUAGES

Delphine is a native Dutch speaker, is very fluent in English and has a working knowledge of French, Spanish and German.

COMPETENCES

Delphine has general scientific knowledge and expertise in life sciences related fields and, more specifically, in biotechnology, including antibody technology, gene therapy and metabolic engineering, cancer biology, biochemistry, molecular biology, (molecular) pharmacology, nutraceuticals, food technology, plant protection and diagnostic methods and tools, but also in environmental sciences such as waste treatment and valorisation.



Annelies De Clercq, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Annelies De Clercq holds a Master of Biochemistry and a PhD in Biotechnology under supervision of Prof. Dr. Dirk Inzé (University of Ghent, Belgium, Department of Plant Systems Biology, Flanders Institute for Biotechnology, VIB).

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in 2010, Annelies worked for almost three years as a postdoctoral researcher in Molecular and Cellular Biology focusing on cancer immunotherapy under Prof. Dr. Aristides Eliopoulos (Medical School, University of Crete, Greece).

In July 2014, she qualified as a European Patent Attorney. In 2023, she successfully obtained the Diploma on Patent Litigation in Europe from the University of Strasbourg (France), qualified as a European Patent Litigator, and registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Acting as an expert in litigation before Belgian civil courts or parties in intellectual property matters
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General and strategic advice in IP matters
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

LANGUAGES

Annelies is a native Dutch speaker and is very fluent in English. She has a working knowledge of French and Greek, and a basic knowledge of German.

COMPETENCES

Annelies has knowledge and expertise in various fields of technology including life sciences and chemistry and more specifically biochemistry, biotechnology, molecular biology, cell biology and chemical engineering including technical fields such as genetically modified plants and animals, stem cells, cell therapy, in vitro cellbased assays, biomarker-based diagnostic methods and tools, pharmaceuticals, dietary supplements, personal care compositions, proteomics, small molecules, peptides, glycoproteins, vaccines, and polymer films.



“ Lieve Coenegrachts is an innovation-driven talent who comes armed with a commendable track record, both in academia and private practice.

Since joining in 2021, she has shown that her expertise is set to make a substantial impact on the firm’s patent offering.”

IAM PATENT 1000 (2025)

Lieve Coenegrachts, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Lieve Coenegrachts holds a Master’s degree and PhD in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Leuven. During her PhD she performed research on several bone diseases in the Laboratory for Experimental Medicine under the supervision of Prof. Geert Carmeliet. Lieve has several years of postdoctoral experience at the Department of Gynaecologic Oncology (University of Leuven) in collaboration with the industry.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in 2021, Lieve worked for 6 years as a Patent Agent in private practice. Since 2018, she is a qualified European Patent Attorney. In 2023, Lieve successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the University of Maastricht. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC). For several years, she has also been recommended in the IAM Patent 1000, which highlights leading patent firms and individual practitioners for their outstanding work.

“ Lieve Coenegrachts is a “real benefit, bringing sound experience in patent drafting and particularly relevant strategic advice in terms of patent prosecution”. She is renowned among clientele for her “thorough knowledge when working on the patentability assessments of inventions, writing patent applications and defining future patent strategies.

IAM PATENT 1000 2024

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General and strategic advice in IP matters

LANGUAGES

Lieve is a native Dutch speaker and is very fluent in English. She also has a working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Lieve has scientific experience in various fields of life sciences and biotechnology, including molecular biology, cell therapy, genetics, cellular and molecular immunology, microbiology, physiology, pharmaceuticals, personal care compositions, cell-based assays, biomarkers, diagnostic methods, and medical devices.



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



Verónica Rojas de la Parra, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Verónica Rojas de la Parra holds a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry Pharmacy-Biology and a Master's degree in Medicinal Chemistry from the National Autonomous University of Mexico; and a PhD in Organic Chemistry from the Lund University, Sweden, at the Bioorganic Chemistry Department, under Prof. Dr. Olov Sterner.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners, Verónica worked for four years as a Medicinal Chemist and IP manager for reMYND, a Flemish biotech company that specializes in research for diseasemodifying treatments against protein misfolding disorders.

She joined De Clercq & Partners in November 2012 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2017. In 2024 Verónica successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from Politecnico di Milano. She has been registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Drafting, filing and prosecution of oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- IP due diligence
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General and strategic advice in IP matters

LANGUAGES

Verónica is a native Spanish speaker and is very fluent in English. She also has a working knowledge of Dutch and Swedish, and a basic knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Verónica has scientific experience in various fields of technology including chemistry and life sciences, in particular organic chemistry, polymer chemistry, pharmaceutical chemistry, computational chemistry, cell biology, biochemistry and biotechnology.



Jacek Kepa, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY
EUROPEAN PATENT LITIGATOR / UPC REPRESENTATIVE

Jacek holds a Doctorate in Physics from the University of Leuven, Belgium, specializing in semiconductor interfaces. He also earned a Master's degree in Bioelectronics and Nanotechnology from the University of Hasselt, Belgium, and Maastricht University, the Netherlands.

Jacek joined De Clercq & Partners in 2015 and qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2019. In addition in 2023, he successfully obtained the Certificate on Patent Litigation in Europe from the Academy of European Law of Trier and Maastricht University and is registered as a representative before the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and filing of European and PCT patent applications
- Worldwide prosecution of national patent applications
- Representing clients in Oppositions and Appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination, opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- General and strategic advice in IP matters
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- IP due diligence
- Patent literature searching and analysis
- Patent Landscape studies for detailed reviews of R&D trends, technology scouting or strategic portfolio alignment
- IP due diligence, including patent portfolio evaluation and strategic recommendations
- Acting as a European Patent Litigator before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)

LANGUAGES

Jacek is a native Dutch and Polish speaker. He is fluent in English and has a working knowledge of French and German.

COMPETENCES

Jacek has scientific experience in various fields related to semiconductor materials and devices – such as, photovoltaics, transistors (MOSFET), optoelectronics, medical devices and biosensors, magnetic and electronic characterization (of defects). His technical areas of expertise include physics, electronics and electrical engineering, ICT, computer-implemented inventions (software/AI), chemical engineering, mechanical engineering and manufacturing, materials science, nanotechnology, and analytical instrumentation.



Ann Viaene, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY

Ann Viaene holds a Master in Biology (Zoology) from the University of Ghent, Belgium, and a PhD in Sciences (Biotechnology) from the University of Leuven. She combined her research on oesophageal cancer with a position as University Assistant, teaching students at the faculty of Medicine (KUL, Kortrijk branch), Histology. After her PhD she worked in a postdoc position (FWO) at the Laboratory for Thrombosis Research (KUL, Kortrijk branch). During her academic period, she gained broad experience in Life Sciences.

Ann's career in Intellectual Property started in 1999 in the start-up of Ann De Clercq & Co BVBA afterwards named De Clercq & Partners, where she qualified in 2003 as a European Patent Attorney. In 2004 she moved to industry where she headed the IP Department of Devgen, a spin-off of the University of Ghent and the Vlaams Instituut voor Biotechnologie (VIB), active in Molecular Genetics and Agriculture, and she participated in Devgen's successful IPO in 2005. After the acquisition of Asian seed companies, she became Head of IP for all Devgen affiliates worldwide, also managing the PVP and trademark portfolios for all seed products in the Asian production and export countries. In R&D, she coordinated within a multicultural team the regulatory and stewardship activities for deregulation of transgenic rice.

In September 2015, Ann re-joined De Clercq & Partners.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and prosecution of European, PCT and national patent applications worldwide
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Advice and compliance with Convention on Biologic Diversity (CBD)
- Contract review, negotiation, drafting and advising in IP matters in major transactions and R&D collaborations, and in- and outlicensing
- IP portfolio management, advice and strategy, including managing IP budgets
- IP due diligence during mergers and acquisitions, and integration or carve-out of intellectual property
- Strategic advice related to patents and other intellectual property matters such as trademarks, plant variety protection and trade secrets, for companies involved in discovery, acquisition, developing and commercialisation of innovations and products
- In-house support of IP services during replacement or during short or longer leave of Patent Attorneys, IP officers or Legal Officers in R&D transactions

LANGUAGES

Ann is a native Dutch speaker and is very fluent in English. She is also fluent in French with working knowledge of German.

COMPETENCES

Ann has scientific and patent experience in various fields of biotechnology and related life sciences with working knowledge of chemistry, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Ann has worked in the field of nucleic acid-based technologies (RNA interference, enabling technologies, ...), biochemistry, molecular and cellular biology, diagnostics including nucleic acid- and proteinbased screening assays, biomarkers, veterinary products, recombinant microorganisms, genetically modified plants, plant breeding, agrochemicals and pest control.

She further has experience in trademarks, plant variety protection strategies, trade secrets and other related IP tools as well as in legal aspects of intellectual property as in R&D collaborations and licencing. Ann has extended exposure at interacting with and advising business executives as well as scientists active within a company.



ir. Krista Nerinckx, PhD

EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY

Krista Nerinckx holds a Master and PhD in Electromechanical Engineering from Ghent University. During her PhD she performed research on algorithms for Computational Fluid Dynamics. Krista started her professional career at the steel manufacturer, ArcelorMittal, where she developed numerical models for controlling hot strip mill, cold strip mill and galvanizing lines. Afterwards, she worked as a consultant in R&D funding to support companies in obtaining innovation grants from the Flemish and European governments.

From 2018 onwards, Krista started to work in the Intellectual Property domain. Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners in 2024, she worked for 6 years in private practice. She qualified as a European Patent Attorney in 2022, and is registered as an associated member of the Institute of Belgian patent attorneys.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting, filing and prosecution of European and PCT patent applications
- Drafting and prosecution of national patent applications
- Oppositions and appeal proceedings before the EPO
- Oral proceedings before the EPO in examination and opposition and before the Boards of Appeal
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, arbitration, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- IP due diligence and advice on licenses and IP acquisitions
- Litigation advice
- Portfolio management, advice and strategy
- General strategic and legal advice in IP matters

LANGUAGES

Krista is a native Dutch speaker, is fluent in English, and has a working knowledge of French and German.

COMPETENCES

Scientific experience in various technologies covering mechanical and electrotechnical engineering, computational technology, chemical processing and materials. Application areas include technical equipment and machinery, mechanical constructions, energy engineering, cleantech, industrial processes, material design, electronics, telecoms, numerical modelling and software.



Filip Van Lysebetten, PhD

PATENT ADVISER / TRAINEE EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY

Filip Van Lysebetten studied at Ghent University and majored in Chemistry. He received his Master's degree in 2019 after successfully completing a thesis in the field of Organic and Macromolecular Chemistry. He continued his scientific career in Ghent with an FWO-funded PhD project, inspired by themes such as sustainability, polymer processing, and chemical reactivity. More specifically, he aimed to reprocess thermoset materials with applications in adhesives and composites under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Filip Du Prez and Prof. Dr. Johan Winne. This work resulted in several publications in prestigious journals as well as two patent applications.

After defending his PhD, Filip joined De Clercq & Partners as a Patent Adviser in February 2023.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and prosecution of national, European and PCT patent applications
- Advising for oppositions and third-party observations before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis

LANGUAGES

Filip is a native Dutch speaker, is very fluent in English and has a working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Filip has scientific experience in various fields of technology including chemistry, life sciences, material science and engineering with a particular focus on organic chemistry, polymer chemistry, small molecules, reactor engineering and pharmaceutical chemistry.

More specific topics include homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis, enzymes and biomimetics, cosmetics, adhesives and formulation chemistry for structural and medical applications, fiber-reinforced materials, petrochemistry, nanomaterials, analytical chemistry, packaging, recycling and green technologies, bio-based monomers and polymers, polymer processing, and food technology.



Anne-lore Bex, MSc

PATENT ADVISER / TRAINEE EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY

Anne-lore Bex obtained a Master's Degree in Biomedical Science, with a major in clinical molecular science at The University of Hasselt and Maastricht. She went abroad for her Master's degree to study epithelial-mesenchymal crosstalk in early esophageal tumourigenesis at the University of Cambridge. After graduating, she continued her scientific career in Cambridge, where she studied the behaviour of epithelial stem cells in the esophagus upon injury. Next, she challenged herself to study epithelial-immune cell cross-talk in pancreatic cancer at the Technical University of Munich.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners, Anne-lore started working in private practice in February 2020. In April 2023, she joined De Clercq & Partners as a Patent Adviser.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and prosecution of national, European and PCT patent applications
- Advising for oppositions and third-party observations before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis

LANGUAGES

Anne-lore is a native Dutch speaker, is very fluent in English and has a working knowledge of German and French.

COMPETENCES

Anne-lore has scientific experience across various life science and engineering fields, including biotechnology, immunology, and molecular and cellular biology, with particular expertise in cell lineage tracing, recombinant gene technology, precise gene editing tools, genetically modified animals, regenerative and oncogenic therapies, signalling cascades, proteomics, and biomarker development. Her technical background further extends to mechanical and process engineering, medical devices, biogas and energy systems, organic waste treatment, construction technologies, materials engineering, packaging and dispensing technologies.



ir. Yannick Ureel, PhD

PATENT ADVISER / TRAINEE EUROPEAN PATENT ATTORNEY

Yannick Ureel obtained a Master's degree in Chemical Engineering at Ghent University in 2021. He proceeded his career with a PhD at Ghent University, after obtaining his personal FWO-fellowship. Under supervision of Prof. Kevin Van Geem and Prof. Maarten Sabbe he performed his research on the catalytic chemical recycling of plastic waste. During his PhD, Yannick spent several months abroad at Penn State University and the High Magnetic Field Laboratory.

After defending his PhD, Yannick joined De Clercq & Partners as a Patent Adviser in September 2025.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Drafting and prosecution of national, European and PCT patent applications
- Advising for oppositions and third-party observations before the EPO
- Opinions regarding patentability, freedom-to-operate, infringement and validity of intellectual property rights
- Patent literature searching and analysis

LANGUAGES

Yannick is a native Dutch speaker, is very fluent in English and has a working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Yannick has scientific experience in various fields of technology including engineering, material science, computer science, chemistry, and physics; more specifically in petrochemistry, catalysis, polymer chemistry, recycling technologies, analytical chemistry, reactor engineering, artificial intelligence, numerical modelling, software, and industrial processes.



Tom Liessens

**JUNIOR PARTNER
TRADEMARK AND DESIGN ATTORNEY
LEGAL COUNSEL**

Tom Liessens holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Ghent and a subsequent LL.M. in Intellectual Property Rights from the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL).

Tom started his career as a lawyer-trainee in 2014 in private practice and gained experience in various aspects of Commercial law, Intellectual Property law and Information Technology law.

Tom joined De Clercq & Partners as a Legal Counsel and Benelux Trademark and Design Attorney in October 2015. In January 2018, he successfully completed the two-year professional training course organized by the Benelux Association for Trademark and Design law (BMM) and qualified as a BMM Certified Trademark Attorney. In October 2019, Tom also qualified as a European Trademark and Design Attorney.

Additionally, Tom has successfully completed a Data Protection Officer Certification training and is De Clercq & Partners' go-to person for matters relating to GDPR.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Tom provides clients with strategic and hands-on advice on the protection, maintenance and management of small and large trademark and design portfolios and he also assists in negotiations and drafting agreements relating to intellectual property.

He has extensive experience in trademark and design prosecution, including formal proceedings before the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property and the European Union Intellectual Property Office, in opposition matters, infringement and enforcement cases.

Tom regularly lectures on several IP related topics. He is a member of AIPPI, BMM and LES Benelux. He is also secretary of the Young AIPPI Committee (YAC), treasurer of the Young BMM Committee and the BMM Programming Committee and board member of the Beneluxstichting Beroepsopleiding Merken- en Modellengemachtigden (BBMM).

LANGUAGES

Tom is a native Dutch speaker and is also fluent in English and French.

COMPETENCES

Tom has experience in legal aspects of intellectual property, particularly trademarks and designs, and in product and service development in various areas of intellectual property.



Joost Muylle

OF COUNSEL TRADEMARK AND DESIGN ATTORNEY

Joost Muylle holds a Master's degree in chemical and biotechnology engineering from the University of Ghent (Howest, 1986) with additional training in intellectual property (EPI CEIPI, 1990 -University of Leuven, 1993) and management (Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School, 2008). He started his professional career at the Vandemoortele Group, first as a patent expert, subsequently in charge of intellectual property rights and finally as a member of the strategic committee on product and market development.

Prior to joining De Clercq & Partners, Joost joined the intellectual property private practice Gevers & Partners in Brussel as Director in 1999, opened its branch office in Ghent and was appointed Managing Director in 2003. He was Operational Director at Novagraaf in Paris from 2010 to 2011 and founded iprmanager in December 2011, an electronic platform enabling intellectual property holders and their counselors to monitor and manage their intellectual property rights themselves. In 2012, Joost was appointed consular judge in the Court of Commerce.

In October 2013, Joost became Partner at De Clercq & Partners through the merger of De Clercq & Partners and iprmanager, heading the firm's trademark, design, domain names and copyright activities. In January 2025, he continued his affiliation with the firm as Of Counsel. In this new role, he provides strategic guidance and support on select matters, leveraging extensive experience in Trademarks and Designs.

Managing Intellectual Property (MIP) singled out Joost as Leading IP Star for the nine seven years and the renowned World Trademark Review (WTR) lists him as a recommended individual as well.



“ One of the very best trademark attorneys in Belgium. He has a wealth of experience and is always in search of commercially minded, pragmatic solutions.

WORLD TRADEMARK REVIEW 2024

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Joost advises small, medium and large corporations as well as individuals, institutes and investors with regard to prosecution and litigation in all areas of intellectual property worldwide. He has extensive expertise in trademark and design prosecution, including formal proceedings before the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property and the Office for the Harmonization in the Internal Mark, in anti-counterfeiting through customs measures and in IP due diligence. Joost often acts as a court appointed or party appointed expert in IP matters in litigation.

Joost often lectures on several IP related topics, at conferences and universities. He is a member of BMM, and LES.

LANGUAGES

Joost is a native Dutch speaker, is fluent in English and French and has working knowledge of German.

COMPETENCES

Joost has scientific experience in various fields of technology, including biochemistry and food technology, in legal aspects of intellectual property, particularly trademarks and designs, and in product and service development in various areas of intellectual property.



TRADEMARK STAR 2025



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



Thomas Baudewijn

TRADEMARK AND DESIGN ATTORNEY LEGAL COUNSEL

Thomas Baudewijn holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Ghent and a subsequent LL.M. in Intellectual Property Rights from the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL).

Thomas started his career as a Legal Counsel and Trademark and Design Attorney and worked in private practice where he gained extensive and practical training in various aspects of Intellectual Property with an emphasis on trademark and design law, copyright, software, databases and domain names as well as commercial contracts.

Thomas qualified as a European Trademark and Design attorney in 2013 and gained further experience with aspects of ICT law. He joined De Clercq & Partners in April 2016 as a Legal Counsel and Trademark and Design Attorney.

Since 2022, he was added to the list of recommended individuals of the renowned World Trademark Review (WTR).

“ Solution-oriented nature that calms clients' minds, while also being reliable, precise and pragmatic without too many words.

WORLD TRADEMARK REVIEW 2023

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Thomas provides clients with strategic and hands-on advice on the protection, maintenance and management of small and large trademark and design portfolios and he also assists in negotiations and drafting agreements relating to intellectual property.

He has extensive experience in trademark and design prosecution, including formal proceedings before the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property and the European Union Intellectual Property Office, in opposition matters, infringement and enforcement cases.

He is also a member of AIPPI, BMM and LES Benelux.

LANGUAGES

Thomas is a native Dutch speaker and is also fluent in English and French.

COMPETENCES

Thomas has experience in legal aspects of intellectual property, particularly trademarks and designs, and in product and service development in various areas of intellectual property.



RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUAL



Wiebeke De Wachter

TRADEMARK AND DESIGN ATTORNEY

Wiebeke graduated from Ghent University in 2017 with a Master's degree in Communication Sciences.

After gaining two years of experience under the Trademark Attorneys' wings, she started the BBMM (Benelux Association for Trademark and Design Law Course) in 2022. Early 2024, she successfully obtained her degree as Certified BMM Trademark & Design Attorney. In the summer of 2024, Wiebeke also qualified as a European Trademark and Design Attorney. You will find her in both the Sint-Martens-Latem and Hasselt office.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Wiebeke manages trademark and design portfolios of several Belgian and foreign companies. Her work consists of communicating with clients and foreign associates, following up on deadlines, filing and renewing trademarks and designs before BOIP, EUIPO and WIPO, advising on the distinctiveness and availability of trademarks, auditing of sometimes extensive trademark portfolios, advising about the maintenance of trademarks and designs, and evaluating watch notices and advising clients accordingly.

She is an active member of the Benelux Association for Trademark & Design Law (BMM) and VOKA (Flanders' Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

LANGUAGES

Wiebeke is a native Dutch speaker. She is fluent in English and has working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Wiebeke has experience in legal aspects of intellectual property, particularly trademarks and designs, and in product and service development in various areas of intellectual property.



Nathalie Gailliaert

TRADEMARK AND DESIGN ATTORNEY

Nathalie holds a Bachelor's degree in legal practice from the Vives University College in Bruges, Belgium. She started her career as a paralegal at De Clercq & Partners in 2015 and emerged as an ambitious trademark attorney candidate through in-house practice and intensive self-study.

In November 2023, Nathalie achieved a significant milestone by qualifying as a European Trademark and Design Attorney. Early 2024, she successfully obtained her degree as Certified BMM Trademark & Design Attorney after a two-year professional training course organised by the Benelux Association for Trademark and Design Law.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Nathalie manages trademark and design portfolios of various Belgian and international clients and foreign associates. Her work includes advising on the distinctiveness and availability of trademarks, auditing of sometimes extensive trademark portfolios, advising on the maintenance of trademarks and designs, and evaluating watch notices and advising clients accordingly.

She is also a member of the Benelux Association for Trademark & Design Law, VOKA (Flanders' Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and AIPPI (International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property).

LANGUAGES

Nathalie is a native Dutch speaker and fluent in French and English.

COMPETENCES

Nathalie has experience in legal aspects of intellectual property, particularly trademarks and designs, and in product and service development in various areas of intellectual property.



Emily Van Mulders

TRADEMARK AND DESIGN ATTORNEY

Emily holds a Master's degree in Globalization and Law from Maastricht University Faculty of Law since 2022. After gaining sector experience at the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) where she worked one year as a Pan-European Seal Trainee, she joined our firm in August 2023 as a Trademark & Design Attorney Trainee. Emily started the BMM (Benelux Association for Trademark and Design Law) course in 2024 and, two years later, successfully obtained her degree as Certified BMM Trademark & Design Attorney. You will find her mainly at our Hasselt office.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Emily manages trademark and design portfolios of several Belgian and foreign companies. Her work consists of communicating with clients and foreign associates, following up on deadlines, filing and renewing trademarks and designs before BOIP, EUIPO and WIPO, advising on the distinctiveness and availability of trademarks, auditing of sometimes extensive trademark portfolios, advising about the maintenance of trademarks and designs, and evaluating watch notices and advising clients accordingly.

LANGUAGES

Emily is a native Dutch speaker. She is fluent in English and has working knowledge of French.

COMPETENCES

Emily has experience in legal aspects of intellectual property, particularly trademarks and designs, and in product and service development in various areas of intellectual property.

de clercq & partners

MAIN OFFICE

Edgard Gevaertdreef 10a
B-9830 Sint-Martens-Latem
Belgium



LEUVEN OFFICE

Silo T2
Fonteinstraat 1/A 0201
B-3001 Leuven Belgium

HASSELT OFFICE

Corda Campus - Corda Gebouw
2 Kempische Steenweg 293/16
B-3500 Hasselt Belgium

 @DeClercqPartners
 +32 (0)9 280 23 40

 @DeClercqPartners
 info@dcp-ip.com

 @DeClercqPartners

 @de-clercq-and-partners