

Meeting of International Authorities under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

**Twenty-Fifth Session
Madrid, February 21 to 23, 2018**

PARTICIPATION IN WIPO CASE IN SUPPORT OF GLOBAL DOSSIER

Document prepared by the European Patent Office

BACKGROUND

1. The WIPO Centralized Access to Search Examination (WIPO CASE) system was initiated in 2011 by the Vancouver Group of Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) (Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom) to allow the exchange of documents between examiners in the three Offices. In 2015, the system was further enhanced to allow any Patent Office to become a participant of the WIPO CASE system by notifying the International Bureau and by agreeing to the new 2015 terms and conditions. Further background on WIPO CASE can be found in document PCT/WG/9/4, which was discussed at the ninth session of the PCT Working Group in 2016. More recent information on WIPO CASE, including the terms and conditions can be accessed from the WIPO website at www.wipo.int/case/en/.
2. IPOs can choose to participate as Providing Offices and/or Accessing Offices. Providing Offices make available at least part of their dossier information. Patent dossiers are either directly uploaded into WIPO CASE or exchange of dossier information occurs via secure web services. Participating Offices will endeavor to become Providing Offices once they are legally, operationally and technically ready to do so.
3. Accessing Offices have access to the WIPO CASE web portal and can use the system to retrieve documents which are made available by relevant Providing Offices. In return, Accessing Offices should make their patent family information available to WIPO in order to develop the search indexes tools to retrieve applications and other documentation.

4. The WIPO CASE system provides a simple and secure platform to facilitate communication of dossier information between examiners of the participating Offices. The system aims to improve the quality, the efficiency and the timeliness in which the search and examination is handled at the participating IPOs.

5. In addition to providing the dossier information to other Offices participating in WIPO CASE, Providing Offices can decide to use the service to make their published dossier information available to the public.

PUBLIC ACCESS: DOSSIER LINKAGE SYSTEM AND GLOBAL DOSSIER

6. The Global Dossier (GD) system provides a similar dossier sharing service between the IP5 Offices (European Patent Office (EPO), State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China (SIPO), Japan Patent Office (JPO), Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)). In 2014, the JPO and WIPO developed a linkage technique between the GD and WIPO CASE which allows all IP5 Offices and participants of WIPO CASE to access and securely exchange dossier information between the two systems, including the parts of the WIPO CASE system authorized for public access.

7. The GD enables public users to access the patent dossiers from the largest patent Offices. The International Bureau also provides a portal through PATENTSCOPE for public use which makes available all dossier information authorized for public access by Providing Offices.

8. WIPO CASE has been extended further and currently 12 Patent Offices and the International Bureau (PCT) make their file wrappers available. The required content of the WIPO CASE file wrapper is not defined in the terms and conditions, and at the present time, the file wrapper content varies from IPO to IPO. Besides, not all Providing Offices agree to allow public access via WIPO CASE. The scope, nature and date range of the dossier information which is made available via WIPO CASE, and which information is available to the public, is specified by each Providing Office in a notification published by the International Bureau.

PROPOSAL

9. The EPO encourages more Offices which act as International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authorities to join WIPO CASE. In the spirit of reciprocity, they should preferably do so as Providing Offices and agree to provide public access to all published dossiers within a certain date range as well as to all published documents within these dossiers (the same access as would be provided via the IPO's own online file wrapper). The comprehensiveness of file wrapper data is key for both Offices and end users and it is therefore essential that providing Offices make sure that this data is complete and is available 24/7.

10. The Meeting is invited to comment on the proposal in paragraph 9 of the document.

[End of document]