Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the EU-User groups

Meeting held November 8th , 2006

Held at: EPO Patent Information Conference, Coral Beach Hotel, Paphos, Cyprus.

Present:

Stephen Adams	GB (PATMG/COPS)	stevea@magister.co.uk
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Marco Fachini	IT (AIDB)	marco.fachini@fisvi.com
Bettina de Jong	NL (WON)	bettina.dejong@shell.com
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Ruth Mikeska	DE	mikeska@maiwald.de
Annette Nystrup	DK (PIF)	af@dkpto.dk
Paul Peters	PATCOM	ppeters@cas.org
Daniel Shalloe	EPO	dshalloe@epo.org
Edlyn Simmons	US (PIUG)	simmons.es@pg.com

Acting Chair:	Aalt van de Kuilen
Acting Secretary:	Bettina de Jong

1. Welcome

Aalt van de Kuilen opens the meeting at around 14:45 and welcomes those present. He passes on the apologies of the PDG, adding that the PDG Board will formally propose to the PDG members to attend the meetings of the EU user group network (as guest, not as member).

Each of the people present briefly introduces him/herself. Philippe Bodart reports that the next CFIB meeting will be held in Belgium, emphasizing that the French speaking part of Belgium is covered by the CFIB.

Ruth Mikeska is from Germany, but not member of a German group. Peter Kallas (BASF) has told in reaction to the presentation on the national user groups, that in Germany there is a group called AGM that in his view would come closest to a national user group. He will provide details of the AGM chairman.
Aalt van de Kuilen summarizes the history of the network, referring to the first meeting at IPI-ConfEx in Athens.

2. Relation and cooperation between user groups

Edlyn Simmons gave an overview of the PIUG. She told that the PIUG sees itself as an international organisation, although the board and most of the members are US citizens. The PIUG was founded in1988 and has now about 500 members and 1500 discussion list members. She would welcome more communication between the PIUG and the European user groups.

Paul Peters asks if there is any exchange of information on the programmes or research done in (working groups of) the national user groups. Sometimes studies are done that are interesting to others as well. Aalt replies that currently this is not the case, that only agenda's of meetings are shared, but it is a good idea. Stephen Adams suggests to also exchange dates of events.

3. Letter from AIDB

Aalt van de Kuilen summarizes the letter with the proposal to form a confederation. Marco Fachini emphasizes that one of the main aims is certification. The AIDB has filled in the questionnaire and would like to receive feedback from the other national user groups.
Stephen Adams mentions that PATMG is generally supporting the proposal, however, one issue could be that some national user groups accept membership of commercial providers. If any sort of funding would be required, it would be difficult since PATMG falls under a parent group by which it is financed.

Because of the limited number of board members of national user groups present at this meeting, it is not possible to come to a decision at this stage. The first impression is that everybody supports the idea of a Confederation, that no commercial vendors should be member, but that PATCOM and EPO can be invited to be observer, depending on the topic.
Each user group will be requested to fill in the questionnaire before the end of the year.

4. COPS

Stephen Adams tells that after the last COPS meeting it has been decided to suspend the next meeting. The problem is that the COPS started as a group of enthusiastic people, but now the group is criticised because it has no mandate. In the COPS letter of 13 October 2006, Stephen has proposed some kind of Confederation institute above the COPS that sends delegates to the COPS. COPS would then be a committee of the Confederation. This would provide the COPS with a clearer line of responsibility and a clear mandate.

Stephen adds that in his view, certification needs to come not only from companies but also from academia.

Bettina de Jong comments that it would be best to wait for the PDG to officially participate in the discussions, since it is important to have European wide support.

Stephen elaborates on some of the current ideas: certification should not be only on how well people can work with searching tools. Ideally there would be a basic training (like the WON training) plus additional modules. The basic training may be enough for some people, and others will be doing further training to get to a level that they can do (another) examination.

Curt Edfjäll (EPO) has sent a reply to the letter to Stephen Adams. This will be distributed in due course. He seems to be willing to provide the user groups the same support as the COPS.

5. Future developments

There are still some ideas on setting up a separate user group in Sweden (although the number of patent information professionals is only limited). There are rumours that there are initiatives to set up a user group in Spain (again), and in Austria. Aalt van de Kuilen and Bettina de Jong will try to get in touch with the AGM in Germany.

After a short discussion, it was concluded that not every country necessarily needs to have its own user group.

6. Other topics

Aalt mentions there seems to be a lot of interest from individuals to follow training locally and he asks if the national user groups are discussing this.
From the discussion it appears that (apart from the WON), the only training given is done by the providers. Edlyn Simmons tells that in the US there is a 3-day PERI Patent Information course. She will send the titles of the chapters of this training

around. (BdJ: see also http://www.peri.org/course_details.cfm?course=1787 for details of this training given last October)
Bettina de Jong suggests that each national user group could discuss internally if they want to set up a training and in what form. The WON is willing to share the curriculum of the WON training.

Philippe Bodart brings up that also qualification is needed for firms to outsource searches to. Edlyn comments that the USPTO is certifying search firms, but probably all certified companies are working full time for the USPTO, since no one hears from them.

Michael Blackman has asked for an article on the network of national user groups for World Patent Information. Stephen Adams volunteers to write an article based on the presentation given by Bettina de Jong and on the minutes of this meeting.

7. Closing remarks

Aalt van de Kuilen thanks everyone who has joined the meeting, and announces to organise a 3rd meeting at the IPI-ConfEx in Sorrento.
The meeting is closed at 16:00 h.