

# WIPO



IPC/CE/26/8

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: March 20, 1998

**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**  
GENEVA

**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION  
(IPC UNION)**

## **COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

**Twenty-Sixth Session**  
**Geneva, March 16 to 20, 1998**

### REPORT

*adopted by the Committee of Experts*

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee of Experts of the IPC Union (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) held its twenty-sixth session in Geneva from March 16 to 20, 1998. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session: Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America (18). The African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI) and the European Patent Office (EPO) were also represented. The list of participants appears as Annex I to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. Y. Takagi, Director, Inter-Office Information Services Department, WIPO, who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director General of WIPO.

#### OFFICERS

3. The Committee unanimously elected Mr. A. Bruun (Sweden) as Chairman and Mrs. T.M. Osman (Egypt) and Mr. J.A. Calvert (United Kingdom) as Vice-Chairmen.

4. Mr. M. Makarov (WIPO) acted as Secretary of the session.

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Committee unanimously adopted the agenda, which appears as Annex II to this report.

#### CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS

6. As decided by the Governing Bodies of WIPO at their tenth series of meetings (see document AB/X/32, paragraphs 51 and 52), held from September 24 to October 2, 1979, the report of this session reflects only the conclusions (decisions, recommendations, opinions, etc.) of the Committee and does not, in particular, reflect the statements made by any participant, except where any reservation in respect of any specific conclusion of the Committee was made or repeated after the conclusion was arrived at.

#### REPORT ON THE IPC-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE PCIPI SINCE MARCH 1997

7. The Committee noted the IPC-related activities of the PCIPI since March 1997 (see documents PCIPI/VI/4, PCIPI/EXEC/XX/9, PCIPI/EXEC/XXI/6, PCIPI/SI/XIX/5 and PCIPI/SI/XX/7) and expressed its satisfaction with the work relating to the IPC that had been carried out by the PCIPI. The Committee noted, in particular, that the PCIPI Executive Coordination Committee had accepted 26 new IPC revision projects for inclusion in the IPC revision program, which would be considered during the next IPC revision period. The Committee also took note of the completion of the following two tasks assigned to the PCIPI Working Group on Search Information (hereinafter referred to as "the PCIPI/SI"):

- Task No. S-3 (*Consider insertion in function-oriented places of the IPC, at least in class G 05, of references and notes to the relevant application places*), and

- Task No. S-4 (*Selection of a set of patent documents exemplifying the problems explained in paragraphs 52 to 62 of the Guide to the sixth edition of the IPC, together with observations on how the documents can be classified*).

8. The International Bureau informed the Committee that progress was made in respect of the work on compiling the IPC training material containing the observations of the PCIPI/SI on patent documents selected under the above-mentioned Task No. S-4, as well as the comments from various offices and rapporteur reports. Upon completion, the said training material would be submitted to the members of the Committee and other interested offices.

## CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC

### Amendments Emanating from Revision Projects

9. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/26/2, containing amendments to the IPC approved by the PCIPI/SI, and its Suppls.1 and 2, containing comments on those amendments, submitted by the members of the Committee.

10. The Committee adopted a number of amendments to the IPC, which appear in the Technical Annexes to this report. Annex III to this report contains changes to amendments previously adopted by the Committee during the present revision period. Annex VII to this report lists the classes and subclasses to which the Committee has adopted amendments during the current revision period, and Annex VIII to this report lists the classes and the subclasses to which the said Technical Annexes pertain.

### Observations Relating to the Amendments Considered

11. In the context of terminology, the Committee agreed to harmonize the terminology used in the IPC and in the English version of the German Catchword Index “Stich- und Schlagwörterverzeichnis,” and requested the International Bureau to cooperate with the German Patent Office in preparing the next edition of the said Catchword Index by providing the German Patent Office with information relating to terminological changes occurred in the IPC during the current revision period.

12. On the assumption that the General Assembly and other interested Governing Bodies would approve the transitional measures as proposed in document A/32/3 (see paragraphs 22 to 24, below), the Committee agreed to refer back to the PCIPI/SI for reconsideration the amendments relating to groups F 21 V 17/02 to 17/18, proposed under Project C 28 (see Annex 41 to document IPC/CE/26/2), since it was felt that three different approaches for subdividing group F 21 V 17/00 had been applied, which would cause unavoidable overlap between, respectively, group 17/02, the set of groups 17/04 to 17/08 and the set of groups 17/10 to 17/18. The PCIPI/SI should reconsider the said groups in order to eliminate overlap thereof, for example, by introducing precedence notes or by deleting groups 17/04 to 17/08, bearing in mind the volume of patent documentation that could belong to those groups.

### Replacement of the Term “Carpule,” Representing a Trademark, in the English Version of the IPC

13. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/26/3, containing the amendments to the IPC relating to the replacement of the term “carpule,” representing a registered trademark, in the English version of the IPC, proposed by the PCIPI/SI.

14. The Committee adopted the above-mentioned amendments which appear in Annex IV to this report.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW CATCHWORDS AND CATCHWORD PHRASES IN THE OFFICIAL CATCHWORD INDEXES TO THE IPC

15. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/26/4, containing the guidelines for the introduction of new catchwords and catchword phrases in the official catchword indexes to the IPC, approved by the PCIPI/SI.

16. Following minor changes made to the text thereof, the Committee adopted those guidelines which appear in Annex V to this report. The Committee agreed that the guidelines should be included in the IPC part of the *WIPO Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation*.

## SURVEY ON THE USE OF THE IPC

17. The Committee considered the survey on the use of the IPC prepared by the International Bureau and containing information extracted from the replies submitted by 44 industrial property offices to WIPO Circular No. PCIPI 2179 of October 17, 1996, which replies had been summarized in document IPC/CE/26/5. The Committee noted the usefulness of the information presented in the survey and that the International Bureau intended, on the basis of the said information, to update the data relating to the use of the IPC, published in the *WIPO Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation*.

18. The Committee observed that the results of the survey, in particular, the data in respect of the use of IPC symbols in search queries, indicated the importance and usefulness of the IPC for online search of patent information.

19. In regard to the assigning of the non-obligatory IPC symbols to patent documents published by industrial property offices, the Committee noted that the majority of the offices having submitted replies allotted the non-obligatory classification symbols and indexing codes to their published documents. The Committee noted that such symbols were useful for searching additional information in patent documents and agreed to discuss whether the allotting of those symbols should be obligatory, when the Committee would consider the future policy of the IPC revision (see paragraph 25, below).

20. The Committee also noted the statement made by the Delegation of Egypt that the Egyptian Patent Office used the IPC for classifying their published patent documents and for searching patent information and that the search files of the Office were organized in accordance with the IPC.

## TRANSFER OF THE PREPARATORY IPC REVISION WORK TO THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

21. The Committee took note of document IPC/CE/26/6 containing a proposal by the International Bureau relating to the transfer of the preparatory IPC revision work to the Committee of Experts. The proposal was made in view of the planned establishment of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) and integration of the PCIPI therewith, as proposed by the Director General of WIPO (see document A/32/3) for the consideration of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO at the thirty-second series of meetings to be held from March 25 to 27, 1998.
22. The Committee indicated that, if the proposal for the integration of the PCIPI with the SCIT was approved, an appropriate working relationship between the SCIT and the IPC Committee of Experts should be considered in order to coordinate the activities of the two Committees, particularly in the area of the retrieval of patent information.
23. Following detailed discussions, the Committee agreed that it was premature to consider possible working procedures and methods for the IPC revision under the Committee without knowing whether the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO would approve the above-mentioned proposal. However, the Committee recognized a need to discuss how to proceed with the pending IPC revision work between July 1, 1998 (i.e. after the expiry of the proposed transitional measures), and the next session of the Committee (scheduled to take place in November 1998; see paragraph 36), during which period there may be no successor body to the PCIPI/SI and no applicable working procedure. The Committee, therefore, agreed that, if the PCIPI ceased to exist, the current working procedure and methods implemented by the PCIPI/SI for the revision work should continue to be applied until the end of 1998.
24. The Committee underlined that the end of the current IPC revision period, which would result in the completion of the revision work for the preparation of the seventh edition of the IPC during 1998, was opportune to review the existing working procedure and policy for the IPC revision in order to make the revision work even more efficient, especially in the light of the advent of new search tools. In this context, the Committee confirmed its firm view that the IPC continued to be an indispensable search tool independent on the language used in searched documentation, in particular, for small and medium-sized offices which largely relied on the IPC for their patent information search.
25. The Committee realized that the review of the existing procedure and policy for the IPC revision would require resources that would also be needed in connection with the ongoing IPC revision work. Underlining the need of the said review, the Committee felt that, just at the beginning of the new (seventh) revision period, it would be acceptable to postpone a session, in the second half of 1998, of a working group dealing with the revision of the IPC for the preparation of the eighth edition. A meeting to discuss the future IPC revision procedure and revision policy could then be held instead. Consequently, the Committee agreed that an advanced IPC Seminar should be held in December 1998.

26. The Committee accepted, with gratitude, the invitation extended by the United Kingdom to host the Seminar at the Patent Office of the United Kingdom and requested the International Bureau to determine, in consultation with the UK Office, appropriate dates and other administrative arrangements.

27. The Committee agreed that the principal task of the Seminar should be to prepare draft recommendations in respect of the IPC revision procedure and revision policy, which should serve as a basis for discussions by the Committee at its session in early 1999 in order to elaborate guidance for the revision work in preparation of the eighth edition of the IPC. The Committee also agreed that the participation in the Seminar should be open to all members and observers of the IPC Union, interested industrial property offices of the States members of WIPO, interested international and national non-governmental organizations, information services and other relevant organizations in the area of the IPC.

28. In order to prepare a program of the Seminar, the Committee requested the International Bureau to issue, by May 1, 1998, a circular inviting the members of the Committee to submit, by August 1, 1998, to the International Bureau their proposals to be reflected in the program. On the basis of those replies, the International Bureau should prepare the program of the Seminar (including the working procedure) and issue invitations, in September 1998, to industrial property offices and organizations concerned.

#### MODIFICATION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

29. The Committee considered the changes to its Rules of Procedure proposed by the International Bureau and contained in the Annex to document IPC/CE/26/6, and agreed that the African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI) and the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO), by virtue of Article 5(2)(a) of the Strasbourg Agreement, since Guinea—a member of OAPI—and Malawi—a member of ARIPO—had become party to the Strasbourg Agreement, should be given the same status as the Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) and the European Patent Organisation (EPO) in the Committee and in the subcommittees and working groups established by the Committee, with the right to make proposals for amendments to the IPC. To this end, the Committee modified Rules 4, 6 and 7 of its Rules of Procedure, expressing its appreciation of the new status of ARIPO and OAPI.

30. The Delegation of OAPI thanked the Committee for according the new status to its Organisation.

31. The Rules of Procedure, as modified by the Committee, appear in Annex VI to this report.

## INDICATION IN THE IPC OF GROUPS WITH A CHANGE OF SCOPE EXISTING SINCE THE FIRST EDITION OF THE IPC

32. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/26/7 containing a proposal, submitted by Germany, concerning the indication in the IPC of groups with a change of scope existing since the first edition of the IPC, and on Suppl.1 to the said document containing comments on the proposal by Germany, submitted by Sweden and the United States of America.

33. The Committee agreed that the above-mentioned proposal would increase the informative value of the IPC and would facilitate searching with the use of different editions of the Classification. The Committee requested the International Bureau to implement the proposal in the seventh edition of the IPC by introducing the designation "1,7" in square brackets of the groups which existed since the first edition of the IPC and had their scope changed in the seventh edition.

34. The Committee noted the proposals, submitted by Germany and the United States of America, contained in the said document IPC/CE/26/7 with its Suppl.1 and concerning modifications to the User Information appearing at the beginning of each section of the IPC, intended to make that information more precise in respect of different kinds of changes which the IPC groups have undergone. The Committee agreed that those proposals should be considered in the context of the revision of the Guide to the IPC carried out by the PCIPI/SI and requested comments on the proposals from the members of the Committee.

### NEXT SESSION

35. The Committee, noting that for the completion of the revision work to be included in the forthcoming seventh edition of the IPC (27 revision projects still to be finalized by the PCIPI/SI, the revision of the Guide to the IPC, the checking of references in the IPC), another session of the Committee during 1998 would be necessary, agreed to request the Director General to convene such session, preferably in November 1998, and further agreed to propose the extension of its duration to 10 days. In this context, the Committee also drew the attention to the need for its session in 1999 (see paragraph 27, above).

36. The Committee noted that the Secretariat tentatively reserved the following dates for its twenty-seventh session:

Geneva, November 2 to 11, 1998.

*37. This report was unanimously adopted by the Committee at its closing meeting on March 20, 1998.*

[Annexes follow]