

## **Special Union for the International Patent Classification (IPC Union) IPC Revision Working Group**

**Forty-Ninth Session**  
**Geneva, April 24 to 28, 2023**

### **REPORT**

*adopted by the Working Group*

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The IPC Revision Working Group (hereinafter referred to as “the Working Group”) held its forty-ninth session in Geneva from April 24 to 28, 2023. The following members of the Working Group were represented at the session: Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, the Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) and the European Patent Office (EPO) (29). Hungary, India and European Law Students’ Association (ELSA) were represented as observers. The list of participants appears as Annex I to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. K. Natsume, Assistant Director General, Infrastructure and Platforms Sector, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), who welcomed the participants.

### **OFFICERS**

3. Mr. J. Cowen (United Kingdom) was elected as Chair and Ms. N. Beauchemin (Canada) as Vice-Chair at the last session of the Working Group for the IPC revision cycle of 2022 – 2023.

4. Mrs. N. Xu (WIPO) acted as Secretary of the session.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

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

## **DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS**

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

## **REPORT ON THE FIFTY-FORTH SESSION OF THE IPC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

7. The Working Group noted an oral report by the Secretariat on the fifty-fourth session of the IPC Committee of Experts (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) (see document IPC/CE/54/2).

8. The Working Group was informed that the Committee reviewed a proposal by the International Bureau concerning modifications to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, in view of the changes in the WIPO General Rules of Procedure by shifting the officers’ terms of office from the beginning of the session immediately after their election to the final meeting of the session during which they are elected. The Committee decided to keep the current practice of the IPC-related bodies unchanged and agreed with several editorial changes in wordings to align with those used in the WIPO General Rules of Procedure.

9. The Working Group was further informed that the Committee expressed its great satisfaction and appreciation with the work achieved by the Working Group, in particular with the improved efficiency in knowing about the decreased average IPC-phase period. The Committee invited the Working Group to take into account both quality and quantity aspects in its future revision process. The Committee further invited a broader participation by offices in the revision under the IPC Revision Roadmap and to propose new emerging technologies (NETs) to the List of candidate areas of the Roadmap where needed.

10. It was further noted that the Committee expressed its deep and sincere appreciation to all member Offices of the Expert Group on Semiconductor Technologies (EGST), and, in particular to the EPO, the leading Office of the EGST, for the considerable outcome achieved so far. The Committee endorsed the latest EGST Roadmap and agreed on the continuation of the EGST activities.

11. The Working Group was also informed that the Committee agreed on certain modifications to the *Guide to the IPC* and Guidelines for Revision of the IPC, in particular, for example, the introduction of a new paragraph 107bis in the Guide on the “scheme for secondary classification” and the introduction of more detailed clarifications in the Appendix VI “Guidelines for Drafting Classification Definitions” of the Guidelines. Special attention of Rapporteurs of projects concerned should be drawn to those modifications while drafting future scheme and definition revision proposals. Furthermore, the Committee confirmed the two official publication dates for IPC definitions, i.e. on July 1 and January 1, which would allow for the definitions approval in the fall session of the Working Group to be integrated into the official publication of the IPC on January 1 of the following year.

## REPORT ON THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE IP5 WG1-WORKING GROUP ON CLASSIFICATION

12. The Working Group noted an oral report by the EPO on behalf of the Five IPOffices (hereinafter referred to as “the IP5 Offices”), on the twenty-fourth session of the IP5 Working Group on Classification (IP5 WG1).

13. The IP5 Offices agreed to promote three P-proposals to the F-phase, i.e. projects [F 183](#), F 184 and F 185, where project [F 183](#) was promoted further to the IPC phase.

14. It was noted that, during the twenty-fourth session of the IP5 WG1, the IP5 Offices agreed to promote 12 IP5 projects (F projects) to the IPC phase. The EPO, on behalf of the IP5 Offices, had posted to the e-forum, under project [CE 456](#), the updated lists of all ongoing IP5 projects and proposals (see Annex 43 to project file) in order to avoid overlap between the IPC revision requests and the IP5 ongoing revision activities.

15. The Working Group further noted that the IP5 Offices agreed on the first edition of the IP5 NET/AI Catalogue and appreciated this initiative. The Working Group further decided to integrate this Catalogue into the candidate areas under the IPC Revision Roadmap.

### IPC REVISION PROGRAM

15. The Working Group discussed 31 revision projects, namely: [C 505](#), [C 510](#), [C 511](#), [C 512](#), [C 513](#), [C 514](#), [C 515](#), [C 516](#), [C 522](#), [C 523](#), [C 524](#), [C 525](#), [C 526](#), [C 527](#), [F 140](#), [F 143](#), [F 155](#), [F 157](#), [F 158](#), [F 160](#), [F 166](#), [F 168](#), [F 169](#), [F 170](#), [F 171](#), [F 173](#), [F 174](#), [F 175](#), [F 179](#), [F 181](#) and [F 183](#).

16. The Working Group approved 20 revision projects, nine of which were completed with respect to scheme amendments and, if any, definition amendments, namely projects [C 510](#), [C 522](#), [C 523](#), [C 524](#), [F 160](#), [F 169](#), [F 173](#), [F 181](#) and [F 183](#), for which both the scheme and definition amendments would enter into force in IPC 2024.01; while seven of which were completed with respect to scheme amendments only, namely projects [C 526](#), [F 158](#), [F 166](#), [F 170](#), [F 171](#), [F 174](#), and [F 175](#), which would enter into force in IPC 2024.01. Meanwhile, four out of 21 projects were completed with respect to definitions to be integrated into IPC 2024.01, namely projects [C 505](#), [C 511](#), [C 512](#), and [F 143](#), while scheme amendments had been completed by the Working Group in its previous sessions.

17. The status of those projects and the list of future actions and deadlines are indicated in the corresponding projects on the e-forum. All decisions, observations and technical annexes are available in the “Working Group Decision” annexes of the corresponding projects on the e-forum.

18. The Working Group emphasized its decision at previous sessions and in the updated Guidelines for Drafting Definitions that definitions should be created for places where only additional explanation and guidance are necessary and are not available in the scheme. In addition, unnecessary lengthy definitions should always be avoided because they might discourage users from reading the whole content.

### IPC MAINTENANCE

19. The Working Group discussed 14 maintenance projects, namely: [M 621](#), [M 627](#), [M 633](#), [M 634](#), [M 812](#), [M 815](#), [M 817](#), [M 818](#), [M 820](#), [M 825](#), [M 827](#), [M 828](#), [M 829](#) and [M 830](#).

20. The Working Group completed eight maintenance projects with respect to either scheme or definition amendments, which would be integrated into IPC 2024.01, namely projects [M 627](#), [M 815](#), [M 817](#), [M 820](#), [M 825](#), [M 827](#), [M 828](#) and [M 830](#).

21. The status of those projects and the list of future actions and deadlines are indicated in the corresponding projects on the e-forum. All decisions, observations and technical annexes are available in the “Working Group Decision” Annexes of the corresponding projects on the e-forum.

22. The Working Group agreed to create two new maintenance projects, namely:

Electricity/Physics: M 832 (Rapporteur - Japan) – originating from project [C 523](#); and

T-independent: M 833 (Rapporteur - United States of America) – originating from project [M 825](#).

23. The status of those projects and the list of future actions and deadlines are indicated in the corresponding projects on the e-forum. All decisions, observations and technical annexes are available in the “Working Group Decision” Annexes of the corresponding projects on the e-forum.

### **STATUS OF REMOVAL OF NON-LIMITING REFERENCES (NLRs) WITHIN M 200 TO M 500 PROJECTS**

24. Discussions were based on a status report prepared by the International Bureau concerning maintenance projects for removal of NLRs for the scheme of the IPC (see Annex 43 to project file [WG 191](#)).

25. The Working Group noted that, among the 17 active projects, agreement had been achieved for the following six projects during discussions on the e-forum and that these projects could be considered completed. The corresponding amendments to the scheme and definitions would thus be included in IPC 2024.01.

[M 246](#) Removal of NLRs in subclass G05B (Rapporteur - United States of America)

[M 251](#) Removal of NLRs in subclass H03L (Rapporteur - United States of America)

[M 263](#) Removal of NLRs in subclass E21B (Rapporteur - United States of America)

[M 267](#) Removal of NLRs in subclass B64G (Rapporteur – United Kingdom)

[M 270](#) Removal of NLRs in subclass F15D (Rapporteur - United States of America)

[M 275](#) Removal of NLRs in subclass A47D (Rapporteur - Israel)

26. The Secretariat indicated that an updated table summarizing the status of the removal of NLRs from the scheme would be posted to project file [WG 191](#).

### **UPDATES ON IPC-RELATED IT SUPPORT**

27. The Working Group noted a short presentation by the International Bureau on the IPC-related IT support and updates and, in particular, on IPCPUB data status and its improvements.

28. It was reminded that the project [CE 447](#) would remain available for possible comments on improvements of the IPC Internet Publication, preferably before the end of 2023.

29. The Working Group invited Rapporteurs, Translators and commenting offices to make more active and better use of the IPCRMS system for preparing revision proposals, translations and comments.

## NEXT SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP

30. The Working Group, having assessed the workload expected for its next session, agreed to devote the first two and a half days to the electrical field, the following afternoon and the next morning to the chemical field and the last one and a half days to the mechanical field.

31. The Working Group noted the following tentative dates for its fiftieth session:

November 20 to 24, 2023.

*32. This report was unanimously adopted by the Working Group by electronic means on May 25, 2023.*

[Annexes follow]