

IP5 Heads of Office Join Forces to Prepare for Global Technological Changes

The annual meeting of the leaders of the world's five largest intellectual property offices took place in Incheon, Korea, on 13 June 2019 and was hosted by the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO). The five offices, known as the IP5, are the KIPO, European Patent Office (EPO), Japan Patent Office (JPO), China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) and United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). The IP5 together handle 85 percent of the world's patent applications.

This year the IP5 Heads of Office meeting was chaired by Mr. PARK Wonjoo, Commissioner of KIPO with the participation of Mr. António CAMPINOS, President of the EPO; Ms. Naoko MUNAKATA, Commissioner of the JPO; Mr. SHEN Changyu, Commissioner of the CNIPA; and Mr. Andrei IANCU, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO. Mr. Francis GURRY, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, also attended the meeting as an observer.

During the meeting, the Heads of Office welcomed recent progress on IP5 initiatives, such as the classification of emerging technologies, the continuous improvement of Global Dossier services, enhanced work sharing, and the harmonization of patent practices and procedures.

The IP5 Heads agreed to launch a New Emerging Technologies/Artificial Intelligence Task Force with a view to responding appropriately to and exploring future joint initiatives related to global technological developments. The five leaders also agreed to improve the IP5 structure to achieve greater efficiency within the IP5 cooperation framework.

Meanwhile, the Heads of Office endorsed the final results of work on the three sub-projects in the area of patent practice harmonization - unity of invention, citation of prior art and written description/sufficiency of disclosure - which aim to alleviate the burden on applicants and increase work efficiency. The Heads acknowledged that the tangible outcomes from IP5 patent practice harmonization have brought substantial benefits to users. The Heads also recognized the need to select new harmonization topics, which are in line with the IP5 vision, to be discussed in the future.

In a separate meeting, the Heads of Office met with representatives of industry groups from the five regions to update them on important recent developments and to discuss intellectual property issues including in strategic areas such as new emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, and the future work of the IP5. The industry group expressed their support for the IP5 Offices' joint efforts to better respond to worldwide technological transformation, and reaffirmed their willingness to maintain an open dialogue and collaboration.

The next IP5 Heads of Office meeting will be hosted by the CNIPA in 2020.

More information on the IP5 cooperation can be found at www.fiveipoffices.org.