

General Statement

Iceland would first and foremost like to thank WIPO for continued strong and fruitful cooperation and support in various aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. It is of high importance to have access, not only to wide variety of information, technical resources and guidelines but also to be able to interact with the Office's experts as needed. On 25 August 2017 Iceland joined the Global Brands Database, an excellent tool for both users and IPR Offices.

The importance of and interest in the international filing systems, namely the PCT, Madrid and The Hague systems is continuous in Iceland. Filing numbers have been similar the last few years, with though a slight increase in all areas.

The meeting of International Searching and Examining Authorities under the PCT (PCT MIA) and the MIA Quality Subgroup meetings were held back to back in Reykjavík, 6 – 10 February 2017. The meetings were hosted by the Nordic Patent Institute (NPI) and were organized by WIPO, NPI and the Icelandic Patent Office. The meetings were very well prepared by the WIPO Secretariat. Mr. John Sandage, Deputy Director General, opened the MIA meeting which was chaired by Ms. Borghildur Erlingsdóttir, Director General of the Icelandic Patent Office and chair of the board of the Nordic Patent Institute. Mr. Sandage also attended a meeting with the board of the Icelandic Trademark and Patent association in Reykjavík, which was very useful.

On 15 April 2017, 20 years had passed since the ratification of the Madrid Protocol in Iceland. The accession to this International Instrument changed the landscape in Iceland in many ways, increasing both registrations from other countries and awareness in the country as to the necessity to register national trademarks in important markets. To underline the importance of the Madrid Protocol for Icelandic users, the IPO is highly interested in hosting a Madrid seminar in Iceland, focusing both on the users of the system and newcomers, such as start-up companies and new innovative businesses.

In August 2017 the IPO was made aware that written notifications of acceptance of the changes to the 1999 and 2003 changes to the WIPO Convention had not yet been received by WIPO from the Icelandic Government. The IPO is thoroughly looking into the matter and will encourage the Icelandic Government to confirm the acceptance of the changes as soon as possible.

The Icelandic Patent Office celebrated the World IP Day on 28 April 2017 by hosting a half-day conference dedicated to the year's topic *Innovation – improving lives*. Lecturers from four Icelandic firms who in their business actively use IPRs gave presentations on various aspects in relation to this important topic. The conference was very well attended by interested parties, such as universities and companies with focus on IP and the improvement of lives.

In March 2017, during the SCT meeting in Geneva, Iceland raised concerns as to the seemingly insufficient protection against the registration of Country Names as Trademarks. The Icelandic Government has in the last years had to allocate considerable time, effort and fund to raise objections to the registration of ICELAND as word mark for several goods and services. Iceland finds it unacceptable that private parties are able to register the country name as word marks and thus prevent Icelandic users from referring to their origin either in marketing or in trademark registrations as well. The indirect protection provided by international and national law should be able to prevent registration of country names as wordmarks, granting all countries and their businesses the right to control the use thereof. The use of country names should be the fundamental right of every country.

No changes were made to national law in Iceland relating to IPRs last year but a few provisions of the Patent Act and the Patent Regulation are being reviewed. The recent EU Directive on Trademarks has, however, not been implemented into the EEA Agreement, thus changes to the Trademark Act and Regulation have been on hold. In June 2017 the first Icelandic Geographical Indication was registered.

To conclude, Iceland would like to thank the WIPO team for organizing this General Assemblies meeting in Geneva and congratulates Mr. Gurry on his achievements within the Organization. Next on the agenda for Iceland is to encourage the ratification of the 1999 and 2003 changes to the WIPO Convention and the organizing of the seminar on the Madrid system. Iceland is looking forward to welcoming WIPO delegations for these and other events in the future.