

GREECE

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

61st Series of Meetings

Geneva, September 21st, 2020

General Statement (Agenda item 5)

Honorable Chair,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

Mr. Chair allow us to congratulate you for your commitment and leadership as Chair of the General Assembly. We also thank the WIPO Secretariat for their support in preparing for the current Assemblies under unusual circumstances experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We thank Director General Gurry for his outstanding leadership and for his commitment in promoting a balanced and inclusive intellectual property system and in addressing challenges emerging from the rapid evolution of technology affecting IP policies worldwide. We are confident, that Director General elect Daren Tang will further strengthen the IP system and wish him every success in advancing WIPO's strategic goals.

Our delegation aligns with the statements delivered by group B and by the European Union and its member states. Furthermore, we wish to praise WIPO's positive financial result due to prudent management and to a continuous increase in PCT and Madrid filings. Delivering high quality services to users should remain a priority in order to ensure an effective IPR system. Towards this end, the digital transformation of filing procedures and the facilitation of access to tools would

contribute to making the IP system easily accessible and responsive to the needs of users. Such a system would in turn promote the creation of intangible IP assets and contribute to economic growth and benefit the society.

Greece has recently modernised the IP system by introducing a new law on trade marks (L.4679/20-3-2020). The new Law is harmonized with both the EU Directive 2015/2436 and the Enforcement Directive 2004/48 and has brought fundamental changes making the system of TM protection in Greece more operational, faster and effective.

A united and powerful market control mechanism was established by law 4712/29-7-2020, namely the Interagency for Market Control (D.I.M.E.A.). It's mission includes the protection of internal market by boosting competitiveness and entrepreneurship, safeguarding consumers, enhancing national security, protecting intellectual property, creating goodwill of trade marks and increasing public and business revenues. In addition, a clear definition of counterfeit goods was introduced, along with strict fines (amounting up to 100.000 €) for those who trade and traffic counterfeit goods. The immediate and rapid destruction of confiscated IP infringing goods is also foreseen. Illicit trade is expected to be restricted to a considerable extend, due to the activities of D.I.M.E.A.

Furthermore, the Greek Trade Mark Office, due to the financial support of the EUIPO, has completed last June the digitalization of its registry. A completely electronic TM registry is expected to be available to users by the end of this year, necessary for an operational and effective TM system. We should also mention the satisfactory number of almost 4.000 national TM applications, from the beginning of 2020 until now, despite the closure for the public of the Greek TM Office for 3 months. E-filing tools provided by EUIPO during the previous years proved very effective under these unexpected circumstances.

In the area of patents and industrial designs, the Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation (OBI) continued to improve IT infrastructure and access to a fully electronic filing system. Due to the digitization of the filing procedure, filings were not disrupted during the lockdown period due to the pandemic. It is noteworthy to mention, that the number of patent filings increased more than 30% during the first semester of 2020, despite the lockdown period. Paperless communication is encouraged. PCT applications filed before OBI are transmitted only electronically to the International Bureau via e-PCT. OBI, as an ISO certified Office, remains committed to providing quality services to users. Access to the IP system improved by enlarging the network of regional patent libraries located in university campuses or Chambers of Commerce in 7 Greek cities, in order to establish links with the local community and businesses.

In the area of IPR enforcement, targeted trainings were provided by OBI to law enforcement officials. A video spot was produced to raise public awareness on the consequences of purchasing counterfeit products. A project was recently launched in collaboration with EUIPO and the municipality of Thessalonica, where the city joined the network of “AUTHENTICITIES”, to prevent the sale of counterfeit goods and sensitize citizens and local authorities on the importance of buying original products. A mobile application for reporting to the municipal police illicit trade activities in real time, was also developed.

In relation to copyright, a number of significant initiatives and steps have been undertaken by the Hellenic Copyright Organization (HCO), which is the competent national authority for copyright and related rights issues under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. It's worth mentioning that in respect to digital piracy, a significant legislative amendment has been recently implemented aiming at fostering the role and competence of the administrative Committee for the Notification of Copyright and Related – Rights Infringements on the Internet. According to this new provision of the Greek Copyright Act, the Committee can order the dynamic blocking of access to infringing copyright

material on the grounds of the assessment of the circumvention of its prior decision(s). The change aims at effectively combatting piracy in the digital environment in alliance with the coordinated efforts made both at EU and international level. Last but not least, the Hellenic Copyright organization has also undertaken significant awareness raising initiatives, such as the creation of the national portal of 'Agorateka' to promote legal creative content sources and an EU-funded educational program for the copyright education of youngsters and secondary school teachers in Greece and Cyprus.

Our delegation remains committed to contribute to the discussions in a constructive spirit.

Thank you Chair.