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WIPO

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

GENEVA

SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC UNION)

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

Thirty-Third Session
Geneva, October 2 to 10, 2003

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

Document prepared by the Secretariat

1.   The Annex to this document contains the report on the ninth 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

Europäisches Patentamt

GD1

European Patent Office

DG1

Office européen des brevets

DG1

Principal Directorate Tools-Documentation

HP/03.135/hp

Report on Trilateral Classification Working Group Meeting held in Tokyo from September 8 to 12, 2003

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the meeting was 1) to discuss the progress in HARMONY; 2) to review the draft document on the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the reformed IPC in view of a proposed simplification of the complex rules; 3) to discuss the pending items for the reformed IPC.

HARMONY

Review of the current Harmony projects

The Harmony project list contained 22 projects, which were to be reviewed. The current status is the following:

2 projects with status F or final stage where reclassification is to be carried out and classification of new incoming documents can be done according to the new scheme.

4 projects with status D or test phase of the scheme and change of the scheme, if needed

9 projects with status C or proposal of the scheme with discussion rounds

5 projects with status A or proposal of scope

2 projects were still suspended but one is reactivated

Extension of the number of projects

Seven new projects are added to the list which brings the total number of projects on 29. It is noted that the comparison of the respective reorganisation plans at the end of 2003 should allow to extend the list of projects.

Project plan template

One further step was added to the project plan template for Harmony projects namely "Propose scheme to IPC". It was agreed that this action belongs to phase C but could be done at any moment in the phase C.

E-Forum on Harmony

The TOs expressed their appreciation to I.B. for establishing the E-forum for the management of the Harmony projects. The TOs requested to introduce the use of different types of passwords in order to make it available for more users including member states of the EPO. I.B. offered to improve the E-forum as soon as possible.

Use of ECLA in USPC at the USPTO

The USPTO identified areas where ECLA subdivisions could be introduced in the USPC. These subdivisions are presented as normal USPC subdivisions. Lists are now made and discussions with the examiners are to be started. The EPO should inform the USPTO on possible changes in these areas.

Use of E-subclasses in the USPC

The USPTO reported on the present situation and although the implementation of the E-subclasses was behind the original schedule, US would continue with its efforts.

Exchange of examiners

The exchange of examiners is very useful in promoting Harmony projects. It is agreed that examiners should receive instructions about the main purpose of the visit. A document elaborated by the EPO with title "Classification Activities for Examiners Participating in the Trilateral Examiner exchange" could serve as a basis for it.

THE REFORM OF THE IPC

CONOPS

The EPO reported on internal discussions with the computer department on the implementation of the rules for the reformed IPC. The current CONOPS document was felt to be very complex and it was questioned if all possible deviations from the basic rules were needed. Therefore a simplification of CONOPS was proposed.

The concept of non-active priorities e.g. for Continuation-In-Part and divided-out, which is used for ECLA propagation should also be used for the IPC. However this concept should still allow Offices to reclassify documents with non-active priorities independently from the parent document.

The propagation should not be limited but completely carried out for all family members also outside the PCT minimum documentation and also to all successive publications. Offices are allowed to give specific classification data for national family documents or for the successive publications. These classifications are overruling the propagated data.

The TOs accepted the proposed simplification. CONOPS is adapted accordingly. Also standard expressions were introduced e.g. for the family types. Also the comments made by the member offices of the EPO during their meeting in the EPO were reflected in the document. Also I.B. introduced changes to reflect the current situation.

Revision of the Guide of the IPC

The TOs discussed mainly the paragraphs 144 and 145 of the Guide as well as the Markush practice. They agreed that some rewording could improve the common understanding and they agreed to make efforts to finalise the revision of the Guide at the next meeting of the Task Force for the Guide.

[End of Annex and of document]