

Minutes

EU user group meeting d.d. 20060312

To: EU User groups representatives
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Subject: Minutes of the EU user groups meeting, Athens

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Minutes of the European User Groups Meeting held March, 9, 2006 in Athens, Greece.

Present:

Daniel Shalloe	EPO dshalloe@epo.org
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Guido Moradei	AIDB Studio Moradei guido.moradei@quaestio.it
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Aalt van de Kuilen	WON Solvay Pharmaceuticals Aalt.Vandekuilen@solvay.com

Acting Chair: Aalt van de Kuilen
Acting Secretary: Gerben Gieling

Aalt van de Kuilen opened the meeting at 9.00 and welcomed those present.

1 Introduction of user groups

The meeting opened with an introduction of the represented user groups:

UG	Founded	membership	fee	# members	notes
WON	1977	company ^{1,2}	€ 125.-	~70-80	
PATMG	1978	personal	£ 25.-	140	
CFIB	1988	personal	--	~90	3
AIDB	2004	personal	€ 80 ⁴	80	5
PIF	2002	--	--	50	6

notes:

- ¹ A company member is allowed to send two representatives to meetings; this number can be increased by paying an additional membership fee.
- ² Personal memberships at a reduced fee are allowed for retired patent searchers or exceptional conditions.
- ³ Meetings are organised at a host company sponsoring the meeting. Information providers are not allowed to attend the meetings. Stephen responded that the presence of providers in a meeting does not inhibit an open discussion.
- ⁴ Commercial providers pay an increased fee of €250.00 for the first member and an ordinary fee for additional members.
- ⁵ At every meeting a member of a foreign association is invited.
- ⁶ Meetings are sponsored by the companies.

During the introduction Guido indicated that a problem for Italian patent information specialists is that their profession is not highly valued, as a result it is difficult to get permission to attend meetings.

No Swedish user group exists (yet); some Swedish patent information specialists are members of PIF (DK). There is an interest to establish a user group or, as an alternative, a (email) discussion group. Perhaps a patent attorney association is open to patent information professionals? SIPF and SPOF founded a patent academy for patent attorneys and paralegals.

1.1 Germany

Aalt commented that an important country was missing in this assembly of European patent information user groups: Germany. Arpat does not behave as

a patent user group. Although some German firms are organized via PDG, PDG does not accept small and medium sized firms as members.

Stephen suggests that PIZ (patent information libraries in Germany) might be interested in setting up a user group.

Bob added that the UK shows that an open group and a big industry group can coexist (PATMG - TSUG)

2 EPO vision

In response to Aalt's question to clarify the EPO's vision towards user groups, Daniel said that the EPO did not have an official policy. The EPO did, however, appreciate the existence of user groups (EPO is member of WON) and Daniel offered some space at the next EPIDOS meeting for the user groups to sit together again.

PATMG and WON are represented in SACEPO-PDI. Daniel explained the purpose of SACEPO-PDI and invited the user groups not represented in SACEPO-PDI to apply for membership.

Stephen asked the PATMG members to bring issues relevant for SACEPO-PDI to his attention and promised to report back to them in an evening PATMG meeting.

3 Commercial providers

Patcom appreciated the possibility of information providers to visit some of the user groups meetings. Since commercial providers cannot be present at CFIB meetings, Paul asked CFIB to appoint one board member as the communication channel between CFIB and PatCom.

Didier explained that due to the long travelling times to and from the meeting, the actual CFIB meeting is rather short. A consequence of the limited amount of time available is that only members' presentations have been given during the last meeting and there were no presentations by commercial providers.

Paul asked CFIB to provide PatCom with copies of the minutes of CFIB meetings, in order that commercial providers would know about the users complaints and wishes.

Aalt asked Paul if he was willing to represent PatCom and thus all commercial providers in PatCom. Paul accepted.

Ford repeated once more that the presence of commercial providers in user group meetings or COPS was not a problem.

Stephen added that PIUG has a built in security system by having two levels of membership. These two levels of membership prevent commercial providers becoming Chair of PIUG or any of its committees.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

Aalt summarized the minutes of the last COPS meeting.

5 Progress of COPS

Aalt asked for permission of the national User groups to have COPS take the initiative in European wide training and certification.

Guido added that AIDB had written a draft proposal for certification. However, AIDB preferred to discuss this on a European level and wished to fallback to a national level discussion only if discussions at European level failed. Guido expressed the wish to share this draft proposal with other user groups. The offer was accepted by all present.

For clarification, Stephen explained the goals of COPS:

Certification Accreditation of patent searchers.
Education Accrditation of (national) courses.

Aalt expressed concerns about the LGA course; LGA "translated" the WON course into German. However, the exam results of their candidates (those that passed) could not pass the standards required in the WON course.

Stephen continued by explaining the difference between COPS accredited courses and courses that "borrow" material of COPS accredited courses but produce "sub-standard" patent searchers.

5.1 COPS Acronym

The old meaning of the COPS acronym (Certification of Patent Searchers) caused confusion:

- activity of COPS was considered as only examination and certification
- COPS was considered as a certifying body

Therefore, it was proposed to change the meaning of the acronym into Committee Of Patent-search Standards.

5.2 COPS legitimacy

Guido continued by reporting that there was confusion in Italy concerning who were members of COPS and who was eligible?

Stephen replied that COPS is indeed a self appointed body; the rationale for this being that someone had to do it, but nobody did.

To increase legitimacy, COPS sought representatives of national user groups to join the committee and eventually included some people out of the academic environment.

The proposed model for COPS was a core committee and a wider user group.

The purpose was to have not too big a core committee, as this would only reduce efficiency. The wider user group be kept informed of progress by receiving minutes of core committee meetings.

Aalt suggested to communicate (via the website) who in the COPS committee was representing which organisation. He added that COPS started off as a personal initiative of Stephen Adams and himself. To get things started they invited some other people they thought necessary. Now COPS should expand by including official representatives of the national user groups.

Stephen asked the people present to spread all COPS related information via their national user groups, especially the new meaning of the acronym.

6 Various

Guido asked for an email list. Tine replied that the COPS website included the possibility to subscribe to an email list. She had done this but had not received a response. Stephen said that while he collectrf all email addresses, there had not been very much to report.

Stephen reported that PDG would meet mid-year and expected some feedback from this meeting.

Daniel suggested that links to the national user groups should be made available on the EPO website. Advertising these user groups might attract responses from other user groups. Richard suggested that members should

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use their contacts in the under-represented countries to ask for the existence of user groups or to stimulate interest in user groups.

Aalt asked Daniel whether the EPO could allow booth space at EPIDOS for information about user groups. Daniel said he could not promise but he would ask. According to Daniel it should at least be possible to store information in the exhibit room.

Next meeting

Aalt proposed to organize the next user group meeting at EPIDOS (Cyprus), and promised to communicate via email prior to meeting. He asked all user groups to send at least one representative to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.30