



"The most successful trilateral conference in 29 years"

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With the launch of a new free-of-charge information service from which patent offices and users alike will benefit, the 29th Annual Trilateral Conference of the EPO, the Japan Patent Office (JPO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) opened a new era of advancing patent harmonisation across the globe.

Originally spurred by requests from industry representatives, the Common Citation Document (CCD) fills an important gap in the information services for the public and IP authorities by offering a one-stop overview of all documents cited by the EPO, JPO and USPTO in the search process for applications for the same invention pending simultaneously at the three offices.

"It is a milestone achievement in our co-operation, and proof of the immediate benefit the user community and the public can derive from the close co-operation of our three offices," EPO President Benoît Battistelli said at the closing of the conference hosted by the EPO in Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris on 7-10 November.

Significant progress was made in all projects ranging from technical standards, statistical reports and discussions on patent law issues to moving to finalising the report on differences in examination. Moreover, the three offices agreed to prolong the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) agreements in relation to work done on PCT- and Paris-route applications, and also to improve on user-friendliness and pending times and conduct a study on quality in PPH procedures: all further requests voiced by representatives of the trilateral industry associations participating in the Trilateral User Day on 9 November where they shared their views on the projects pursued by the Trilateral Offices.

"The meeting with the users is very meaningful because it confirms that the three offices are going in the right direction, as their strong approval of the CCD clearly demonstrates," said JPO Commissioner Yoshiyuki Iwai. "This will boost our work."

Looking to future activities, the three heads of office also indicated that many of their joint projects, including the CCD and statistical reports, will need to be expanded to the IP5 co-operation to also include China and South Korea: "We need to graduate these items to IP5 level to offer room for new projects in our trilateral co-operation," USPTO Director David Kappos said, citing improvements on the PCT as a subject for attention: "Addressing PCT questions both at agenda-setting and implementing level is a priority in the next months."

While moving trilateral projects to IP5-level will certainly free up capacity on their joint agenda, the Trilateral Offices recognised the need for a dedicated long-term planning of their activities of up to seven years in order to achieve measurable results and enhanced public visibility of the results of their co-operation. They concluded that, after all, co-operation between the EPO, JPO and USPTO remains pivotal for progress in patent harmonisation at the global level.

Further information

[News of 10 November 2011: "Trilateral Patent Offices agree on milestones at annual conference"](#)
[Common Citation Document on the Trilateral website](#)



JPO Commissioner Yoshiyuki Iwai, EPO President Benoît Battistelli, USPTO Director David Kappos

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