

THE FIRST
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
PATENT CLASSIFICATION



WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
PATENT CLASSIFICATION
1971-1996



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*Arpad Bogsch
Director General of WIPO since 1973*

PREFACE

The Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification was signed on March 24, 1971.

The International Patent Classification (IPC) has during the first 25 years of its existence become a universally used system for classifying and searching patent documents and other technical literature. On March 24, 1996, 29 States were bound by the IPC Agreement, but industrial property offices of more than 90 States use the IPC.

Every year, the IPC symbols are allotted to, and printed on, approximately one million patent documents issued all over the world, and industrial property offices and other users carry out several hundred thousand searches using the IPC symbols in order to retrieve patent information.

The administration of the IPC, which covers both the revision of the classification system and the promotion of its use, is the task of the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

The revision of the IPC is carried out by the industrial property offices of the member States, as well as by regional industrial property offices.

Both the administration and the revision are continuous tasks, requiring a substantial contribution by the staff of both the International Bureau of WIPO and the national and regional industrial property offices.

This publication is intended to commemorate the achievements in the field of the IPC during its first 25 years.



Arpad Bogsch
Director General
World Intellectual Property Organization



The WIPO Building in Geneva

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST 25 YEARS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC)



Bo Hansson
Director
International Classifications Division (WIPO)

History of the IPC

The International Patent Classification, which is most often referred to as the IPC, has now existed for 25 years and is the only truly worldwide classification system for technical information. The system was not developed from scratch but was based on an already existing classification system, the International Classification of Patents for Invention, which had been elaborated under the auspices of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, during the years 1954 to 1965.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the States members of the International (Paris) Union for the Protection of Industrial Property considered it advisable to harmonize the classification systems used in different countries and to create an international patent classification. In 1904, the *Bureaux Internationaux Réunis pour la Protection de la Propriété Intellectuelle* (BIRPI, the predecessor of WIPO) forwarded to the States members of the Paris Union a draft proposal for such an international patent classification. However, the reaction to this proposal was predominantly unfavorable, so the proposal was dropped.

The main argument against an international system was that due to the fast development of technology in quite different fields in the various countries, a common system would not be used optimally. Although it was generally accepted that an

international system would involve a number of indisputable advantages, proposals submitted by France, Czechoslovakia and Spain during the second *Réunion technique* organized by the *Bureau international de l'Union pour la protection de la propriété industrielle* in Berne, in October 1926, were also rejected.

The Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Patents, which was entrusted with studies on the harmonization of national laws and formalities, in 1951 set up a Classification Working Party with the task of elaborating an international patent classification system. The fundamental discussions in the Working Party were devoted to the question of whether the new system should be based on the function-oriented principle – i.e., according to the intrinsic nature or function of a process, product or apparatus, independent of its field of application – or whether it should be an application-oriented system – i.e., according to the particular use or application of a process, product or apparatus. It was agreed that a system combining both principles would best meet the needs of all users. Consequently, the new system should be devised in such a way that classification according to both the function involved and the particular field of application would be possible. The Working Party, which mainly consisted of members of the Patent Offices of France,

Germany (Federal Republic of), the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, elaborated a classification along those lines.

The legal basis for this work was the European Convention on the International Classification of Patents for Invention of December 19, 1954 (hereinafter referred to as the "European Convention" and the "European Classification," respectively). According to the provisions of that Convention, the European Classification had to be established in the two official languages of the Council of Europe, i.e., English and French. Furthermore, the European Classification had to be modified continuously in line with technical progress, so it was agreed that the Classification should be subject to general revision at intervals not shorter than five years. The first edition of the European Classification was published and entered into force on September 1, 1968. It divided technology into eight sections, containing 115 classes, 607 subclasses and about 46,000 groups, of which approximately 6,000 were so-called main groups.

It had already become clear in the preceding years that the European Classification was of universal interest and value. This important fact was stressed by the decision of a conference of the countries of the former COMECON (Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Soviet Union and Viet Nam) in Bucharest, in 1961, to adopt the Classification. Moreover, a number of other countries were using, or intended to use, the European Classification, among them particularly Japan, the Soviet Union and the United States of America.

According to the European Convention, any State member of the Paris Union could accede to the Convention. However, no State that was not a member of the Council of Europe could be a member of the Committee of Experts on Patents of the Council of Europe. Consequently, those States which were members of the Paris Union but not of the Council of Europe were unable to participate actively in the development and revision of the Classification.

The unsatisfactory nature of this situation led to negotiations between BIRPI and the Council of Europe, resulting in cooperation between these two institutions, and in December 1967 the Conference of Representatives of the Paris Union decided that the Director of BIRPI should enter into negotiations with the Council of Europe for the purpose of seeking ways that would permit all countries of the Paris Union to participate on an equal footing in the development of the Classification. Negotiations between BIRPI and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe terminated in conclusions which in 1968 were approved by the Executive Committee of the Paris Union and, in 1969, by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The principal conclusions were to give the Classification Convention a more universal character in order to facilitate its worldwide adoption and to give all contracting parties equal status. Proposals for the revision of the then existing International (European) Classification should be prepared by the two Organizations and should ensure that the Classification continued to be properly applied, that the basic structure of the Classification would not be altered and that the new convention would have a broader scope geographically, i.e., it should not enter into force until it had been ratified by a certain number of States not party to the European Convention.

Pending the entry into force of the new convention, and in accordance with the above-mentioned conclusions, the *Joint ad hoc Committee of the Council of Europe and BIRPI on the International Classification of Patents* was set up in 1969. It was composed of representatives of five States members of the Council of Europe (France, Germany (Federal Republic of), the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), designated by the Council of Europe, and five States members of the Paris Union not being members of the Council of Europe (Czechoslovakia, Japan, the Soviet Union, Spain and the United States of America), designated by BIRPI, and the Institut International des Brevets (IIB, the predecessor of the European Patent Organisation (EPO)), The Hague. The membership of the Committee was later increased to 12, when Brazil and Sweden joined the Committee.

The terms of reference of the Joint ad hoc Committee were to facilitate the use of the Classification, to prepare the five-yearly revisions of the Classification, to ensure the uniform application of the Classification and to assist, as far as possible, in establishing translations of the Classification into languages which were not official languages of the Council of Europe.

BIRPI and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe established a first draft of the *Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification*, according to which the countries adhering to the Agreement would adopt the International Patent Classification (hereinafter referred to as the "IPC") as a common classification for patents, inventors' certificates, utility models and utility certificates. This draft was examined by the third session of the Joint ad hoc Committee, in April 1970, which Committee, subject to some observations, approved the text. Subsequently, following modification of the first draft, in the light of the observations made by the Joint ad hoc Committee, BIRPI and the Council of Europe presented a proposal for a new Agreement, to be considered at a Diplomatic Conference on the International Patent Classification.

The Strasbourg Diplomatic Conference

The Diplomatic Conference on the International Patent Classification was held from March 15 to 24, 1971, at the Maison de l'Europe in Strasbourg (France), under the auspices of the Council of Europe and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which, in the meantime, had replaced BIRPI.

The States members of the Paris Union were invited as participants with the right to vote, whereas States not members of the Paris Union were invited as observers. Furthermore, 13 intergovernmental organizations and 12 international non-governmental organizations were invited as observers. Thirty-eight States members of the Paris Union participated. They were the following: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Greece, Holy See, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

The following four Intergovernmental organizations participated as observers: African and Malagasy Industrial Property Office (OAMPI), European Free Trade Association (EFTA), International Patent Institute (IIB), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The following seven international non-governmental organizations participated as observers: Asian Patent Attorneys Association (APAA), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA), International Federation of Patent Agents (FICPI), Pacific Industrial Property Association (PIPA), Union of European Patents Agents, Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE).

WIPO was represented by its Director General, Mr. G.H.C. Bodenhausen. The Council of Europe was represented by Mr. L. Tonic-Sorinj, Secretary General, Mr. S.G. Sforza, Deputy Secretary General, and Mr. H. Golsong, Director of Legal Affairs. The Secretariat of the Conference was made up of 11 staff members of WIPO and 10 staff members of the Council of Europe.

The deliberations at the Diplomatic Conference took place in seven different bodies, namely, in the:

Conference – chaired by Mr. F. Savignon (France), with six Vice-Chairmen (from Brazil, Japan, Romania, Togo, the United Kingdom and the United States of America), a Rapporteur

General, Mr. J. Voyame (WIPO), and a Secretary General, Mr. R. Muller (Council of Europe);

Main Committee – with the same composition as the Conference, except that the Rapporteur General and the Secretary General were replaced by a Secretary, Mr. K. Pfanner (WIPO);

Credentials Committee – chaired by Mr. M. Naraghi (Iran), with two Vice-Chairmen (from Australia and Spain), a Secretary, Mr. P. von Holstein (Council of Europe), and nine members;

Drafting Committee – chaired by Mr. R. von Keller (Federal Republic of Germany), with two Vice-Chairmen (from Algeria and the Netherlands), a Secretary, Mr. K. Pfanner (WIPO), and 14 members;

Working Group I (entrusted with the task of examining the question of the status of observers) – chaired by Mr. E. Armitage (United Kingdom), with a Secretary, Mr. K. Pfanner (WIPO), and 18 members;

Working Group II (entrusted with the task of studying the question of the translation and publication of the IPC into languages other than English and French) – chaired by Mr. L.M. Laurelli (Argentina), with a Secretary, Mr. L. Baeumer (WIPO), and 13 members.

The Conference first discussed the *Draft Agreement on the International Patent Classification* in general terms, after which a discussion of detail followed. The two most controversial questions that were discussed related to what became Article 4(1), which states that “the Classification shall be solely of an administrative character” and what became Article 5(6)(c), which provides for “a qualified majority for any decision which is regarded by one-fifth of the countries represented as giving rise to a modification in the basic structure of the Classification or as entailing a substantial work of reclassification.”

In respect of the said Article 4(1), the Conference did not follow the text of the Nice and Locarno Agreements, which relate to the international classifications for marks and industrial designs, respectively – according to which a contracting State may attribute to the Classification the legal scope which it considers appropriate – since it was considered to be hardly conceivable that the nature and scope of the protection afforded to an invention should be determined by the classification of the title of protection relating to the invention.



*Council of Europe – Strasbourg:
Front view of the “Palais de l’Europe” (with the flags of the member States)*

In respect of the above-mentioned Article 5(6)(c), the expression “modification in the basic structure of the Classification” was considered too vague and difficult to apply. However, it was felt that no more satisfactory solution could be found which did not involve the risk of an excessively casuistic and dangerous enumeration.

On March 24, 1971, the Conference adopted the *Strasbourg (IPC) Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification*, which on that date was signed by the following

15 States: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany (Federal Republic of), Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

Following the signing of the IPC Agreement, the International (European) Classification of Patents for Invention (see page 6, above) became the *de facto* first edition of the IPC, i.e., the European Classification, which had been published on September 1, 1968, was as of March 24, 1971, considered and referred to as the first edition of the IPC.



*The Director General of WIPO, Dr. Arpad Bogsch, in his office at WIPO in January 1996
with (from left to right) François Curchod, Bo Hansson and Mikhail Makarov*

Administration of the IPC

The administration of the IPC, which mainly means the revision of the Classification and its further development, has over the years undergone substantial changes, as a result of both organizational alterations and modified working methods in the International Bureau of WIPO. The work relating to the IPC has been carried out in a number of different bodies, which is explained in this Chapter. The meetings of these bodies are indicated in Chapter III, below.

Administration of the IPC Pending the Entry Into Force of the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the IPC (March 1971 to October 1975)

Pending the entry into force of the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the IPC, the administration of the IPC was the joint responsibility of WIPO and the Council of Europe. During this period, the work was carried out within the "Joint ad hoc Committee of the Council of Europe and BIRPI on the International Classification of Patents," set up in 1969 (see page 6, above, which also gives the composition of the said Committee). The Joint ad hoc Committee set up a Bureau, which was to supervise and coordinate the work of five working groups set up by the Committee. The Bureau was composed of the Chairman and the three Vice-Chairmen of the Joint ad hoc Committee, the Chairmen of the five working groups and a representative of the IIB (the predecessor of the EPO).

Working Group I was charged with the revision of Sections C and D (Chemistry, Metallurgy, Paper and Textiles) of the IPC, Working Group II with the revision of Sections G and H (Electricity and Physics), Working Group III with the revision of Section B (Mechanics), Working Group IV with the revision of Sections A, E and F (other technologies) and Working Group V with the supervision of the uniform application of the IPC.

Administration of the IPC From October 1975 to September 1978

Following the entry into force of the Strasbourg Agreement, on October 7, 1975, the administration of the IPC became the responsibility solely of WIPO. Under the Agreement, the IPC Assembly and the IPC Committee of Experts were established. All countries party to the Agreement, which constitute the Special (IPC) Union, are automatically members of the Assembly and the Committee of Experts, and of any subsidiary body

set up by the Assembly or the Committee of Experts. States members of the Paris Union but not being members of the IPC Union, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations may participate in meetings of the Assembly, of the Committee of Experts and of any of their subsidiary bodies in the capacity of observers.

The main tasks of the Assembly are to deal with all matters concerning the maintenance and development of the IPC Union and the implementation of the Strasbourg Agreement, to give directions to the International Bureau concerning the preparation of conferences of revision and to determine the program and adopt the budget of the IPC Union.

The main tasks of the Committee of Experts are to amend the Classification, to address recommendations to the countries of the IPC Union, with the purpose of facilitating the use of the Classification and promoting its uniform application, and to assist in the promotion of international cooperation in the reclassification of patent documents.

The Committee of Experts, by analogy with the preceding organization of work, set up a Steering Committee and five working groups. These six bodies were to assume tasks similar to those of the Bureau and the five working groups set up by the Joint ad hoc Committee. The Steering Committee was composed of the Chairmen of the five working groups, six members elected by the Committee of Experts and a representative of the IIB. The membership of the working groups was open to all members of the IPC Union.

Administration of the IPC Since September 1978

In September 1978, the Committee of Experts decided to entrust the WIPO Permanent Committee on Patent Information (PCPI), established in October 1977, with the planning and organization of the future revision of the IPC, which was to be dealt with in the Working Group on Search Information, set up by the PCPI in April 1978 to deal with tasks concerning search file organization and maintenance, such as IPC revision matters and search system development. In February 1979, the Committee of Experts decided to discontinue the Steering Committee and Working Groups I to V.

The purpose of establishing the PCPI, which led to the Committee of Experts entrusting the PCPI with the work relating to the revision of the IPC, was to increase coordination and cooperation in the field of patent information matters within the

framework of WIPO and to achieve increased efficiency and savings for the benefit of States and all others interested in patent information.

In September 1987, the structure of the PCPI was simplified and streamlined and the said Committee became the WIPO Permanent Committee on Industrial Property Information (PCIPI). At the same time, the Committee's tasks were broadened to encompass also standardization and automation questions concerning trademarks and industrial designs. The Working Group on Search Information was continued under the new Permanent Committee and its mandate remained unchanged.

The membership in the Working Group on Search Information is open to all members of the PCIPI, *inter alia*, the States members of the IPC Union, States members of the Paris Union but not being members of the IPC Union, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO) and the European Patent Organisation (EPO).

ARIPO, OAPI and the EPO (and earlier, the former IIB) have participated since the signing of the Strasbourg Agreement (in March 1971), or since their creation, in the capacity of observers in the meetings of the Committee of Experts and its subsidiary bodies, with the right to make proposals for amendments to the IPC. These Organizations retain this right in the Working Group on Search Information.

The Work of the International Bureau

The IPC work performed by the International Bureau of WIPO consists of preparation and follow-up of the sessions of the different IPC bodies – in particular the establishment of working documents, providing the secretariat during the sessions and preparation of the reports of the sessions – preparing new editions of the IPC and other IPC publications, organizing and/or participating in training courses and seminars, and promoting the use of the IPC throughout the world.

The large majority of working documents contain proposals for amending the IPC, as well as comments and reports

thereon, submitted by the members of the IPC Union and the above-mentioned Organizations.

Since September 1978, almost all IPC sessions have been held in Geneva, whereas from March 1971 to September 1978 the sessions of Working Groups I to IV were held at industrial property offices, mainly because of the need for consulting relevant patent documents during the sessions, which patent documents in those days were only kept in paper collections, which were not available at WIPO. Since 1978, however, the increased use of fax machines, and patent documents in electronic form, has made it possible to have access to patent documents whilst holding the meetings in Geneva.

Over the years, staff of the International Bureau have participated in IPC training courses or IPC seminars all over the world, in order to train staff of industrial property offices in the use of the IPC for classifying and search purposes and to lecture on the IPC and its role in the field of patent information. Training courses or seminars dedicated to the IPC have been held in, for example, Algiers, Beijing, Geneva, Havana, Lima, Mexico, Munich, Stockholm, The Hague and Vienna.

The work on the IPC within the International Bureau has undergone many changes since 1971. Thus, the staff have been able to take advantage of, in particular, more and more automated procedures. The most noticeable change in the work pattern of the International Bureau in respect of the IPC occurred with the introduction of the IPCIS (*IPC Information System*) database management system in 1994. This system, which was developed by Arcanum Development (formerly Arcanum), Budapest, Hungary, permits the International Bureau to store and manage all amendments approved by the Working Group on Search Information or adopted by the Committee of Experts. The transparency of the system gives the International Bureau access, at any time, to the current edition of the IPC, with or without amendments approved and/or adopted up to that time, and to previous editions of the IPC (as of the fifth edition). At the end of each revision period, IPCIS permits the International Bureau to produce the new IPC editions in the authentic languages (English and French), to generate the data files for the IPC:CLASS CD-ROM (see page 14, below) and to update the *Official Catchword Indexes* and the *Revision Concordance List*.

Major Events in the History of the IPC

Implementation of the IPC by Major Industrial Property Offices

The IPC Agreement entered into force on October 7, 1975, with respect to 13 countries (Austria, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America). As of that date, those countries were obliged to allot the classification symbols of the IPC to the patent documents they issued. However, most of them had already for many years allotted those symbols as a secondary classification to their patent documents.

To fully implement the IPC in an office goes far beyond the obligation of the IPC Agreement to allot the IPC symbols to the patent documents issued. It comprises arrangement of the search files according to the IPC and the use of the IPC for carrying out patent searches, which usually means that the patent examiners are responsible for technical fields defined according to the IPC. In this respect, offices have implemented the IPC to varying degrees, and it is interesting to note how some of the major industrial property offices are using the IPC.

The French National Institute of Industrial Property, which has allotted the IPC symbols since the late 1960s, does not proceed itself to a search within the framework of the granting procedure, but has arranged part of its patent documentation, as well as its databases, according to the IPC and carries out state-of-the-art searches using the IPC.

The German Patent Office has also allotted the symbols of the IPC since the late 1960s; first in addition to the symbols of the German Patent Classification and later, when the IPC Agreement entered into force, as the only classification symbols, deciding to abolish the German Patent Classification in order to implement the IPC completely. To this end, the patent documents of the complete search file were reclassified and rearranged according to the IPC, which work took several years.

The United Kingdom Patent Office and the United States Patent and Trademark Office have allotted the IPC symbols since the late 1960s in addition to the classification symbols of their national patent classifications. The United Kingdom Patent Office's manual search files are based on both the IPC and its national classification system. The United States Patent and Trademark Office has only part of its search files arranged according to the IPC and carries out the patent searches mainly according to its national classification system.

Of the countries that became party to the IPC Agreement after its entry into force (a list of the 29 countries which on March 24, 1996, were party to the IPC Agreement appears on page I9, below), the Australian Industrial Property Organisation, which has only its national patent documents arranged according to the IPC, and the Committee of the Russian Federation for Patents and Trademarks (formerly the USSR State Committee for Inventions and Discoveries), which possesses a search file almost entirely reclassified and rearranged according to the IPC, have allotted the IPC symbols since the late 1960s and carry out their searches primarily using the IPC.

When Japan became party to the IPC Agreement in August 1977, the Japanese Patent Office took the decision to discontinue the use of the Japanese Patent Classification and use the IPC to its full extent. The Office, which has allotted the IPC symbols since 1972, has reclassified and rearranged its entire search file according to the IPC and carries out the searches using the IPC, although it has supplemented the search system with an elaborate indexing system, based on the IPC.

China is not a member of the IPC Union, but since its establishment in January 1980 the Chinese Patent Office has been using the IPC to its full extent.

The European Patent Office (EPO), which became operational in June 1978, also uses the IPC to its full extent, but because of its particular search needs the EPO has supplemented the IPC with a great number of classification entries. This enlarged classification system is referred to as the *European Classification (ECLA)*.

The CAPRI System

Rearranging part or all of an existing search file according to the IPC requires, as a first step, the classification of the patent documents of the search file according to the IPC, i.e., reclassification of documents already classified according to another classification system. This work, which can only be carried out by experts in the various technical fields (usually the patent examiners) is a tremendous undertaking, since a complete search file contains several million patent documents.

In order to assist offices wishing to undertake such reclassification work and, in particular, in order to assist offices in developing countries to create a searchable patent document collection, the CAPRI (Computer Administration of Patent Documents Reclassified According to the IPC) System was established. In

1975, WIPO signed with the former *International Patent Documentation Center* (INPADOC) in Vienna, Austria, the *Agreement Concerning the Computer Administration of Patent Documents Reclassified According to the IPC* (the CAPRI System). The aim of the CAPRI System was to reclassify according to the first edition of the IPC all patent documents issued before 1975 and being part of the PCT minimum documentation, which is based on the patent documents issued from 1920 onwards by the major patent offices, and to store these IPC symbols together with the related patent document numbers in a database. Offices could thereafter obtain this information from INPADOC and use it as a basis for building up a collection of patent documents arranged according to the IPC.

The industrial property offices of Austria, Germany, Japan and the former Soviet Union and the EPO cooperated in the establishment of the CAPRI System, which was completed in 1988 and consists of inventories of all IPC subclasses, covering approximately 16 million documents. Since the takeover of INPADOC by the EPO, in 1990, the CAPRI database is available on magnetic tape or COM microfiche from the EPO sub-office in Vienna.

Introduction of Indexing Schemes

In December 1979, the IPC Committee of Experts decided that – when a specific technical field of the IPC could not be further developed by using conventional classification techniques – in order to improve the effectiveness of the IPC as a search tool, the classifying entries of that field could be supplemented by indexing entries, which should be presented in an indexing scheme. A technical subject classified into such a field of the IPC could, if appropriate, also be indexed. The indexing entries permit indexing of aspects of the technical subject that cannot be classified, for example, a technical subject classified accord-

ing to its intrinsic nature may be indexed according to its application.

Whereas the States members of the IPC Union are obliged to allot and print the classification symbols of the IPC on the patent documents they issue, they are not obliged to allot and print the codes of the indexing entries.

At first, there was some reluctance on the part of offices participating in the IPC revision work as to the usefulness of the indexing codes in the search process, so indexing entries were introduced only in a few IPC areas, for example, in the chemical field, where searching with the use of classifying symbols alone often was insufficient. However, after offices had gained experience in using the indexing codes, which appeared for the first time in the fourth edition of the IPC, they became convinced of their value for searching. Since then, more and more indexing schemes have been introduced in the IPC.

The IPC:CLASS CD-ROM

In May 1992, WIPO published the first edition of the IPC:CLASS CD-ROM. It was not merely the publication of the current version of the IPC on this new type of data carrier, but the publication of a complete search system for the IPC, intended mainly for the user who is not very familiar with the IPC.

The second edition of IPC:CLASS, published in September 1994, contains all six IPC editions in English and French, several editions in German, Hungarian and Spanish, and the sixth edition in Russian, as well as catchword indexes and revision concordance data for many of these language versions of the IPC. The use of IPC:CLASS obviates the voluminous collection of publications which otherwise has to be used in order to identify in different IPC editions the places which cover a given technical subject.

CHAPTER II

IPC MEETINGS

Chapter I, above, speaks of the administration of the IPC from 1971 to 1996, in particular the different organizational setups for dealing with all questions relating to the IPC. This Chapter indicates the meetings held by the various IPC bodies during the said period, for each body giving the year of each meeting (and the months, if in a year more than one meeting was held; if a meeting started in one month and ended in the following month, both months are indicated, separated by an oblique stroke) and the total number of actual meeting days (Saturdays and Sundays not counted). Altogether, there were 1,175 meeting days in the 25 years covered (not counting the meeting days of the Assembly of the IPC Union; see page 16, below). This Chapter also indicates the training courses and seminars, dedicated to the IPC, which have taken place in that period.

Meetings of IPC Bodies Pending the Entry Into Force of the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the IPC (March 1971 to October 1975)

Joint ad hoc Committee of the Council of Europe and BIRPI on the International Classification of Patents: 1971, 1972 (June and November/December), 1973, 1974, 1975 [21 days];

Bureau of the Joint ad hoc Committee: 1971 (May and November), 1972 (May/June and November), 1973

(February/March and June), 1974 (January and December), 1975 [55 days];

Working Group I of the Joint ad hoc Committee: 1971, 1972 (January, June/July and December), 1973, 1974 (March and September/October), 1975 [53 days];

Working Group II of the Joint ad hoc Committee: 1971, 1972 (February and August/September), 1974 (February and July), 1975 [39 days];

Working Group III of the Joint ad hoc Committee: 1971, 1972 (January/February and July), 1973, 1974 (March and September), 1975 [45 days];

Working Group IV of the Joint ad hoc Committee: 1971, 1972 (March and September/October), 1973, 1974 (May and November), 1975 [53 days];

Working Group V of the Joint ad hoc Committee: 1971 (May and October), 1972 (March and September), 1973 (March and November), 1974, 1975 [40 days];

Preparatory Meeting for the Entry into Force of the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the IPC: 1975 [6 days].

Meetings of IPC Bodies From October 1975 to March 1996

Note: The Assembly of the IPC Union held its first (extraordinary) session from October 7 to 9, 1975. Since then, the Assembly has met 12 times in ordinary sessions, in Geneva, during the same period as the General Assembly of WIPO.

Committee of Experts of the IPC Union: 1975, 1976 (January and October), 1977, 1978, 1979 (January/February and December), 1980, 1981, 1982 (February and December), 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 (March and September), 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993 (March and September/October), 1995 [110 days];

Steering Committee of the Committee of Experts: 1976 (January and October), 1977 (March and November), 1978 [33 days];

Working Group I of the Committee of Experts: 1976 (March/April and November/December), 1977, 1978 (February/March and October) [46 days];

Working Group II of the Committee of Experts: 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978 (April and November) [46 days];

Working Group III of the Committee of Experts: 1975, 1976, 1977 (February and October), 1978 (April and December) [51 days];

Working Group IV of the Committee of Experts: 1976 (February and November), 1977, 1978 (January and October) [46 days];

Working Group V of the Committee of Experts: 1976, 1977, 1978 [15 days];

Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revision of the Guide to the IPC: 1977, 1978 (March and October), 1982, 1983, 1988 [28 days];

Working Group on International Cooperation in the Classification of Search Files According to the IPC: 1973, 1975, 1980 (March, April and December) [13 days].

Note: In September 1978, Working Groups I to V of the Committee of Experts were discontinued, and since then the preparatory work for the Committee of Experts has been carried out in the Working Group on Search Information, within the framework of the Permanent Committee on Patent [as of December 1987 Industrial Property] Information (see page 11, above).

Working Group on Search Information: 1979 (February and July), 1980 (January/February and June), 1981 (January and June), 1982 (January and June), 1983 (January and June), 1984 (January, May and November/December), 1985 (May and November/December), 1986 (June and November/December), 1987 (May and November/December), 1988 (June and November/December), 1989 (May/June and November/December), 1990 (May and November), 1991 (May/June and November/December), 1992 (May and November), 1993 (June and November/December), 1994 (May/June and November/December), 1995 (June and November/December) [329 days];

Subsidiary bodies of the PCPI Working Group on Search Information: 1979 (May and June), 1980 (November and December), 1981 (May and November), 1982 (April and November), 1985, 1986 [49 days];

Ad Hoc Working Group on IPC Revision Policy: 1988 [2 days];

Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term IPC Revision Policy: 1992, 1993 [9 days].

Ad Hoc Working Group on the Application of the Criteria for the Selection of IPC Revision Projects: 1994 [5 days];

Seminars and Training Courses Devoted to the IPC

Seminars: 1975, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1987, 1989 [42 days];

Training Courses: 1975 (May and October), 1979, 1980 (July, November and December) [39 days].

CHAPTER III

IPC PUBLICATIONS

Before the entry into force of a new IPC edition, which occurs every five years, the International Bureau prepares and publishes the two authentic (English and French) versions of the new edition. Each language version comprises approximately 1,700 pages, divided into 10 Volumes, of which Volumes 1 to 8 cover the complete classification system (Sections A to H), Volume 9 contains the Summary of the Main Groups together with the Guide to the IPC, and Volume 10 contains just the Guide to the IPC. These two authentic versions of the IPC serve as a basis for translation of the IPC into other languages. For example, complete texts of the sixth edition of the IPC have been prepared and published, by the industrial property offices concerned, in Chinese, Croatian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Russian and Spanish.

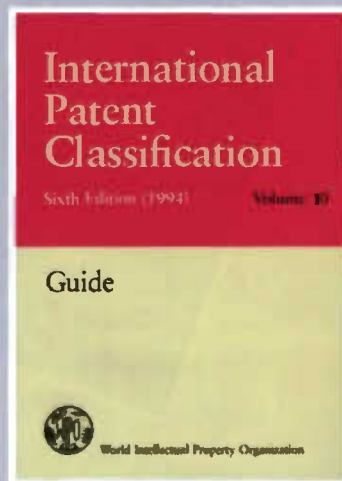
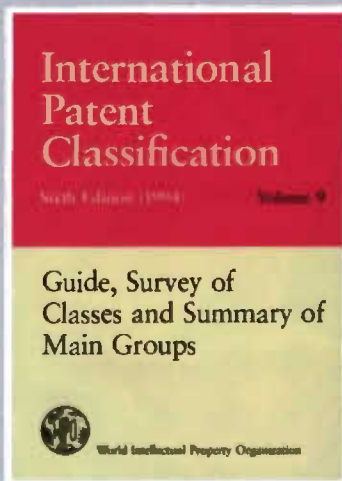
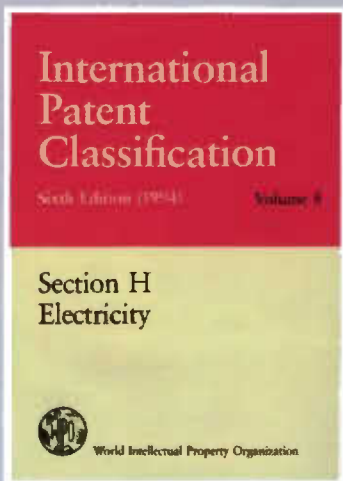
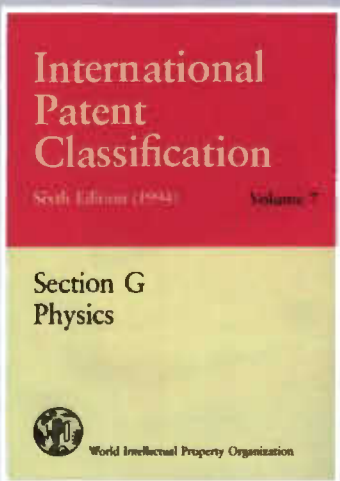
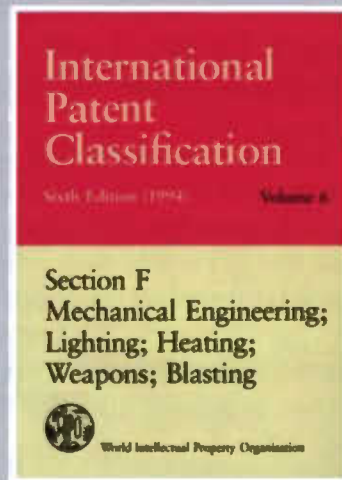
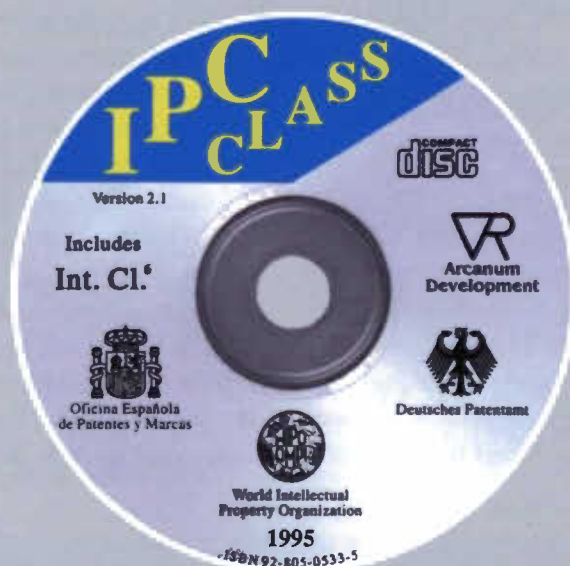
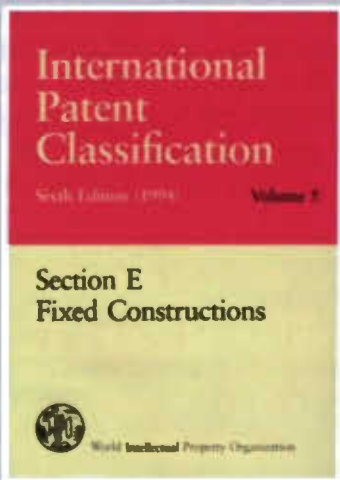
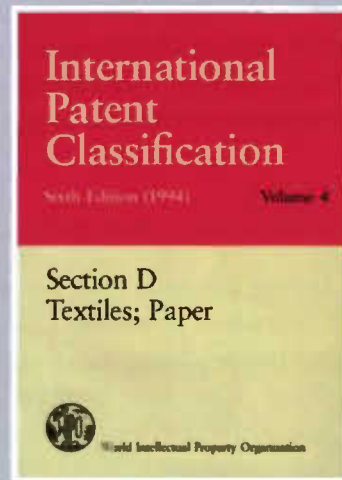
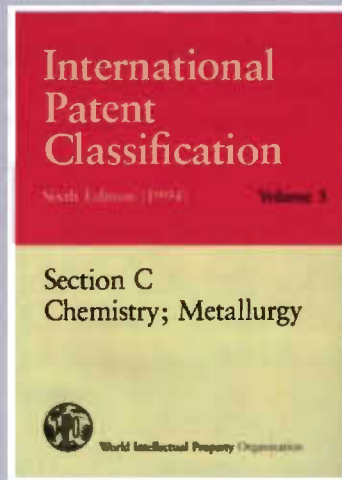
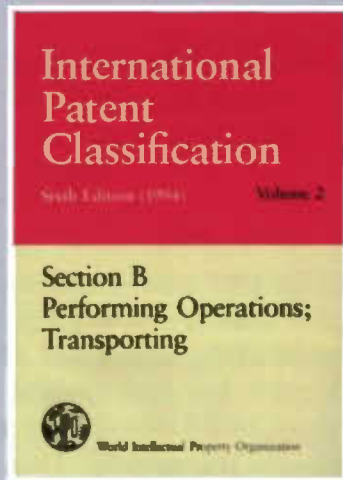
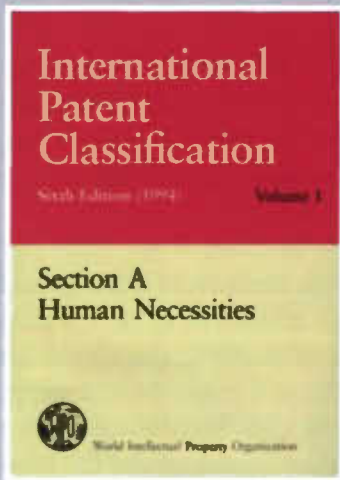
In order to assist the user in finding the places in the IPC that are relevant to any technical subject of interest, the IPC Committee of Experts has elaborated official catchword indexes, in English and in French, each one containing more than 20,000 catchwords (or phrases) that appear in the IPC. These catchword indexes are updated by the Committee of Experts at the end of each revision period, in accordance with the new edition of the IPC. Also, in order to alleviate the problems faced by the user

of the IPC when subject matter has been moved due to the revision work from one place in one edition of the IPC to another place in the subsequent edition of the IPC, the Committee of Experts has established a Revision Concordance List, which shows how subject matter has been transferred between two successive IPC editions. The catchword indexes and the Revision Concordance List are prepared and published by the International Bureau at virtually the same time as the corresponding new edition of the IPC.

The International Bureau also publishes, in connection with each new edition of the IPC, an updated version of the brochure International Patent Classification - General Information. This brochure, which is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, gives brief information on the history and administration of the IPC, the classification system itself and activities relating to the IPC.

In addition to these printed publications, the International Bureau publishes, at the time of publishing a new edition of the IPC, a new edition of the IPC:CLASS CD-ROM (see page 14, above), incorporating therein the new edition of the IPC in the languages already present on the CD-ROM.





CHAPTER IV

FACTS AND FIGURES CONCERNING THE IPC

States Party to the Strasbourg (IPC) Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification

Status on March 24, 1996

<i>State</i>	<i>Date on which State became party to the Agreement</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Date on which State became party to the Agreement</i>
Australia ¹	November 12, 1975	Luxembourg ²	April 9, 1977
Austria	October 7, 1975	Monaco ²	June 13, 1976
Belgium ²	July 4, 1976	Netherlands ³	October 7, 1975
Brazil	October 7, 1975	Norway ¹	October 7, 1975
Canada	January 11, 1996	Portugal	May 1, 1979
Czech Republic	January 1, 1993	Russian Federation	October 3, 1976 ⁴
Denmark	October 7, 1975	Slovakia	January 1, 1993
Egypt	October 17, 1975	Spain ^{1,2}	November 29, 1975
Finland ¹	May 16, 1976	Suriname	November 25, 1975
France ²	October 7, 1975	Sweden	October 7, 1975
Germany	October 7, 1975	Switzerland	October 7, 1975
Ireland ¹	October 7, 1975	Tajikistan	December 25, 1991
Israel	October 7, 1975	United Kingdom ¹	October 7, 1975
Italy ²	March 30, 1980	United States of America	October 7, 1975
Japan	August 18, 1977		

(Total: 29 States)

¹ With the reservation provided for in Article 4(4)(i) (see Chapter V, below).

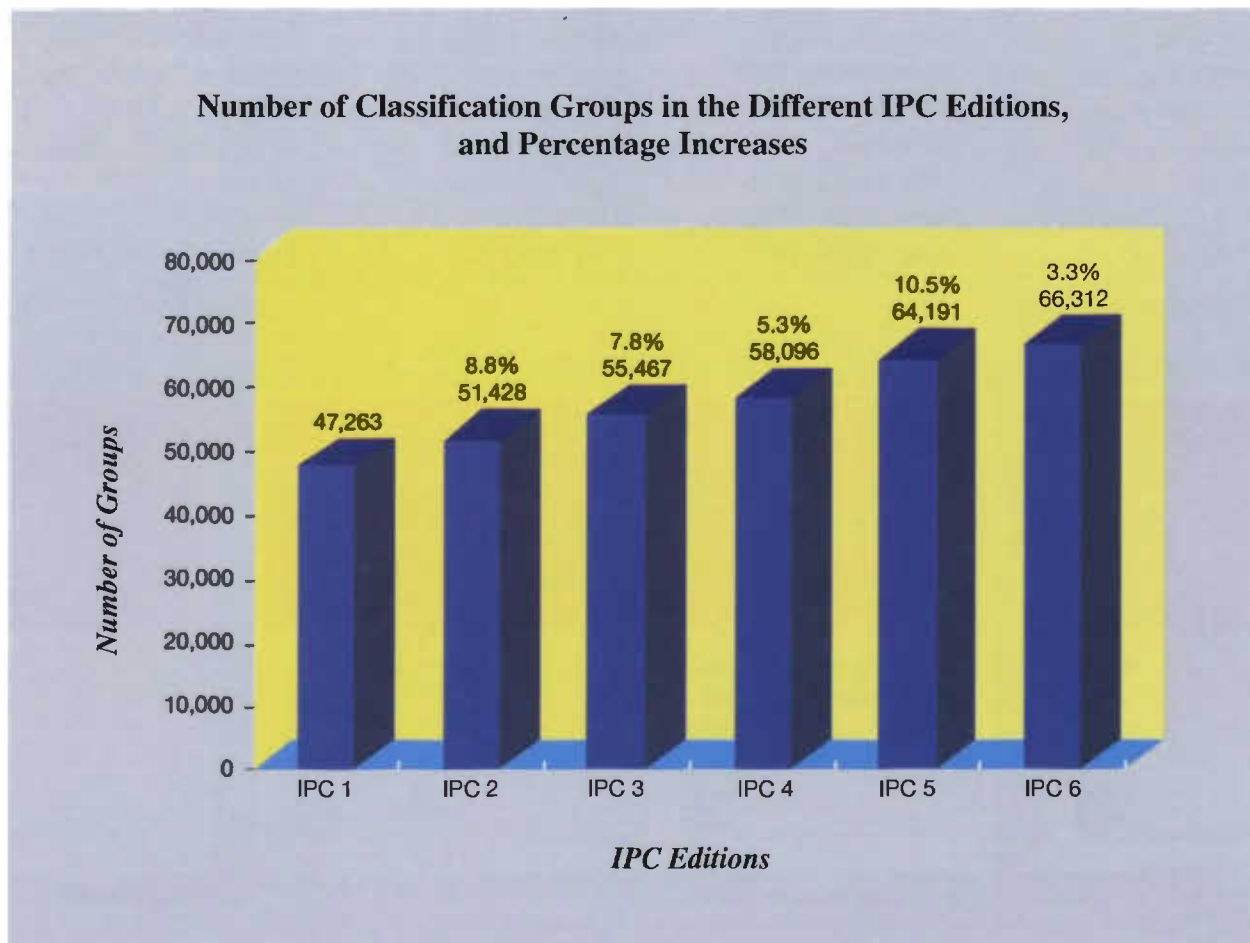
² With the reservation provided for in Article 4(4)(ii) (see Chapter V, below).

³ Ratification for the Kingdom in Europe, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

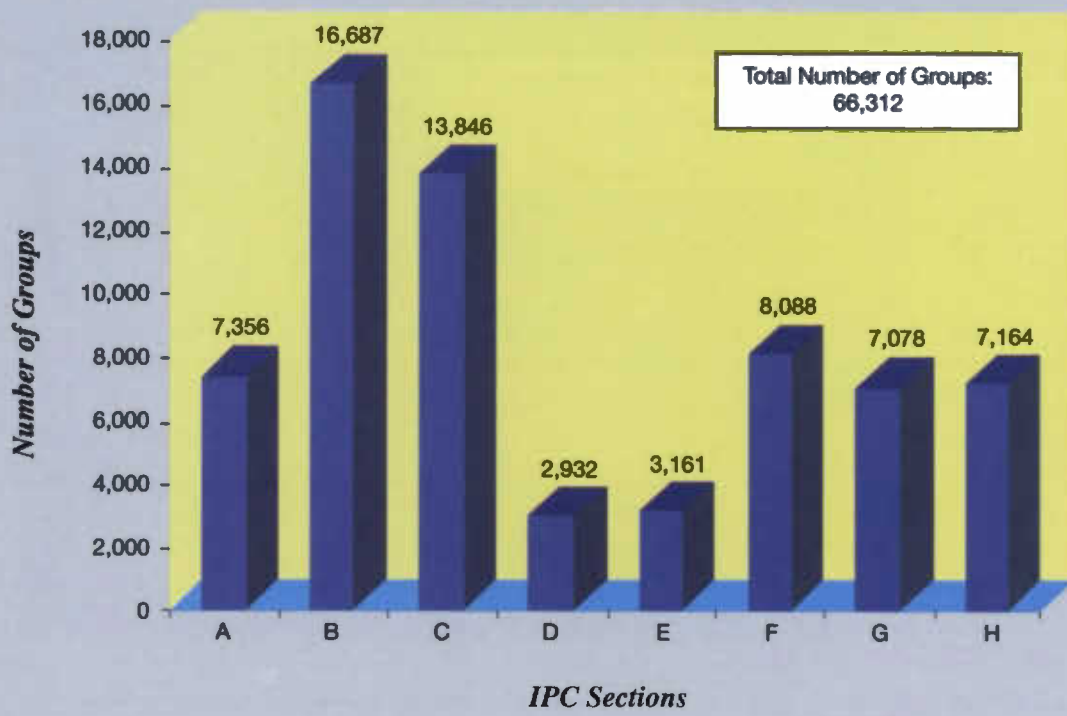
⁴ Date of accession by the Soviet Union, continued by the Russian Federation as from December 25, 1991.

Countries and International Organizations Allotting the IPC Symbols to the Patent Documents They Issue

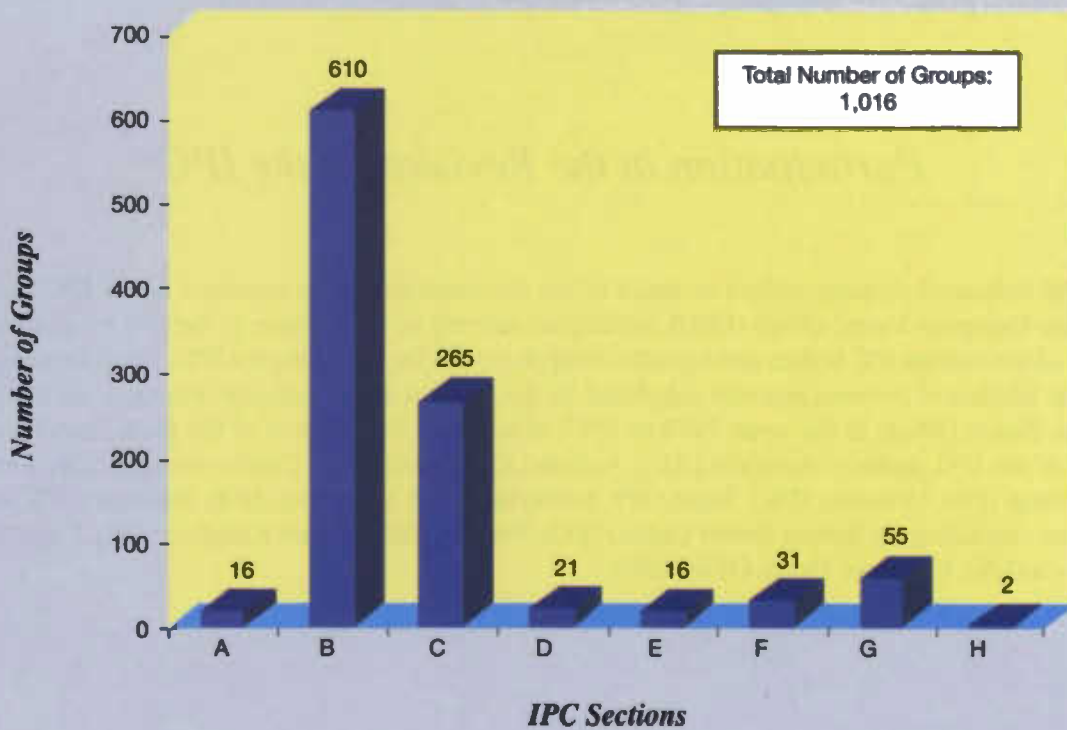
At least the following 84 countries and four international organizations allot IPC symbols to the patent documents they issue, amounting to approximately one million documents each year (altogether, more than 22 million patent documents bear the IPC symbols): African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO), Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, European Patent Office (EPO), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.



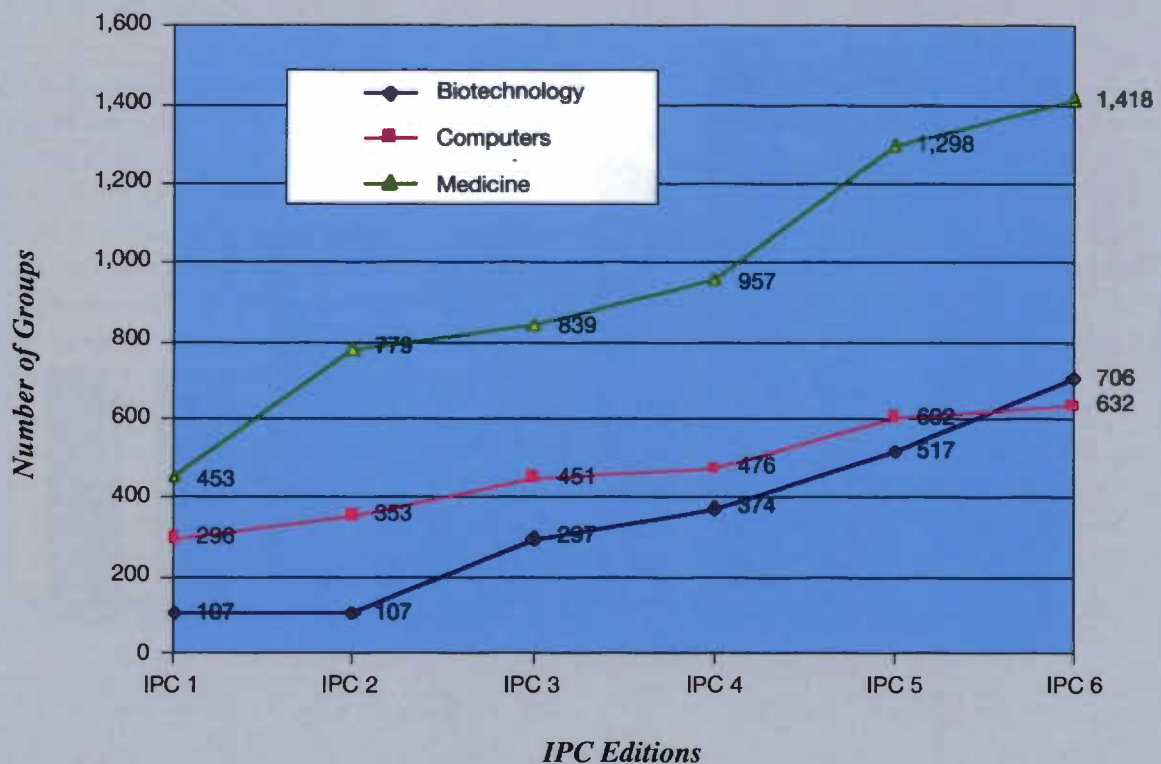
Number of Classification Groups in the Sixth Edition of the IPC



Number of Indexing Groups in the Sixth Edition of the IPC



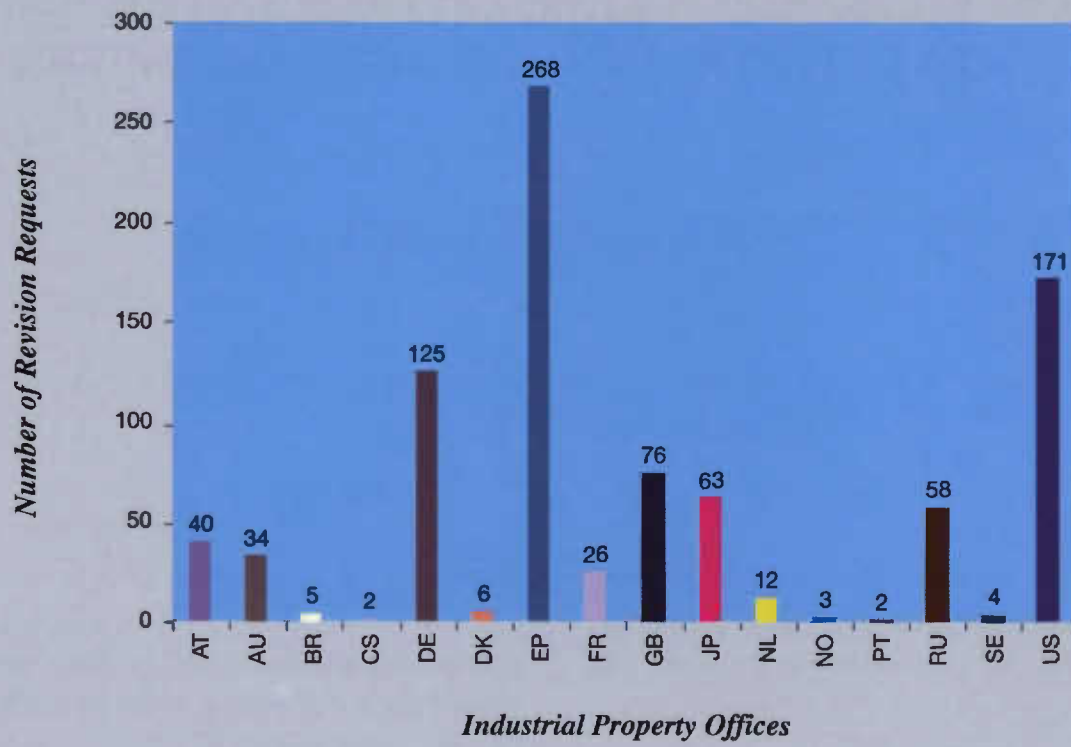
Number of Classification Groups for Some Rapidly Expanding Technologies



Participation in the Revision of the IPC

The industrial property offices of many of the countries which are members of the IPC Union, as well as the European Patent Office (EPO), participate actively in the revision of the IPC by attending the sessions of the various IPC bodies and by submitting proposals for amending the IPC. The following graph shows the number of revision requests submitted by the 15 most active national offices, as well as by the European Patent Office, in the years 1978 to 1993, concerning the revision of the third, fourth and fifth editions of the IPC, namely: Australia (AU), Austria (AT), Brazil (BR), Czechoslovakia (CS), Denmark (DK), France (FR), Germany (DE), Japan (JP), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Portugal (PT), Russian Federation (including the former Soviet Union) (RU), Sweden (SE), United Kingdom (GB), United States of America (US), European Patent Office (EP).

Number of Revision Requests Submitted in the Years 1978 to 1993



CHAPTER V

THE TEXT OF THE STRASBOURG (IPC) AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION

of March 24, 1971,
as amended on September 28, 1979

The Contracting Parties,

Considering that the universal adoption of a uniform system of classification of patents, inventors' certificates, utility models and utility certificates is in the general interest and is likely to establish closer international cooperation in the industrial property field, and to contribute to the harmonization of national legislation in that field,

Recognizing the importance of the European Convention on the International Classification of Patents for Invention, of December 19, 1954, under which the Council of Europe created the International Classification of Patents for Invention,

Having regard to the universal value of this Classification, and to its importance to all countries party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property,

Having regard to the importance to developing countries of this Classification, which gives them easier access to the ever-expanding volume of modern technology,

Having regard to Article 19 of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property of March 20, 1883, as revised at Brussels on December 14, 1900, at Washington on June 2, 1911, at The Hague on November 6, 1925, at London on June 2, 1934, at Lisbon on October 31, 1958, and at Stockholm on July 14, 1967,

Agree as follows:

Article 1

Establishment of a Special Union; Adoption of an International Classification

The countries to which this Agreement applies constitute a Special Union and adopt a common classification for patents for invention, inventors' certificates, utility models and utility

certificates, to be known as the "International Patent Classification" (hereinafter designated as the "Classification").

Article 2

Definition of the Classification

(1) (a) The Classification comprises:

- (i) the text which was established pursuant to the provisions of the European Convention on the International Classification of Patents for Invention of December 19, 1954 (hereinafter designated as the "European Convention"), and which came into force and was published by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on September 1, 1968;
- (ii) the amendments which have entered into force pursuant to Article 2(2) of the European Convention prior to the entry into force of this Agreement;
- (iii) the amendments made thereafter in accordance with Article 5 which enter into force pursuant to the provisions of Article 6.

(b) The Guide and the notes included in the text of the Classification are an integral part thereof.

(2) (a) The text referred to in paragraph (1)(a)(i) is contained in two authentic copies, each in the English and French languages, deposited, at the time that this Agreement is opened for signature, one with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the other with the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (hereinafter respectively designated "Director General" and "Organization") established by the Convention of July 14, 1967.

(b) The amendments referred to in paragraph (1)(a)(ii) shall be deposited in two authentic copies, each in the English and French languages, one with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the other with the Director General.

(c) The amendments referred to in paragraph (1)(a)(iii) shall be deposited in one authentic copy only, in the English and French languages, with the Director General.

Article 3

Languages of the Classification

(1) The Classification shall be established in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic.

(2) Official texts of the Classification, in German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and in such other languages as the Assembly referred to in Article 7 may designate, shall be established by the International Bureau of the Organization (hereinafter designated as the "International Bureau"), in consultation with the interested Governments and either on the basis of a translation submitted by those Governments or by any other means which do not entail financial implications for the budget of the Special Union or for the Organization.

Article 4

Use of the Classification

(1) The Classification shall be solely of an administrative character.

(2) Each country of the Special Union shall have the right to use the Classification either as a principal or as a subsidiary system.

(3) The competent authorities of the countries of the Special Union shall include in

- (i) patents, inventors' certificates, utility models and utility certificates issued by them, and in applications relating thereto, whether published or only laid open for public inspection by them, and
- (ii) notices, appearing in official periodicals, of the publication or laying open of the documents referred to in subparagraph (i)

the complete symbols of the Classification applied to the invention to which the document referred to in subparagraph (i) relates.

(4) When signing this Agreement or when depositing its instrument of ratification or accession:

- (i) any country may declare that it does not undertake to include the symbols relating to groups or subgroups of the Classification in applications as referred to in para-

graph (3) which are only laid open for public inspection and in notices relating thereto, and

- (ii) any country which does not proceed to an examination as to novelty, whether immediate or deferred, and in which the procedure for the grant of patents or other kinds of protection does not provide for a search into the state of the art, may declare that it does not undertake to include the symbols relating to the groups and subgroups of the Classification in the documents and notices referred to in paragraph (3). If these conditions exist only in relation to certain kinds of protection or certain fields of technology, the country in question may only make this reservation to the extent that the conditions apply.

(5) The symbols of the Classification, preceded by the words "International Patent Classification" or an abbreviation thereof to be determined by the Committee of Experts referred to in Article 5, shall be printed in heavy type, or in such a manner that they are clearly visible, in the heading of each document referred to in paragraph (3)(i) in which they are to be included.

(6) If any country of the Special Union entrusts the grant of patents to an intergovernmental authority, it shall take all possible measures to ensure that this authority uses the Classification in accordance with this Article.

Article 5

Committee of Experts

(1) A Committee of Experts shall be set up in which each country of the Special Union shall be represented.

(2) (a) The Director General shall invite intergovernmental organizations specialized in the patent field, and of which at least one of the member countries is party to this Agreement, to be represented by observers at meetings of the Committee of Experts.

(b) The Director General may, and, if requested by the Committee of Experts, shall, invite representatives of other intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations to participate in discussions of interest to them.

(3) The Committee of Experts shall:

- (i) amend the Classification;
- (ii) address recommendations to the countries of the Special Union for the purpose of facilitating the use of the Classification and promoting its uniform application;
- (iii) assist in the promotion of international cooperation in the reclassification of documentation used for the examination of inventions, taking in particular the needs of developing countries into account;

- (iv) take all other measures which, without entailing financial implications for the budget of the Special Union or for the Organization, contribute towards facilitating the application of the Classification by developing countries;
- (v) have the right to establish subcommittees and working groups.

(4) The Committee of Experts shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure. These shall allow for the possibility of participation of intergovernmental organizations, referred to in paragraph (2)(a), which can perform substantial work in the development of the Classification, in meetings of its subcommittees and working groups.

(5) Proposals for amendments to the Classification may be made by the competent authority of any country of the Special Union, the International Bureau, any intergovernmental organization represented in the Committee of Experts pursuant to paragraph (2)(a) and any other organization specially invited by the Committee of Experts to submit such proposals. The proposals shall be communicated to the International Bureau which shall submit them to the members of the Committee of Experts and to the observers not later than two months before the session of the Committee of Experts at which the said proposals are to be considered.

(6) (a) Each country member of the Committee of Experts shall have one vote.

(b) The decisions of the Committee of Experts shall require a simple majority of the countries represented and voting.

(c) Any decision which is regarded by one-fifth of the countries represented and voting as giving rise to a modification in the basic structure of the Classification or as entailing a substantial work of reclassification shall require a majority of three-fourths of the countries represented and voting.

(d) Abstentions shall not be considered as votes.

Article 6

Notification, Entry into Force and Publication of Amendments and Other Decisions

(1) Every decision of the Committee of Experts concerning the adoption of amendments to the Classification and recommendations of the Committee of Experts shall be notified by the International Bureau to the competent authorities of the countries of the Special Union. The amendments shall enter into force six months from the date of dispatch of the notification.

(2) The International Bureau shall incorporate in the Classification the amendments which have entered into force.

Announcements of the amendments shall be published in such periodicals as are designated by the Assembly referred to in Article 7.

Article 7

Assembly of the Special Union

(1) (a) The Special Union shall have an Assembly consisting of the countries of the Special Union.

(b) The Government of each country of the Special Union shall be represented by one delegate, who may be assisted by alternate delegates, advisors and experts.

(c) Any intergovernmental organization referred to in Article 5(2)(a) may be represented by an observer in the meetings of the Assembly, and, if the Assembly so decides, in those of such committees or working groups as may have been established by the Assembly.

(d) The expenses of each delegation shall be borne by the Government which has appointed it.

(2) (a) Subject to the provisions of Article 5, the Assembly shall:

- (i) deal with all matters concerning the maintenance and development of the Special Union and the implementation of this Agreement;
- (ii) give directions to the International Bureau concerning the preparation for conferences of revision;
- (iii) review and approve the reports and activities of the Director General concerning the Special Union, and give him all necessary instructions concerning matters within the competence of the Special Union;
- (iv) determine the program and adopt the biennial budget of the Special Union, and approve its final accounts;
- (v) adopt the financial regulations of the Special Union;
- (vi) decide on the establishment of official texts of the Classification in languages other than English, French and those listed in Article 3(2);
- (vii) establish such committees and working groups as it deems appropriate to achieve the objectives of the Special Union;
- (viii) determine, subject to paragraph (1)(c), which countries not members of the Special Union and which intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations shall be admitted as observers to its meetings, and to those of any committee or working group established by it;
- (ix) take any other appropriate action designed to further the objectives of the Special Union;
- (x) perform such other functions as are appropriate under this Agreement.

(b) With respect to matters which are of interest also to other Unions administered by the Organization, the Assembly shall make its decisions after having heard the advice of the Coordination Committee of the Organization.

(3) (a) Each country member of the Assembly shall have one vote.

(b) One-half of the countries members of the Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

(c) In the absence of the quorum, the Assembly may make decisions but, with the exception of decisions concerning its own procedure, all such decisions shall take effect only if the conditions set forth hereinafter are fulfilled. The International Bureau shall communicate the said decisions to the countries members of the Assembly which were not represented and shall invite them to express in writing their vote or abstention within a period of three months from the date of the communication. If, at the expiration of this period, the number of countries having thus expressed their vote or abstention attains the number of countries which was lacking for attaining the quorum in the session itself, such decisions shall take effect provided that at the same time the required majority still obtains.

(d) Subject to the provisions of Article 11(2), the decisions of the Assembly shall require two-thirds of the votes cast.

(e) Abstentions shall not be considered as votes.

(f) A delegate may represent, and vote in the name of, one country only.

(4) (a) The Assembly shall meet once in every second calendar year in ordinary session upon convocation by the Director General and, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, during the same period and at the same place as the General Assembly of the Organization.

(b) The Assembly shall meet in extraordinary session upon convocation by the Director General, at the request of one-fourth of the countries members of the Assembly.

(c) The agenda of each session shall be prepared by the Director General.

(5) The Assembly shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure.

Article 8

International Bureau

(1) (a) Administrative tasks concerning the Special Union shall be performed by the International Bureau.

(b) In particular, the International Bureau shall prepare the meetings and provide the secretariat of the Assembly, the Committee of Experts and such other committees or working groups as may have been established by the Assembly or the Committee of Experts.

(c) The Director General shall be the chief executive of the Special Union and shall represent the Special Union.

(2) The Director General and any staff member designated by him shall participate, without the right to vote, in all meetings of the Assembly, the Committee of Experts and such other committees or working groups as may have been established by the Assembly or the Committee of Experts. The Director General, or a staff member designated by him, shall be *ex officio* secretary of those bodies.

(3) (a) The International Bureau shall, in accordance with the directions of the Assembly, make the preparations for revision conferences.

(b) The International Bureau may consult with intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations concerning preparations for revision conferences.

(c) The Director General and persons designated by him shall take part, without the right to vote, in the discussions at revision conferences.

(4) The International Bureau shall carry out any other tasks assigned to it.

Article 9

Finances

(1) (a) The Special Union shall have a budget.

(b) The budget of the Special Union shall include the income and expenses proper to the Special Union, its contribution to the budget of expenses common to the Unions and, where applicable, the sum made available to the budget of the Conference of the Organization.

(c) Expenses not attributable exclusively to the Special Union but also to one or more other Unions administered by the Organization shall be considered as expenses common to the Unions. The share of the Special Union in such common expenses shall be in proportion to the interest the Special Union has in them.

(2) The budget of the Special Union shall be established with due regard to the requirements of coordination with the budgets of the other Unions administered by the Organization.

(3) The budget of the Special Union shall be financed from the following sources:

- (i) contributions of the countries of the Special Union;
- (ii) fees and charges due for services rendered by the International Bureau in relation to the Special Union;
- (iii) sale of, or royalties on, the publications of the International Bureau concerning the Special Union;
- (iv) gifts, bequests and subventions;
- (v) rents, interests and other miscellaneous income.

(4) (a) For the purpose of establishing its contribution referred to in paragraph (3)(i), each country of the Special Union shall belong to the same class as it belongs to in the Paris Union for the Protection of Industrial Property, and shall pay its annual contribution on the basis of the same number of units as is fixed for that class in that Union.

(b) The annual contribution of each country of the Special Union shall be an amount in the same proportion to the total sum to be contributed to the budget of the Special Union by all countries as the number of its units is to the total of the units of all contributing countries.

(c) Contributions shall become due on the first of January of each year.

(d) A country which is in arrears in the payment of its contributions may not exercise its right to vote in any organ of the Special Union if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. However, any organ of the Special Union may allow such a country to continue to exercise its right to vote in that organ if, and as long as, it is satisfied that the delay in payment is due to exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.

(e) If the budget is not adopted before the beginning of a new financial period, it shall be at the same level as the budget of the previous year, as provided in the financial regulations.

(5) The amount of the fees and charges due for services rendered by the International Bureau in relation to the Special Union shall be established, and shall be reported to the Assembly, by the Director General.

(6) (a) The Special Union shall have a working capital fund which shall be constituted by a single payment made by each country of the Special Union. If the fund becomes insufficient, the Assembly shall decide to increase it.

(b) The amount of the initial payment of each country to the said fund or of its participation in the increase thereof shall be a proportion of the contribution of that country for the year in which the fund is established or the decision to increase it is made.

(c) The proportion and the terms of payment shall be fixed by the Assembly on the proposal of the Director General and after it has heard the advice of the Coordination Committee of the Organization.

(7) (a) In the headquarters agreement concluded with the country on the territory of which the Organization has its headquarters, it shall be provided that, whenever the working capital fund is insufficient, such country shall grant advances. The amount of those advances and the conditions on which they are granted shall be the subject of separate agreements, in each case, between such country and the Organization.

(b) The country referred to in subparagraph (a) and the Organization shall each have the right to denounce the obligation to grant advances, by written notification. Denunciation shall

take effect three years after the end of the year in which it was notified.

(8) The auditing of the accounts shall be effected by one or more of the countries of the Special Union or by external auditors, as provided in the financial regulations. They shall be designated, with their agreement, by the Assembly.

Article 10

Revision of the Agreement

(1) This Agreement may be revised from time to time by a special conference of the countries of the Special Union.

(2) The convocation of any revision conference shall be decided by the Assembly.

(3) Articles 7, 8, 9 and 11 may be amended either by a revision conference or according to the provisions of Article 11.

Article 11

Amendment of Certain Provisions of the Agreement

(1) Proposals for the amendment of Articles 7, 8, 9 and of the present Article may be initiated by any country of the Special Union or by the Director General. Such proposals shall be communicated by the Director General to the countries of the Special Union at least six months in advance of their consideration by the Assembly.

(2) Amendments to the Articles referred to in paragraph (1) shall be adopted by the Assembly. Adoption shall require three-fourths of the votes cast, provided that any amendment to Article 7 and to the present paragraph shall require four-fifths of the votes cast.

(3) (a) Any amendment to the Articles referred to in paragraph (1) shall enter into force one month after written notifications of acceptance, effected in accordance with their respective constitutional processes, have been received by the Director General from three-fourths of the countries members of the Special Union at the time the amendment was adopted.

(b) Any amendment to the said Articles thus accepted shall bind all the countries which are members of the Special Union at the time the amendment enters into force, provided that any amendment increasing the financial obligations of countries of the Special Union shall bind only those countries which have notified their acceptance of such amendment.

(c) Any amendment accepted in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (a) shall bind all countries which become members of the Special Union after the date on which the amendment entered into force in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (a).

Article 12

Becoming Party to the Agreement

(1) Any country party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property may become party to this Agreement by:

- (i) signature followed by the deposit of an instrument of ratification, or
- (ii) deposit of an instrument of accession.

(2) Instruments of ratification or accession shall be deposited with the Director General.

(3) The provisions of Article 24 of the Stockholm Act of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property shall apply to this Agreement.

(4) Paragraph (3) shall in no way be understood as implying the recognition or tacit acceptance, by a country of the Special Union, of the factual situation concerning a territory to which this Agreement is made applicable by another country by virtue of the said paragraph.

Article 13

Entry into Force of the Agreement

(1) (a) This Agreement shall enter into force one year after instruments of ratification or accession have been deposited by:

- (i) two-thirds of the countries party to the European Convention on the date on which this Agreement is opened for signature, and
- (ii) three countries party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, which were not previously party to the European Convention and of which at least one is a country where, according to the most recent annual statistics published by the International Bureau on the date of deposit of its instrument of ratification or accession, more than 40,000 applications for patents or inventors' certificates have been filed.

(b) With respect to any country other than those for which this Agreement has entered into force pursuant to subparagraph (a), it shall enter into force one year after the date on which the ratification or accession of that country was notified by the Director General, unless a subsequent date has been indicated in the instrument of ratification or accession. In the latter case, this Agreement shall enter into force with respect to that country on the date thus indicated.

(c) Countries party to the European Convention which ratify this Agreement or accede to it shall be obliged to denounce the said Convention, at the latest, with effect from the day on which this Agreement enters into force with respect to those countries.

(2) Ratification or accession shall automatically entail acceptance of all the clauses and admission to all the advantages of this Agreement.

Article 14

Duration of the Agreement

This Agreement shall have the same duration as the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

Article 15

Denunciation

(1) Any country of the Special Union may denounce this Agreement by notification addressed to the Director General.

(2) Denunciation shall take effect one year after the day on which the Director General has received the notification.

(3) The right of denunciation provided by this Article shall not be exercised by any country before the expiration of five years from the date upon which it becomes a member of the Special Union.

Article 16

Signature, Languages, Notification, Depositary Functions

(1) (a) This Agreement shall be signed in a single original in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic.

(b) This Agreement shall remain open for signature at Strasbourg until September 30, 1971.

(c) The original of this Agreement, when no longer open for signature, shall be deposited with the Director General.

(2) Official texts shall be established by the Director General, after consultation with the interested Governments, in German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and such other languages as the Assembly may designate.

(3) (a) The Director General shall transmit two copies, certified by him, of the signed text of this Agreement to the Governments of the countries that have signed it and, on request, to the Government of any other country. He shall also transmit a copy, certified by him, to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

(b) The Director General shall transmit two copies, certified by him, of any amendment to this Agreement to the Governments of all countries of the Special Union and, on request, to the

Government of any other country. He shall also transmit a copy, certified by him, to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

(c) The Director General shall, on request, furnish the Government of any country that has signed this Agreement, or that accedes to it, with a copy of the Classification, certified by him, in the English or French language.

(4) The Director General shall register this Agreement with the Secretariat of the United Nations.

(5) The Director General shall notify the Governments of all countries party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe of:

- (i) signatures;
- (ii) deposits of instruments of ratification or accession;
- (iii) the date of entry into force of this Agreement;
- (iv) reservations on the use of the Classification;
- (v) acceptances of amendments to this Agreement;
- (vi) the dates on which such amendments enter into force;
- (vii) denunciations received.

Article 17

Transitional Provisions

(1) During the two years following the entry into force of this Agreement, the countries party to the European Convention which are not yet members of the Special Union may enjoy, if they so wish, the same rights in the Committee of Experts as if they were members of the Special Union.

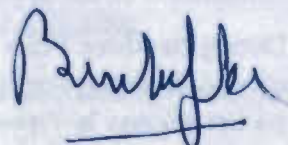
(2) During the three years following the expiration of the period referred to in paragraph (1), the countries referred to in the said paragraph may be represented by observers in the meetings of the Committee of Experts and, if the said Committee so decides, in any subcommittee or working group established by it. During the same period they may submit proposals for amendments to the Classification, in accordance with Article 5(5), and shall be notified of the decisions and recommendations of the Committee of Experts, in accordance with Article 6(1).

(3) During the five years following the entry into force of this Agreement, the countries party to the European Convention which are not yet members of the Special Union may be represented by observers in the meetings of the Assembly and, if the Assembly so decides, in any committee or working group established by it.

**Reproduction of the original signatures of the Final Act
of the 1971 Strasbourg Diplomatic Conference on the International Patent Classification**

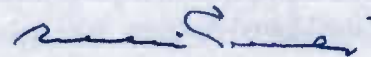
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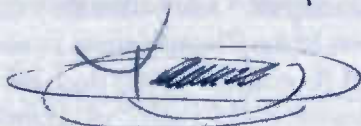
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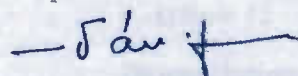
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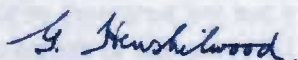
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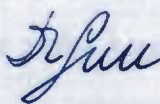
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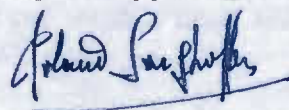
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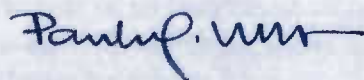
POUR L'IRAN :

Strasbourg, le 22 juin 1971



FOR BRAZIL :

POUR LE BRESIL :



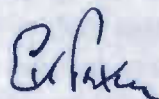
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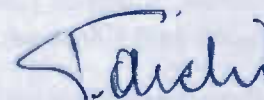
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POUR LE DANEMARK :



FOR ITALY :

POUR L'ITALIE :



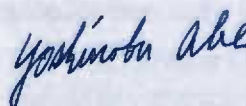
FOR THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY :

POUR LA REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE
D'ALLEMAGNE :

von Kellern
Hein Kauter

FOR JAPAN :

POUR LE JAPON :



FOR LIECHTENSTEIN :

POUR LE LIECHTENSTEIN :

FOR SPAIN :

POUR L'ESPAGNE :

Jacques Bonin

Antoni F. Mafumad *Walter O. de Souza*

FOR LUXEMBOURG :

POUR LE LUXEMBOURG :

FOR SWEDEN :

POUR LA SUEDE :

J. P. Goffin

Ernst Bergqvist

FOR MONACO :

POUR MONACO :

FOR SWITZERLAND :

POUR LA SUISSE :

Remy

Walter Stamm

FOR THE KINGDOM OF THE
NETHERLANDS :

POUR LE ROYAUME DES PAYS-BAS :

FOR TOGO :

POUR LE TOGO :

Shat

PM

PM

FOR NORWAY :

POUR LA NORVEGE :

Sig Nordstrand

FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND :

POUR LE ROYAUME-UNI
DE GRANDE BRETAGNE
ET D'IRLANDE DU NORD :

FOR THE PHILIPPINES :

POUR LES PHILIPPINES :

Fancia A. Cates

Sammy

FOR ROMANIA :

POUR LA ROUMANIE :

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA :

POUR LES ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE :

Laurin

Richard A. Stahl
Harvey J. Nites

FOR SOUTH AFRICA :

POUR L'AFRIQUE DU SUD :

FOR YUGOSLAVIA :

POUR LA YOUGOSLAVIE :

W. Roubert

r. Jovic



WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION