

Press Statement

The Plurilateral Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) Meeting at the Heads of Office level was held at the Danish Patent and Trademark Office in Taastrup, Denmark on 20 February 2009. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Jesper Kongstad, Director General of the Danish Patent and Trademark Office, and Mr. Takashi Suzuki, Commissioner of the Japan Patent Office.

The attendees of the Meeting were from IP Australia, Canadian Intellectual Property Office, German Patent and Trademark Office, Korean Intellectual Property Office, Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office, and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (hereinafter referred to as "Offices"). The Meeting also included observers from the National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland and from WIPO.

At the Plurilateral PPH Meeting, the Offices discussed the following issues with the shared view that enhancing the usability of the PPH program for users was a key priority:

- exchange of information on the PPH experience,
- how to deepen public awareness of the PPH, and
- future PPH initiatives.

The Offices noted that the PPH program had contributed to improving the timeliness and quality of patent examination and thus had worked beneficially for users. The Offices were pleased that the PPH program had been showing promise as an effective work-sharing mechanism to raise the quality of a patent and help reduce the workloads and redundancies of the Offices.

The Offices reaffirmed that the PPH program would help to build confidence in work sharing among examiners as well as Offices and that the PPH program and the PCT could function in a complementary manner.

The Offices also noted the relevance of sharing the following perspectives in exploring the Plurilateral PPH initiative:

- to facilitate applicants' early and global acquisition of patent rights
- to gain applicants' trust and satisfaction by providing applicants with examination results of high quality for the sake of internationally stable rights
- to substantially contribute to international work-sharing
- to account for PCT international application in the PPH in a mutually complementary way.

The Offices discussed avenues, which participating offices would follow on a voluntary basis, with a view to enhancing the PPH program, including the following:

- to exchange relevant information and statistics for the analysis and evaluation of the result of the PPH program
- to carry out PPH awareness programs involving the user community
- to standardize requirements and procedures for applicants to participate in the PPH
- to encourage, as appropriate, examiner exchange between Offices in order to share the best practices for improving work-sharing efficiency through the PPH

The Offices considered how best to continue their cooperation and to support, as appropriate, various activities including i) the Plurilateral PPH Roundtable at the working-level to be held in Tokyo in 2009 and ii) the symposium for raising awareness and facilitating user participation in the PPH to be held in 2009. In order to maintain the transparency of their discussions, the Offices agreed that Plurilateral PPH Meetings should be open to WIPO and to all other IP offices.

The Offices expressed their desire to review the development of the PPH program at the next Meeting.

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