

ANNEX III

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

Document prepared by the European Patent Office (EPO)

I. Introduction

From September 11-14, 2001, a trilateral working group meeting on classification has been held in The Hague. On the agenda were three main items namely the IPC Reform, the Harmony project and the handling of traditional knowledge.

II. IPC Reform

Under the heading IPC Reform 12 main items were discussed namely

- Glossary of terms
- What to classify
- Concept of Operations
- Revision Policy and Procedure for the Reformed IPC
- ST.8 Revision Proposal
- Creation of core level and impact of the last place rule
- Actions needed for the the use of the Reformed IPC
- Limiting versus informative references
- Guidelines for the conversion of existing IPC indexing schemes
- Revision cycles
- Revision of the IPC guide
- Review of the IPC reform implementation plan.

Substantial progress has been made for most of the items. The full agreement on the glossary of terms facilitated a common understanding on what to classify. Due to a lack of time the concept of operations was not discussed in detail but it is intended to work it out begin of 2002.

It can be concluded that the trilateral offices have reached a common understanding for the important issues but a lot of details have still to be worked out.

III. Harmony Project

Under the heading Harmony Project four main items were discussed namely

- Greatest Common Divisor Classification (GCDC)
- Testing of USPC rules
- List with technical fields for harmonisation
- Approach for Business Methods.

It is agreed that when the three offices are not able to agree all three on a harmonisation but if two are prepared to start this harmonisation that in such cases the harmonisation should start and the third office is informed on the progress made. As result 19 technical fields were discussed from which one is declared abandoned and two are for the time being pending or 16 technical fields are open for harmonisation.

Also a trilateral database with the names of the examiners grouped per technical field e.g. see REPA of the EPO should be set up to facilitate the later personal contact between examiners. Modern tools as Video-Conferencing should be used, if needed.

IV. Traditional Knowledge

In the scope of WIPO namely the Committee of Experts a task force on traditional knowledge is created and the trilateral offices are members. The availability of the data e.g. in databases as well as the access to it via classification symbols were discussed. It is felt that no major changes are to be made in the IPC and the EPO offered to load the data in a database under EPOQUE. Copies could be made for the other offices.

[Annex IV follows]