

MEETING OF B+ SUB-GROUP ON PATENT HARMONISATION, LONDON 10 APRIL 2015: AGREED STATEMENT

Members of the sub-group of Group B+ working on patent law harmonisation met in London on 10 April.

The sub-group considered a number of issues where there are currently different national or regional legal provisions, in particular the grace period, publication of applications, conflicting applications, prior user rights and prior art.

The sub-group underlined the desirability of making progress towards harmonisation of these issues, taking account of the needs of users of the patent system and other interested stakeholders. It welcomed the continuing interest taken by these groups in this topic.

The sub-group agreed to make public a set of principles governing their approach to these issues, together with a commentary on the outstanding points which have yet to be agreed, once this document has been approved by the sub-group. This will enable business and other stakeholders to comment on the proposed approach and engage with the work of the sub-group. It will also ensure full transparency for all members of Group B+.

The sub-group intends to submit a report to the plenary meeting of Group B+ in October which takes account of input from stakeholders and any further work which the sub-group carries out over the coming months. It will then be for Group B+ as a whole to decide on next steps.

The sub-group believes that as a result of the substantial work carried out in recent years on this topic, and the commitment shown by IP offices and business, the prospects for securing agreement on the issues under discussion have improved. It will use its best endeavours to ensure further progress over the coming months.