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Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

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DATE FORMAT RECOMMENDED IN WIPO STANDARDS

Document prepared by the Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifth session held from May 29 to June 2, 2017, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) adopted WIPO Standards ST.27 "Recommendation for the exchange of patent legal status data". The CWS requested the XML4IP Task Force to develop, in consultation with the Legal Status Task Force, XML schema components based on the new WIPO Standard ST.27 in order to facilitate the exchange of patent legal status data. (See paragraphs 50 and 54 of document CWS/5/22.)

2. The CWS took note that there might be an inconsistency between the date format recommended in WIPO Standard ST.27 referring to WIPO Standard ST.2, and the future extensible markup language (XML) schema components for patent legal status based on the WIPO Standard ST.96. Considering the potential inconsistency mentioned above, the CWS requested the Secretariat to review the recommended date format(s) in WIPO Standards and report the outcome at its current session. (See paragraphs 56 and 57 of document CWS/5/22.)

DATE FORMATS USED IN WIPO STANDARDS

3. As a follow-up to the CWS/5, the Secretariat has investigated a possible inconsistency of date format(s) used in various WIPO Standards with the recommendation of WIPO Standard ST.2; and any amendments should be made to the relevant WIPO Standards, including Standard ST.2.

4.   WIPO Standard ST.2 recommends that the complete representation of a calendar date should be a single numeric data string comprising eight numerals in either of the following two sequences of date elements: (a) CCYY MM DD, or (b) DD MM CCYY; where "CCYY" represents a calendar year, "MM" the ordinal number of a calendar month within the calendar year, and "DD" the ordinal number of a day within the calendar month. It is recommended that the sequence provided in option (a), above, be used in the field of electronic data storage and for data transfer on electronic data carriers. For the sake of legibility of a calendar date expressed in printed industrial property documents, in printed official gazettes and on user interfaces of electronic industrial property information products, the date elements should be separated by signs, i.e., full stops, slants or hyphens, or by spaces. (See paragraphs 7 and 11 of WIPO Standard ST.2.)

5.   The following WIPO Standards refer to Standards ST.2 for the calendar date format: ST.1, ST.7/A, ST.9, ST.10, ST.10/C, ST.14, ST.18, ST.26, ST.27, ST.37, ST.50, ST.60, ST.63, ST.80 and ST.81. WIPO XML Standards, i.e., ST.36, ST.66, ST.86 and ST.96, however, do not refer to Standard ST.2, but Standard ST.36 defines its own date format, YYYYMMDD, e.g., 20040717 represents 2004 July 17th; Standards ST.66 and ST.86 refer to ISO 8601 "Data elements and interchange formats – Information interchange – Representation of dates", which is "YYYY-MM-DD", e.g., 2018-10-15; and Standard ST.96 uses the datatype of xs:date defined by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) which forms "YYYY-MM-DD", e.g., 2018-10-15.

6.   Moreover, as WIPO Standard ST.2 and W3C refer to the ISO 8601 "Data elements and interchange formats—Information interchange—Representation of dates and times," the date formats referred to or used in WIPO Standards should be aligned with ISO 8601. The difference between the date formats is whether the inclusion of the separator dash "-" is explicitly recommended as part of three date elements.

7.   In addition, it should be noted that the WIPO XML Standards mentioned above also refer to other WIPO Standards such as ST.3, ST.9, ST.60 and ST.80 with regard to other business information, but restructure the information in XML format following their own XML design rules and conventions.

PROPOSAL

8.   The Secretariat considers that the main purpose of Standard ST.2 is to recommend the eight entire number positions instead of six positions and the order of components, preferably year, month and date.

9.   The current WIPO Standard ST.2 was published in May 1997 and at that time XML technology was not used. Therefore it could be considered whether it would be more appropriate to revise Standard ST.2, in particular paragraph 11, to specify the date format for XML following W3C recommendation, i.e., YYYY-MM-DD. However, it would not be the case for Standard ST.36 which is based on the XML technology of Document Type Definition (DTD) as it can be applied to XML schema technology. As a result, the Secretariat considers that it would be better to keep the current recommendations on the date format in XML unchanged. This means the date format "YYYYMMDD" without separator will be used in the XML DTD format and the date format "YYYY-MM-DD" should be used in XML schema format. This is due to the fact that the XML Standards define their own data model for other business data defined in other WIPO Standards.

10.   Furthermore, WIPO Standard ST.27 refers to WIPO Standard ST.2 and uses the date format "YYYYMMDD" in examples. However, like other non-XML Standards, WIPO Standard ST.27 does not specify how legal status data should be formed in XML structure even if it is assumed that XML will be used for legal status data exchange.

11.	In accordance with the request by the CWS, the XML4IP Task Force is developing XML schema components for legal status data (legal status XML) based on the WIPO Standards ST.27 and ST.96. In the current draft schema, xsd:date is used for ST.96-based XML schema for the legal status XML even though a specific date type following ST.2 is recommended in Standard ST.27.

12.	In conclusion, the Secretariat considers that all recommendations on date format across all WIPO Standards are aligned with ISO 8601. The Secretariat, therefore, proposes not to change any WIPO Standard in relation to the date format and requests the CWS to reaffirm that the legal status data XML should be based on WIPO Standard ST.96.

*13.	The CWS is invited to note the content of this document and consider the proposal for keeping Standards unchanged in view of recommended data format, as indicated in paragraph 12, above.*

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