

# Report of the Harmonisation Committee

J. Brown (GB), Chair

The inaugural meeting of the newly elected **epi** Harmonisation Committee was held by Zoom on Thursday, 19 November 2020.

All the newly elected members of the committee were present, namely Veronica Zemanova (CZ), Gabriele Leissler-Gerstl (DE), Ulrich Weingarten (DE), Luis-Alfonso Durán Moya (ES), Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (FI), John Brown (GB), Catherine Hanratty (IE), Dermot Roche (IE), Filippo Santi (IT) and Magdalena Krekora (PL). Also in attendance were Heike Vogelsang-Wenke (DE) (**epi** Vice President), Nicole van der Laan (**epi** Legal Adviser) and Sadia Liebig (**epi** Secretariat).

John Brown (GB) was re-elected as Chairman of the committee and Filippo Santi (IT) was re-elected as the Secretary. After all the attendees had introduced themselves,

Representation of **epi** at the meeting of the Standing Committee on the law of patents ("SCP") at WIPO on 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 was discussed. John Brown explained that, as far as we are concerned as an

NGO, the SCP meeting would be a virtual one. The meetings of SCP are available on line via the WIPO website to anyone interested – registration is not necessary for this. **epi** can have two registered delegates to "attend" for each day. After discussion, it was agreed to ask Francis Leyder, **epi** President to nominate himself, John Brown, Guiseppe Colucci (member of the **epi** Litigation Committee), Luis Alfonso Duran Moya, Filippo Santi and Catherine as the **epi** delegates, with the intention that two delegates would "attend" each session (which days subject to the draft timetable of order of business which is not yet available).

There was a discussion of Substantive Patent Law Harmonisation ("SPLH"), many directed to the slides presented by Sylvie Strobel to the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 of the EPO Committee on Patent Law and to the IT3 "Elements Paper" Proposal. It was difficult to have a meaningful discussion because the IT3 proposal is embargoed. As soon as the embargo is lifted, circulation to the committee will be arranged, followed fairly swiftly by the calling of a meeting of the committee.

## Report of the Online Communications Committee

Y. Biron (FR), Secretary

### 1. Introduction

The EPO had to react with short term measures to the Covid 19 crisis starting in April 2020 and has set-up a plan for more mid- to long-term measures, involving internal and external evolutions, including changes to the legal framework. During the past months, OCC and EPO focus has been mainly on evolving towards **video conferencing in oral procedures**. Other major activities relate to the ongoing **Online Filing 2.0** pilot projects (incl. DOCX filing format) and the **Front Office working group**, focusing on national filings via EPO centralized systems.

### 2. Video conference for oral proceedings

During our latest EPO-OCC meeting, held on 3rd November 2020, the EPO reported **1500 examination video conferences had already been held since the beginning of the health crisis** (only two conferences could not be completed). 7000 are already planned in the next 12 months. 28 opposition video conferences have been held so far through Zoom, with better results than what was initially experienced – during test cases – with Skype for Business.