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**Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)**

**Fifth Session**

**Geneva, May 29 to June 2, 2017**

APPLICANT NAME STANDARDIZATION

*Document prepared by the Secretariat*

## INTRODUCTION

1. It is noted that applicant name standardization is an issue of paramount importance in the community of industrial property (IP) information. Industrial Property Offices (IPOs), IP information providers and IP information users currently face significant difficulties related to lack of harmonization of applicant names in patent applications. It is also noted that there are several fora, regional and international, where stakeholders try to streamline these efforts and make them more efficient. Therefore applicant name standardization is on the agenda of Five IPOs as well as other IPOs; it is discussed at IP information users’ meetings.

## Workshop on applicant name standardization

1. Recognizing the importance of applicant name standardization and taking into account the difficulties caused by lack thereof for all stakeholders, the International Bureau of WIPO organized the WIPO Standards Workshop on Applicant Name Standardization (hereinafter referred to as “Workshop”) by issuing Circular C. CWS 71 of June 8, 2016. The Workshop took place in Geneva on September 5, 2016. Further information on the Workshop is available on the web site of WIPO at: <http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=40784>.
2. Twenty eight participants representing the following organizations attended the event:

* IPOs: Austrian Patent Office, IP Australia, German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA), Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO), European Patent Office (EPO), INPI France, Japan Patent Office (JPO), Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), Rospatent, Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (OEPM), United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO);
* Observers at the CWS: Patent Documentation Group (PDG), Patent Information Users Group (PIUG), PatCom;
* Other organizations and companies: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Philips, Siemens, Magister Ltd., Extract Information, CENTREDOC, Thomson Reuters, FIZ Karlsruhe, Regimbeau, Fairview Research Barcelona.

1. The main goal of the Workshop was coordinating and streamlining efforts taken to address difficulties related to lack of harmonization of applicant names in patent applications. The participants discussed problems faced by users of IP information, IPOs and patent information providers, they identified main issues related to applicant names and priorities for applicant name standardization, they also discussed possible cooperation framework for all stakeholders to work together on improving the situation.
2. Main issues related to lack of name standardization identified at the Workshop were the following:
3. Need to handle large data sets where applicant name information wasn’t presented consistently due to misprints, using different variants of the same name, etc.;
4. Lack of guidance from IPOs to applicants on matters related to names;
5. Difficulties to retrieve information on the changes of ownership;
6. Inconsistent results of transliteration and issues related to presenting names in different languages; and
7. Different name structure in different countries.
8. Possible solutions for the problems related to applicant names found at the Workshop were:
9. Development of a WIPO standard to provide recommendations assisting IPOs in providing better “quality at source” in relation to applicant names;
10. Creation of a Task and a Task Force under the umbrella of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) to provide forum for all interested parties to discuss priorities and ways to overcome difficulties related to applicant name standardization;
11. Exchanging normalized or harmonized applicant names assigned by IPOs, adding corresponding fields in patent databases;
12. Changes in national IP legislation empowering IPOs to request using one form of an applicant name on all applications filed by the same applicant;
13. Enforcement at the national level of provision of the change of ownership information by right owners (for example, along with fee payments) and of other data quality policies related to applicant names;
14. Addressing transliteration of applicant names in the framework of PCT;
15. Creation of a worldwide unique numerical identifier for patent applicants; as the first step, carrying out a study on how useful the identifiers can be and what might be the problems associated with that.
16. The participants agreed that the Workshop was an important step forward and a good starting point for collaboration between all interested parties. They highly appreciated the involvement and commitment of the International Bureau and welcomed its initiative to bring the matter to the attention of the CWS at its fifth session.

## Study on applicant name standardization

1. To analyze the situation related to the standardization of applicant names in IP documents and outline main problems faced and solutions found so far, the International Bureau prepared a study on applicant name standardization (hereinafter referred to as “Study”) for consideration by the CWS. The Study is reproduced in the Annex to the present document.

## Proposed New task and further actions

1. As indicated in paragraph 5 above, the Workshop noted the need for a new task under the CWS to address the issues related to applicant name standardization and agreed to request the CWS to create a new task force to handle this task.
2. Following the Workshop recommendations, it is proposed to create a new task in the CWS Work Program with the following description:

“Envisaging developing a WIPO standard assisting Industrial Property Offices (IPOs) in providing better “quality at source” in relation to applicant names,

1. conduct a survey on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs and on the problems, which might be associated with it; and
2. prepare a proposal for future actions aimed at the standardization of applicant names in IP documents and present it for consideration by the CWS.”
3. It is also proposed to create a new Task Force (Name Standardization Task Force) to handle the proposed new task and request this Task Force to
4. prepare a questionnaire to carry out the survey mentioned in paragraph 10 (i) above and present it for consideration by the CWS at its next (sixth) session; and
5. prepare, on the basis of the survey results, the proposal for further actions and present it for consideration by the CWS at its seventh session to be held in 2019.
6. *The CWS is invited to:*

*(a) note the content of the present document and its Annex;*

*(b) consider and decide on the creation of the new task and the establishment of a new Task Force as referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11 above; and*

*(c) consider and decide on the timeline proposed in paragraph 11 above.*

[Annex follows]