

# **World's five largest intellectual property offices celebrate ten years of co-operation**

**Valletta, Malta, 1 June 2017 – The world's five largest intellectual property offices today commemorate ten years of co-operation to strengthen work-sharing, patent examination efficiency and quality, and the stability of patent rights for innovators around the world.**

The co-operation between the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the State Intellectual Property Office of China (SIPO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) – commonly referred to as the IP5 – was established in 2007 in response to the increasing globalisation of the patent process marked by ever growing numbers of patent applications and companies increasingly filing their patents with multiple offices. In the first ten years of its existence, IP5 co-operation has delivered a number of products and services that particularly support innovating businesses which have a global market orientation.

Among them are the Global Dossier, a public service that enables users to monitor via a single online source how a family of patent applications is progressing at the IP5 offices, as well as a fast-track scheme, the IP5 Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH), which allows the offices to share work and speed up patent processing.

Accounting for more than 80% of patent applications worldwide as well as about 95% of all Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) work done, the IP5 has put its initial focus on the elimination of unnecessary double work through improved efficiencies, alignment of procedures and the development of joint tools to increase the quality of the patent system while reducing costs to users. The IP5 has established itself as a powerful driver and provider of optimised services to users and the public in the rapidly expanding field of patenting across multiple regions.

Celebrating their tenth anniversary of successful co-operation at a time when global demand for patent protection has never been higher, the IP5 offices also offer a forum for exchanges with industry associations from the five regions: Thanks to the growing involvement of users in the discussions over the past five years, the IP5 has become an important platform for constructive dialogue between the offices and industry with a view to improving the IP5 patent systems in line with user expectations and needs.

At their annual meeting hosted by the EPO in Valletta, Malta, the Heads of the IP5 offices committed themselves to continuing their joint efforts towards effective work-sharing and harmonisation of patent practices and procedures to further improve the patent landscape for users worldwide.

With a view to deepen their co-operation, the IP5 Heads of Office agreed to focus their endeavours on: (1) pursuing efforts towards patent harmonisation on practices and procedures within the IP5, (2) optimising quality management, (3) maximising the work-sharing potential within the IP5, and (4) improving patent information services.

In this context, the IP5 Heads of Office also agreed to launch the operational phase of the third pilot project on Collaborative Search and Examination under the PCT, tentatively on 1 May 2018. Within the framework of this pilot project, the IP5 offices acting as competent International Searching Authority (ISA) will establish high-quality international search reports and written opinions, taking contributions received from the other IP5 offices (“peer ISAs”) into account.

Prior to the meeting, the IP5 Heads of Office met representatives of industry groups from the five regions (“IP5 Industry”) to discuss users’ expectations of the future strategic direction of IP5 co-operation.

The next IP5 Heads of Office meeting will be hosted by the USPTO in 2018.

More information on the IP5 co-operation can be found at [www.fiveipoffices.org](http://www.fiveipoffices.org). The IP5 Joint Statement 2017 is available at: [www.fiveipoffices.org/news/malta2017.html](http://www.fiveipoffices.org/news/malta2017.html)