02/23/2017 Events

The 3 millionth patent application filed under WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) [1] was published by the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization. This is an important milestone in the history of the Treaty and of WIPO. The PCT surpassed the milestones of 1 million filed applications in 2004 and of 2 million filed applications in 2011.

"The PCT has reached 3 million published international applications in record time", said WIPO Director General, Francis Gurry, underscoring its central and growing role in helping innovators reach a global marketplace.

To mark the occasion, the Director General of WIPO addressed a letter to all innovators around the globe as users of the System, representatives of PCT Member States [2], staff of Offices working in and for the PCT System, and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as civil society groups. Francis Gurry thanked everybody for the invaluable support and collaboration, the faith and confidence in the System, and for engaging with the International Bureau in developing the System over the years to ensure that it meets the needs of all its stakeholders.

Building on the vision of the founders of the PCT, the Director General of WIPO emphasized the need for the System to further evolve so that it can continue to function as a primary tool to support innovation.

The 3 millionth published international application for a "Vector Network Analyzer" (PCT/EP2016/062897 [3], WO/2017/017579) was filed by Germany-based Fraunhofer Gesellschaft [4], Europe's largest organization for applied research, with 69 institutes and research units in Germany and additional research centers in Asia, South America, the United States of America and elsewhere in Europe and a major user of the PCT, averaging almost 300 international applications under the PCT per year over the last 5 years. Representatives of the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft will meet with the Director General of WIPO to mark the event.

The PCT, a successful example of practical international cooperation in the intellectual property field, has been operating for 39 years, and currently has 151 Contracting States [2].

The number of PCT applications filed has grown each year since the PCT's inception except, as a result of the global financial crisis, in 2009. In 2015, some 218,000 applications were filed. The PCT makes it easier and more cost-effective for companies and inventors to seek patent protection for their inventions in multiple countries. A single international patent application under the PCT has legal effect in all of the countries bound by the Treaty. PCT applicants are able to postpone the payment of significant costs relating to internationalizing their patent application until after they have received valuable information about their invention's potential patentability. They thus have more time than under the traditional patent system to decide in which of the PCT countries to continue pursuing patent protection. And the information they receive during the PCT procedure is very useful in making those important decisions.

More details can be found here: http://www.wipo.int/pct/en/3million/index.html [5]

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