

# WIPO



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**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**  
GENEVA

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

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

**Thirty-Fifth Session  
Geneva, October 25 to 29, 2004**

REPORT ON THE ELEVENTH MEETING  
OF THE TRILATERAL WORKING GROUP ON CLASSIFICATION

*Document prepared by the Secretariat*

1. The Annex to this document contains the report on the eleventh meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification, submitted by the European Patent Office (EPO) on behalf of the Trilateral Offices.

2. *The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of this report.*

[Annex follows]

## ANNEX




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**Europäisches  
Patentamt**

GD1

**European  
Patent Office**

DG1

**Office européen  
des brevets**

DG1

**Principal Directorate Tools/Documentation  
Directorate 1.3.5 - Classification**

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The Hague, October 13, 2004

**11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification  
- Summary of the results -**

The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification took place at the EPO in Vienna from October 4 to 8, 2004.

**Interaction between Trilateral Offices and other WIPO Member States in the framework of Harmony projects**

The Trilateral Offices (TO's) consider comments and submissions from other offices on Harmony projects to be useful in principle. Interested offices should consult the trilateral e-forum as a guest user. Any comments relating to Harmony projects should be sent directly to the trilateral Rapporteur of the project in question.

**Review of Harmony projects**

New projects. The TO's agreed to take onboard the following proposals:

T034	Audio-Compression	G10L	(Rapporteur: EP)
T035	Air-conditioning	F24F5	(Rapporteur : JP)
T036	Photo masks and screens	G03F1	(Rapporteur : still to be assigned)
T037	Light-emitting devices	H01L33	(Rapporteur: EP)

The TO's noted that T034 is still subject to final confirmation by JPO and EPO. Proposals relating to Casting (B22D), Measuring (G01D) and (G01P) were not accepted.

Alloys database. Analysis by EPO technical experts showed that there is a good potential for loading the data of the Alloys-related ICIREPAT database of the JPO into EPO's systems and merging them with the EPO's Alloys database. Some questions remain to be solved with respect to unpublished data.

Examiner exchange. The TO's reported about their experiences with recent trilateral and bilateral examiner exchanges. Although it was underlined in general that these exchange visits contribute fundamentally to the progress of Harmony projects, some obstacles were identified. Mainly the briefing and preparation of examiners was felt in need of improvement. The TO's presented proposals for improvement.

### **Methods for accelerating projects**

The TO's consider that Classification Harmony is not progressing as fast as it would be desirable. The TO's concluded that a combined effort of all TO's is necessary in order to achieve substantial acceleration of the project. The TO's underlined that Harmony is one of the fundamental elements of trilateral cooperation. By ensuring consistent search quality, Harmony is the basis for the mutual recognition of search results and will contribute to more effective searching by making documents of all TO's available in a single classification philosophy. Harmony contributes also to a reduction in classification costs.

The TO's agreed on a number of measures that would advance Classification Harmony, like increase in awareness of TO staff and management about the Harmony projects, availability of sufficient resources, increased use of the examiner exchange program for advancing Harmony projects, and a study about possible harmonization of areas in ECLA and FI having a high degree of similarity.

### **Use of ECLA at USPTO**

The USPTO reported on the status of the use of ECLA-derived classifications in the US-classification. The e-subclasses in the semiconductor field (US class 257) are available to US examiners for search purposes, but documents are not yet systematically classified in these groups. In three smaller technical fields (E21B43/26, G01S13/90 and G10L15/14), the work on new USPC subclasses based on ECLA has been completed and will be adopted soon into the official USPC.

### **Interpretation of rules**

In the trilateral classification meeting in the year 2000 it was decided to use the first place priority rule in Harmony projects, wherever feasible. However, during the discussion of some individual projects, this question kept coming back and has already caused delays in some projects. It appears that examiners participating in Harmony projects are not always completely aware of the agreed rule. In order to clarify the application of this rule in Harmony projects, the EPO presented a clarifying document.

### **WIKI Internet platform**

The EPO presented an experimental new Internet based tool "WIKI", adapted to sharing, editing and distributing content to a group of persons. Examiners of the EPO and the JPO have started to use this tool for discussing Harmony and other classification-related issues. The TO's noted that the system presented a useful functionality for discussing Harmony projects and expressed interest in further testing WIKI with a limited number of Harmony projects.

### **Importance of the IPC Reform for Trilateral Offices**

TO's and WIPO underlined once again the importance of the IPC reform and its timely implementation. In that respect, the EPO expressed again its full commitment to implement the IPC reform and to make the Master Classification Database available in time for entering into force of the new IPC at the beginning of 2006. The EPO referred to the considerable budget in the order of 1.8 million Euro which the office is committed to invest for this purpose, and that it expects a clear return on investment via accelerated Harmony and speedy introduction of Harmony results into the IPC. Noticeable achievements in these areas seem only possible, when all trilateral offices are committed to invest time and money on similar levels.

### **Progress in the technical implementation of the IPC reform**

EPO presented the status of the implementation, which was reported to be on schedule both for the MCD and for internal systems. It was pointed out that for a proper and timely preparation of the MCD procedures, timely availability of the IPC validity file is important.

JPO presented status information and details of the envisaged data exchange format to the MCD.

USPTO presented status information and further explained that the USPTO plans to make IPC schemes available to its examiners using rearrangements based on the standardized sequence of groups.

WIPO presented status information and underlined further details concerning the implementation of the IPC scheme itself and related services, the changes in the PCT procedure and the changes in administrative and business procedures.

WIPO is currently reviewing its fee policy with regard to IPC products. Some products will probably be charged at a marginal price for commercial customers. The products will remain free of charge for intellectual property offices. EPO and JPO declared that it would be beneficial for promotion of the IPC if IPC products were free of charge for all users. WIPO explained that this question would be discussed at the 36th meeting of the IPC Committee of Experts in Spring 2005.

### **Reclassification of back file to IPC-2006**

The EPO gave a presentation about the procedures for assigning IPC 2006 symbols to the documents published before 1 January 2006 and to store them in the MCD. These procedures include converting ECLA classifications to IPC-2006 where possible and complementing this information with data from DE, JP and RU offices as well as of other offices which are in a position to deliver such data. Classification data of offices not participating in reclassification would be administratively converted to advanced or core level IPC, where possible. Due to the propagation of IPC symbols among members of simple patent families, the number of documents receiving IPC-2006 symbols would be much higher than the number of documents actually reclassified.

### **Working Procedures for the Advanced Level Subcommittee**

The USPTO submitted a proposal for improved working procedures for the Advanced Level Subcommittee (ALS). Another proposal for defining the relations of the ALS with the IPC Revision Working Group was already submitted to the IPC e-forum for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee of Experts in October 2004. Some improvements were made to the document already submitted to the e-forum. The Working Group instructed the USPTO to post the amended document and the proposal for the ALS working procedures on the e-forum, in order to facilitate discussions at the CE meeting.

### **Specification of the IPC Validity File**

The WIPO delegation explained their latest version of the IPC Validity File Specification, which was the result of consultation with the TO's and therefore takes the comments and proposals of these offices into account. Discussion with the TO's took place in order to arrive at a consolidated version within a reasonable time and due to the special role of the EPO with respect to the MCD.

### **Revision of WIPO Standards ST.8 and ST.10/C**

Recent internal discussions at WIPO and consultations of WIPO with some offices have shown that the revised WIPO standards ST.8 and ST.10/C are not sufficiently clear and might lead to confusion in their application. Further revision of these standards will be on the agenda of the November meeting of the SDWG of the SCIT. The Working Group discussed a proposal containing clarifying modifications for the two standards and agreed on some amendments. The Working Group requested the EPO to forward the modification requests to the SCIT.

[End of Annex and of document]