

# WIPO



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**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**  
GENEVA

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**

### **PLENARY**

#### **Fifth Session**

**Geneva, July 10 to 14, 2000**

#### **GRANTING OF OBSERVER STATUS IN MEETINGS OF THE SCIT**

*Document prepared by the International Bureau*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. By circular letter SCIT 2501, the International Bureau sent out the working document SCIT/5/7 on the “granting of observer status in meetings of the SCIT.” Since then the International Bureau has received comments from the World Patent Information Journal on this subject. A copy of their letter is reproduced in the Annex to this document.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

**TEXT OF THE LETTER FROM  
THE WORLD PATENT INFORMATION JOURNAL**

10 May, 2000

**Subject:** Observer status at the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT), its sub-committees and working groups.

Dear Mr. Director General,

Since the inception of the journal of World Patent Information (WPI) in 1980, successive editors of the journal have been permitted to attend sessions of relevant WIPO committees, such as PCPI, PCIPI and IPC, as observers. Following some publishing and editorial changes, the creation of SCIT, and the eventually terminal illness of the then editor, Jim Sibley, this observer status apparently lapsed in 1997. As you will be aware, the current editorial team is keen to recover and continue that status. A formal request to this effect was made by Tony Seward, Senior Publishing Editor at Elsevier Science in his letter dated 26 April 1999. While we have been permitted to attend meetings at the Ad Hoc IPC Reform Group and these meetings have been most valuable in keeping our readers informed on a matter of vital importance to them, the matter is, we understand, still unresolved in the broader SCIT forum, and is due to be discussed again at the next plenary session.

The purpose of this letter is therefore to provide you with a current picture of our position and to invite you to consider how it is distinguished from that of certain organisations currently seeking observer status. We also invite you to consider how publication of information from such meetings in this journal can continue to assist WIPO in meeting its objectives, by providing the information to a significant, highly professional, experienced, influential and motivated group within the intellectual property profession.

By way of a little background information, the WPI journal started as a joint publication of WIPO and the CEC published under the Pergamon Press imprint. In 1996 it became a solely Elsevier Science publication, but still under the Pergamon Press imprint. In actual fact, the history of the journal is still indicated in each new issue. WPI is part of their extensive portfolio of many hundreds of specialist scientific, technical, library and information science journals. It has for its objective “to provide a world-wide forum for the exchange of information between people working professionally in the field of industrial property information and documentation, and to promote the widest possible use of the associated literature.”

Our readers have always been, and remain a relatively small but knowledgeable professional grouping of patent, trademark and design information retrieval experts and searchers working mainly in large corporates or the larger firms of attorneys, in international, regional and national patent and trademark offices, in major libraries and universities, especially in Europe, the USA, and Japan.

We quite understand WIPO's caution with the approaches of a number of organisations desiring observer status and who can reasonably be expected to have a positive commercial interest in promoting their organisation. This may be either by commercial association with WIPO or through getting early knowledge of future developments which they can use to give their organisations a commercial advantage over competitors.

However one should consider our journal's status, objectives and practice to always have been, and remain to be, quite distinct from such organisations. For example, inclusion of WIPO information will not give it a commercial edge over any rivals, especially as it is the premier journal in its specific field and has no direct competitors. Inclusion of such information will primarily keep our subscribers better informed and help them and the fellow intellectual property attorneys and similar professionals that they work with to keep abreast of future law and policy changes in which the WIPO is at the forefront. It will also help readers keep a better balance between this information and the large amount of material with a commercial bias that they receive from the major companies selling patent and trade mark information databases and like information resources.

May we just reiterate the benefits we see to both this journal and its readers and to WIPO of the continuation of the previously long-standing arrangement for the Editors to attend these meetings as observers. On the one hand, readers of our journal will then continue to be kept up-to-date with world-wide developments in areas of core importance to them, such as information retrieval methods, classification, and information technology. They will also continue to learn about areas of potential or future interest, such as developments in international and regional laws in intellectual property. On the other hand, it will continue to provide a useful conduit for WIPO to achieve wider dissemination of data on current developments to this key audience. In turn, these people naturally work very closely with attorneys, policy makers and other senior intellectual property staff in these organisations.

We do hope that you, Mr. Director General, can give your personal support to our request, that the editors of the WPI journal, be given again observer status in the SCIT, its sub-committees and working groups, as we understand that the SCIT is also successor organisation of the PCIPI. Although you may not be able yourself to attend the forthcoming SCIT meeting, we trust that you will pass the content of this letter, with hopefully your endorsement to your representatives at the said meeting.

Accept, Mr. Director General, the expression of our highest consideration.

(Signed)

Michael Blackman  
Paul Claus

[End of Annex and of document]