

Special Union for the International Patent Classification (IPC Union)

Committee of Experts

Forty-Sixth Session

Geneva, February 26 to 28, 2014

REPORT

adopted by the Committee of Experts

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee of Experts of the IPC Union (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) held its forty-sixth session in Geneva from February 26 to 28, 2014. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session: Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America (29). The Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) and the European Patent Office (EPO) were also represented. The list of participants appears as Annex I to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. Antonios Farassopoulos, Director, International Classifications and Standards Division, who welcomed the participants.

OFFICERS

3. The Committee unanimously elected Mr. Hiroshi Kawamata (Japan) as Chair and Ms. Nancy Beauchemin (Canada) and Ms. Lavinia Ramona Marina Cornea (Romania), as Vice-Chairs.
4. Mr. Antonios Farassopoulos (WIPO) acted as Secretary of the session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Committee unanimously adopted the agenda with a modification, which appears as Annex II to this report.
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 Committee (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 Committee was expressed or repeated after the conclusion was reached.

REPORT ON THE EIGHTH AND NINTH SESSIONS OF THE IP5 WG1-WORKING GROUP ON CLASSIFICATION

7. The Committee noted brief oral reports by the USPTO and KIPO on the eighth and ninth sessions, respectively, of the IP5 WG1-Working Group on Classification (WG1).
8. At its eighth session, the WG1 agreed on a new and revised mandate based on the Global Classification Initiative (GCI) concept. The CHC Project was closed out. The new mandate focused on two activities:
 - I. introduction of aligned internal classification schemes into the IPC; and
 - II. adaptation of classification schemes to emerging technologies.
9. The WG1 received a revision proposal in the area of additive manufacturing under the Activity II, above. The WG1 also discussed a draft Operating Procedures (GCI-OPS) document which described in detail the process on how proposals on GCI Activities I and II would work. The WG1 agreed that IP5 Office revision projects should be automatically included in the working program of the IPC Revision Working Group (hereinafter referred to as the "Working Group"), and given priority.
10. Concerning its ninth session, the WG1 reviewed an update on the classification systems, as well as the status of CPC pilot projects in KIPO and SIPO. The WG1 also agreed to launch 16 F projects in IP5 phase, namely, projects F 019 to F 034.

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS ON THE IPC REVISION PROGRAM

11. Discussions were based on Annex 2 to project file [CE 462](#) prepared by the International Bureau containing a status report on the activities of the Working Group in particular, on the IPC revision program.

12. The Committee recalled its decision at the forty-fifth session that the Working Group would be responsible for all technical or formal consideration of revision projects, and to delegate its authority to adopt approved schemes to the Working Group.

13. The Committee noted that the total number of A and F projects had decreased since IPC-2013.01 and, in contrast, the number of C projects had rapidly increased since IPC-2014.01. The Committee also noted that, in addition to the IP5 Offices, increasingly, more offices, such as Brazil, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, submitted revision requests under the framework of the IPC Revision Roadmap.

IPC REVISION MANAGEMENT (IPCRM) PROJECT AND IMPLICATIONS ON IPC PUBLICATION AND MASTER FILES

14. In the framework of the replacement of the Reformed IPC Information System (RIPCIS) by a new IPC Revision Management System (IPCRMS), the Committee discussed the principles of the procedure of the revision, as needed for IPCRMS, the way that IPCRMS will interact with Offices and the proposed simplifications and changes in the Master Files and in the IPC Publication. This discussion was based on project [CE 457](#) and the conclusions are included in Annex III to this report.

REPORT ON IPC-RELATED IT SYSTEMS

15. The International Bureau delivered a [presentation](#) on the status of IPCRECLASS functional evolutions and on the parallel viewer (FIPCPC) project.

16. IPCRECLASS is now able to perform default transfer for stage 3 reclassification and ignores the kind code of documents proposed by offices for reclassification at family level. It also allows for identification of potential candidates for de-activation, includes a Web service for reclassification and additional features for a better monitoring of IPC reclassification.

17. The International Bureau gave an update to the Committee on the status of the FIPCPC project. An extended text search facility ([STATS](#)), based on the statistical analysis of text occurrence in PATENTSCOPE documents and most frequently used IPC symbols in these documents, was added to the IPC Internet publication (IPCPUB) in Autumn 2013.

18. The International Bureau also demonstrated the beta version of the parallel viewer showing the CPC and FI subdivisions in the context of the IPC.

19. The International Bureau clarified that the parallel viewer will neither include the Y section nor the 2000 symbols of the CPC and described the impact of problems found in the CPC and FI XML scheme and concordance files. The International Bureau and the EPO/United States of America, who are the owners of CPC, or Japan, who is the owner of FI, were invited to keep in touch to solve those problems as best as possible.

20. The Committee reviewed several suggestions submitted to projects [CE 445](#), [CE 446](#) and [CE 447](#) from offices and confirmed, in particular, the need to maintain a PDF version of the IPC in two columns, to give more visibility to the *Guide* in IPCPUB and to consider the parallel viewer as a functional extension also in the publication of national versions of the IPC. The Committee also noted that the position 40 "Source of Classification Data" of ST.8 might not be used properly in accordance with its definition and decided to create project CE 464, with the United States of America as Rapporteur, to further investigate this issue and to propose clarification for consideration at its next session.

21. In an effort to streamline its investments in IT support for the IPC, the International Bureau announced a survey aiming at reviewing the utility of each by-product of IPC master files.

TREATMENT OF NON-RECLASSIFIED PATENT DOCUMENTS IN THE MASTER CLASSIFICATION DATABASE (MCD) AND IPCRECLASS

22. Discussions were based on Annex 20 to project file [CE 381](#).

23. The Committee noted a table prepared by the International Bureau containing statistics on the amount of non-reclassified patent families. A large amount of reclassification data had been delivered to the IPCRECLASS by responsible offices since last year. The percentage of non-reclassified patent families had decreased from 12.5% to 6.2% for revision projects that entered into force in 2007 and 2008.

24. The Delegation of the EPO indicated that its working lists should be excluded from IPCRECLASS since its reclassification data had been stored in the MCD and that the data in IPCRECLASS and the MCD should be synchronized. The International Bureau and the EPO were invited to agree bilaterally on a process for synchronizing IPCRECLASS with the MCD.

25. The Committee also noted that some offices had already completed their reclassification work for certain projects, however for some unknown reason, the reclassification data were not correctly recorded in IPCRECLASS. Offices were therefore invited to review their reclassification status and to submit their result lists properly.

26. The International Bureau was invited to implement the default transfers to revision projects that entered into force in 2007 and 2008 after the above synchronization and the submission of result lists by offices.

27. The Committee decided to postpone the inclusion of additional projects, that entered into force in 2009 and thereafter, to implement default transfers until its next session. The International Bureau was therefore invited to propose additional projects to implement default transfers.

28. The Committee considered non-reclassified documents of project M 099 in version 2010.01 that should have been dealt with by one-to-one automatic transfer in the MCD. The International Bureau and the EPO were invited to further investigate this issue.

MASTER CLASSIFICATION DATABASE AND RECLASSIFICATION STATUS REPORT

29. The Committee noted that the International Bureau posted accumulated statistics from the MCD and the current reports from IPCRECLASS (see Annex 11 to project file [QC 013](#)).

30. It was noted that the percentage of already reclassified patent families for versions 2007.01 to 2011.01 was considerably improved compared to last year. The percentage for versions 2007.01 to 2008.04 had reached more than 90% of the original, while that for versions 2009.01 to 2012.02 remained at a relatively low level of 40% to 70%. The total backlog of IPC reclassification for versions 2007.01 to 2014.01 amounts to 1.6 million families.

31. The Committee noted a considerable amount of non-reclassified documents in versions 2013.01 and 2014.01. The International Bureau was requested to update the IPC warnings in version 2014.01 in the IPC Internet publication by the end of March 2014.

32. The International Bureau was invited to provide updated statistics for consideration by the Committee at its next session.

AMENDMENTS TO THE *GUIDE TO THE IPC* AND OTHER BASIC IPC DOCUMENTS

33. Discussions were based on project file [CE 454](#), in particular, on Annex 5 to the project file prepared by the International Bureau containing amendments to the *Guide*.

34. The Committee adopted, with some modifications, the proposed amendments to paragraphs 15, 28, 39, 40, 45, 48, 63, 92bis, 99 147, 151 and 163, which appear in Annex IV to this report. These amendments would be included in version 2014 of the *Guide*.

35. Discussions were also based on project file [CE 455](#), in particular, on Annexes 11 and 13 to the project file, containing amendments to the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC and other basic IPC documents prepared by the International Bureau which integrated proposals and comments by offices, and a consolidated proposal by Sweden, respectively.

36. The Committee adopted, with some modifications, the amendments to paragraphs 2, 37, 37bis, 38, 67, 122, 123, 125 and Appendix I of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC, which appear in Annex V to this report.

37. It also adopted, with some modifications, the amendments to the Guidelines for Drafting Classification Definitions, which appear in Annex VI to this report.

38. With respect to the amendments to the IPC Revision Policy and Procedure, the Committee noted that this document was outdated in relation to the IPC Revision Roadmap and the IP5's new activities. It was therefore decided to remove the hyperlink to this document from the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC and the International Bureau was invited to update the entire document for consideration by the Committee at its next session.

REMOVAL OF NON-LIMITING REFERENCES (NLRs) FROM THE SCHEME OF THE IPC

39. Discussions were based on Annex 17 to project [WG 191](#). In view of the decrease of new definition projects considered by the Working Group, based on the Committee's decision at the forty-fifth session that new subclass definitions would be considered only in those subclasses where there is evidence that the scheme or the relation of the subclass with other places is not clear enough, concerns were expressed by the Committee on the completion of the removal of NLRs from the scheme. Currently more than 348 subclasses remained to be completed.

40. It was decided to include the task of removal of NLRs in the framework of revision projects and maintenance projects, on a voluntary basis, following agreement by the corresponding Rapporteurs.

41. In order to further accelerate this removal, it was decided to create project [WG 301](#) with the International Bureau as Rapporteur. During a pilot phase the International Bureau would post a proposal on 10 subclasses. Comments should be submitted exclusively to the IEF, i.e. they will not be discussed at the Working Group, and only to indicate disagreement with individual proposals. The International Bureau would then post a proposal including the amendments where there is no disagreement, as well as corresponding definitions that include non-limiting references removed from the scheme.

42. If, during the pilot phase, there is substantial agreement with International Bureau's proposals, the International Bureau would submit at the forty-seventh session of the Committee a plan to continue and complete the removal of NLRs using the above procedure. In case of important disagreements, the International Bureau should submit instead an alternative procedure that would not impact the revision tasks of the Working Group.

NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

43. The Committee noted the following tentative dates for its next regular session:

Geneva, February 9 to 13, 2015.

44. This report was unanimously adopted by the Committee of Experts by electronic means on March 20, 2014.

[Annexes follow]