

GREECE

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

56th Series of Meetings

Geneva, October 3rd, 2016

General Statement (Agenda item 5)

Chair,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

We would like to renew our support to the excellent work of the World Intellectual Property Organization in the pursuance of its strategic goals. We would also like to thank the WIPO Secretariat for the continued support in preparing the numerous documents for the Assemblies. We would also like to congratulate you for taking up the responsibility of chairing this General Assembly.

Greece would like to associate with the statements made by group B and by the EU and its member states. As regards the Design Law Treaty, the draft elaborated by the Standing Committee on Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications in a series of meetings was mature enough to be submitted to a Diplomatic Conference since 2014. Due to a subsequent proposal for inclusion of a substantive requirement within the filing requirements, harmonization of design registration formalities has regrettably not been possible. Both outstanding issues of technical assistance and disclosure requirement have been thoroughly examined in the SCT. A solution compatible to a formalities treaty and to design law could be found, so that a Diplomatic Conference is convened in 2017.

Work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore has significantly progressed in 2016. There are still however many outstanding issues to be resolved and the texts elaborated need further examination.

The Standing Committee on the Law of Patents has continued to examine the five topics under consideration. We support the continuation of discussions. At the same time we would like to reiterate our interest in initiating patent law harmonization discussions.

Our support is also extended to the work of the Patent Cooperation Treaty Working Group. The changing needs of users, third parties and patent Offices should be the guiding force for continuously improving the PCT system.

For the 16th consecutive year Greece has benefited from the implementation of the International Treaty of the Madrid Protocol, which entered into force in Greece in 2000. Despite the initial financial burden to the Hellenic Trademark Office, the ratification proved beneficial in the long run. Apart from increased revenue to the National Office, that contributed to its financial sustainability, numerous Greek undertakings could reinforce their international presence, during the economic crisis, by registering their trademarks in WIPO. This led to a steady increase of the number of international applications. We continue to participate in the Working Group on the legal development of the Madrid System and look forward to further development of the system.

Following the financial statements presented during the last Program and Budget Committee session, we believe, that although WIPO's financial situation is sound, the international context under which it is requested to operate calls for prudence.

As regards External Offices, following the decision adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, we trust that a coherent decision will be reached.

We look forward to the discussions and express our willingness to engage in a constructive spirit towards finding fair and balanced solutions.

I thank you Mr. Chair.