

PCT-SAFE MOVES AHEAD

A modified Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) request form will be made available for use as of January 1, 2004. The new form will reflect some of the changes to the Rules of the PCT that will enter into effect on that date. Further, to accommodate these changes, PCT-EASY will be upgraded into WIPO's PCT electronic filing software, PCT-SAFE, which will be made available before January 1, 2004.

As PCT-SAFE incorporates full PCT-EASY functionality – allowing for the creation and printing of the validated PCT-EASY request form and the PCT-EASY diskette –the distribution of PCT-EASY as separate software will be discontinued. Consequently, as of January 1, 2004, all PCT-EASY users are requested to upgrade their current software to the new PCT-SAFE software.

The PCT-SAFE software will be made available for download from the PCT-SAFE website (www.wipo.int/PCT-SAFE) and as a CD installation. If you would like to order a copy of the PCT-SAFE, please send an e-mail (pcteasy.help@wipo.int) or fax (+41-22 338 80 40) to the PCT-EASY Help Desk, indicating clearly your name, full postal address and the mention "Request for PCT-SAFE CD".



Fully Electronic PCT Applications

Earlier this year Koninklijke Philips Electronics N.V. became the first to file a fully electronic international application under the PCT with the WIPO Receiving Office (RO/IB) using PCT-SAFE software. The availability of the upgraded PCT-SAFE secure electronic filing facility means that all PCT users will soon be able to file their international applications with RO/IB either online or using physical media such as CD-R.

PCT-SAFE allows for applicants to prepare fully electronic applications as well as PCT-EASY applications. The possibility to file fully electronic applications is expected to be available to all users of the PCT in early 2004 and will offer PCT applicants significant benefits. Users will be able to submit validated applications without the printing, copying and mailing normally associated with such a transaction. PCT-SAFE will also allow users to receive almost immediate notification that their application has been received and is being processed. The PCT-SAFE development was made possible through the adoption by the industrial property offices of the PCT Contracting States of a legal framework and technical standard necessary for the implementation of electronic filing and processing of international applications, and their subsequent

Sustained growth in the use of the PCT system, which is now handling over 100,000 international applications per year, and the increasing complexity of applications, in particular, from the biotechnology sector, prompted WIPO to look for business solutions to handle such large amounts of data while still providing a value for money, quality service to users. PCT-SAFE will play a key role in ensuring the timely receipt and processing of international applications filed under the PCT.

WIPO will continue to provide information about developments in the PCT-SAFE project through the Internet at www.wipo.int/PCT-SAFE, the *PCT Newsletter* and the *WIPO Magazine*. A WIPO publication entitled "What is PCT-SAFE?" (publication number 496) is also available at the address indicated on the back cover of the magazine.



Further information on the January 2004 PCT Rule changes can be found on the PCT website under the section PCT Meetings, in particular the PCT Assemblies 2002 (www.wipo.int/documents/en/document/govbody/wo_pct/index_31.htm), PCT Assemblies 2003 (www.wipo.int/documents/en/document/govbody/wo_pct/index_32.htm), and in the PCT Newsletters 10/2002 and 10/2003 (www.wipo.int/pct/en/newslett/index.htm).