Aim of the discussion round
To present the WIPO ST.27 to the IP community, to assess the usefulness of the standard and of the categories, and to discuss what is necessary to make the standard successful.


Starting point of the discussion round
The "Recommendation for the exchange of patent legal status data" or "Standard 27" was adopted on 2 June 2017 by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS). Standard 27 is based on a patent prosecution model including various stages and potential transitions. It should enable users to identify and generally understand legal event data. The categories and key events have been finalised. The detailed events included in the standard are provisional and will be reviewed and assessed by industrial property offices by mid-2018.

It has to be understood that the availability of a standard for the exchange of legal status data will not per se lead to a harmonisation of legal status events. The standard can only serve as a framework offering similar wording for similar legal event categories and other overarching levels of procedural stages in the life of a patent, while at the same time providing room for the original national event codes for continuity and hopefully later homogenisation as far as national laws allow.

Input from the questionnaire
The participants had received a questionnaire before the discussion round.

What type of legal event information is important for your area of activity?
- Procedural information on filing and examination stage and pre-grant or post-grant review information
- Post-grant stage, party data and protection beyond IP term as important.

What do you use legal data for?
- Freedom-to-operate searches
- Competitor monitoring
- Statistical analysis
What are the main sources?
INPADOC worldwide legal event data was used by all but one of the participants. Other important sources were the European Patent Register, national registers and commercial providers.

What are the challenges in the interpretation of legal events?
- Different meaning of the codes, depending on the country or period in time; if users only want events in a specific category (see Q2) very detailed codes with different time ranges make it difficult to sort through.
- It is often necessary to use different sources for legal events (for instance, national register and the EP register for granted EP patents). Some events are in both sources, but have different codes.
- Understanding the impact of legal status events on the life of a patent.

Discussion round around three questions – some thoughts
After a short introduction into the topic by expert Christian Soltmann, the participants were assigned to three break-out groups dealing with the following three sub-topics on which they reported after discussing among themselves, supported by one of the EPO experts:

- WIPO ST.27 standard: are 21 categories sufficient or too many?
  o The assessment of the standard depends on the consistency of the implementation.
  o Will the standard be adopted homogenously in all participating countries or IP authorities?
  o How will the IP offices streamline the adoption of the standard?
  o Who will be the guardian of the "status-event-codes"?

- Advantages and disadvantages of enumerative classifications (e.g. ST.27 with listing of detailed events) and other classifications
  o To make a classification concept useful, it has to be understandable intuitively and clear.
  o The participants prefer a sufficient level of detail in their own field of work whereas other classification areas may stay more general. In light of the various fields of work patent information users are active in, a suitable classification concept has to strike a balance between being detailed and being general in order to be useful for as many patent information users as possible.
The EPO mentioned that a genuine INPADOC classification scheme was being developed. The INPADOC classification would aim to facilitate the understanding, accessibility and usability of legal event data and be compatible with ST.27.

- What does it take to make ST.27 successful? How many and which patent offices are needed to make the standard a success?
  - The critical mass is perhaps not as important as the consistent application of the standard

**Quo vadis**
Where will this all go?
- The EPO and other offices are currently working on their status event codes and expected to deliver soon.
- INPADOC will make the published codes available
- These first experiences with the ST.27 will influence the evaluation of the ST.27 in 2018.

Bernd Wolter, Chairman, Discussion round 5

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