E-Filing
Empowering Users

Asking the questions – the User Satisfaction Survey
Designing Spain – inside the OEPM
EuropeanTMDN News is edited by the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM) and is published every four months.

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As a consequence of strong and lasting cooperation between national and regional IP offices and OHIM, e-filing is slowly but surely becoming the preferred filing channel for users, across the EU.

Developed by OHIM’s Cooperation Fund as part of the Software Package suite of e-services, e-filing’s success is reflected in the number of implementations to date. 13 offices across the Network have already implemented e-filing for trade marks, for example, with a wave of further implementations to come.

Some ETMDN members, of course, have had e-filing for many years. For some, it is an entirely new service - and one which users are adopting enthusiastically.

The Irish Patents Office implemented e-filing in April 2014, to give them an electronic filing system for the first time ever. Staff in the Office’s base in Kilkenny, in the south-east of Ireland, was supported by a deployed project manager, funded by OHIM and working on site, as well as the e-filing rollout teams, based in Alicante, but constantly on the move between ETMDN implementing offices.

The result, as John Nolan from the Irish Patents Office explains, has been a transformative one for the Office and its users.

“At this point in excess of eighty per cent of our national applications are e-filed”

John Nolan - Irish Patents Office

“At this point”, he says with a smile, “in excess of eighty per cent of our national applications are e-filed”. The Irish, it seems, are taking to e-filing like the proverbial ducks to water. But John Nolan stresses that their success had a lot to do with the preparation they put in.
“We worked with user associations from the outset, and we kept them informed of every step of the process”, he says. “Our users championed it with us, and also we involved them in testing, so it was a collaboration at every stage. The benefits were manifest pretty quickly, and a key part of that, from the user and the Office perspective, is a link to other OHIM projects and solutions, in particular TMclass.”

TMclass, John Nolan explains, is the difference engine in terms of e-filing. “Now for the first time, an applicant has visibility, and clear indications as to the goods and services. If they opt for the harmonised database in TMclass, they know there will not be any classification issues for them. So that in itself is an insurance for them.”

Getting eighty per cent of trade mark applications filed online in one year is no mean feat in itself. But the Irish Patents Office is ambitious for more. “We think we should be able to get close to a hundred per cent”, John Nolan states. “The key to it all is that the system is simple to use, from a user perspective. It doesn’t require a great deal of IT knowledge to use, and the proof of that is in the very, very small number of queries we have had from applicants as a result of their interfacing with the tools.”

The Irish Patents Office has been a steady partner in the Cooperation Fund since its inception. The decision to implement e-filing for trade marks was not taken lightly, but it has proved to be a rewarding one. “Without OHIM’s support I don’t think it would have been possible for us to implement a solution”, John Nolan says. “It has worked very well, and shown us the true value of cooperation”.

Meanwhile, in the Söderhamn branch of the Swedish Patent and Registration Office, 250 kilometres north of Stockholm, staff there are bedding in their own e-filing system. Åsa Ekvall and Jenny Englund, business developers from the Design and Trade Mark Department were involved in its implementation, and liaised with the rollout teams from the Cooperation Fund throughout the process.

“We had our own e-filing”, Åsa Ekvall explains, “but we implemented the OHIM e-filing in March. To date, it’s going quite well”.

The Swedes are prolific e-filers anyway, with the previous e-filing system proving extremely popular with applicants. “In the old e-filing system, we had around 70% of all our applications through e-filing”, Jenny Englund explains, adding that hopes are high that even more applications will come through electronically with the new system.

Jenny Englund also underlines the support given by the OHIM rollout teams in terms of getting the implementation through, both in terms of help on the ground and remotely, via email and phone from Alicante.

In Sofia, e-filing is now an established part of life at the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria. Trade mark e-filing was implemented on November 18, 2013, with e-filing for designs coming just a month later. And as if that wasn’t enough, Bulgarian experts, in collaboration with OHIM teams, have implemented 23 other e-services within the framework of the Cooperation Fund’s Software Package.

“Users have the possibility of using e-payment, they can calculate fees online, they save time and money”
Magdalena Radulova, Bulgarian Patents Office

“There are a lot of benefits for our Office after all these implementations,” says the Director of Trademarks in the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, Magdalena Radulova. “The most important ones are the modernization and improvement of the image of the Office. We are proud that we can offer our users a high quality experience by providing e-services and facilitating communication”.

The benefits for the Office are automatically passed on to the users, Magdalena Radulova explains. “All of the e-filings and
e-services are completely integrated with our back office and fewer people are engaged in keying-in of data, which leads to less technical mistakes. There are other benefits as well, for example: the quality of trade marks and the design’s graphic representation is better, applications are forwarded faster to the examiners, the examination of classification of goods and services of trade mark applications is faster due to the integration with TMclass, there’s less correspondence with applicants, etc.”

Bulgaria, like Ireland, was starting from scratch in terms of e-filing. “Before the implementation of e-filing for trade marks and designs, that applications had to be filed only on paper”, Magdalena Radulova points out. “Fortunately, our trade mark legislation allows e-filing without the necessity of adding an e-signature, which leads to a greater usage of the e-filing systems. The numbers speak for themselves - the average percentages of use of e-filings compared to paper applications are 39%, and going as high as 47%.”

Magdalena Radulova also points out that users benefit directly from the implementation, across a variety of fronts. “They have access to the system 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They have the possibility of using e-payment, they can calculate of fees online, they save time and money, they have the opportunity to import existing trade mark or design details, they benefit from the elimination of classification mistakes and of formal deficiencies, there is an improvement in predictability and in transparency and last but not least - harmonization with OHIM and with other national offices.”

Arguably, they were also going to be the ones which called for the most effort on behalf of national offices in terms of the mechanics of implementation, and the subject of the most intense cooperation with OHIM.

The rollout of the various projects has been, and continues to be, highly collaborative and inclusive, with rollout teams, deployed developers, deployed project managers and national and regional office IP experts working together to ensure the best result possible for ETMDN users. During the course of what has been an intense and sustained effort throughout the lifetime of the Cooperation Fund, the end user has always been at the forefront of the minds of everyone involved in the implementation effort.

The idea has always been that e-filing would empower users in a real and tangible way. Now, as the Cooperation Fund enters its final phase, e-filing is showing real returns. Users, no matter where they live, have speed, reliability and security at the top of their wish lists when dealing with IP offices anywhere in the world. E-filing allows offices to give their users what they need, and in doing so, contribute to strengthening IP protection across the EU.

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Like the Irish, the Bulgarians were supported by a deployed project manager, as well as deployed developers. OHIM’s rollout teams were a familiar sight in Sofia in the months running up to the e-filing launch, too. “I can honestly say that without the deployed project manager and deployed developers and the support of OHIM’s great team, we would not have made it”, Magdalena Radulova states.

The four huge projects nested within the Cooperation Fund’s Software Package – e-filing for trade marks, e-filing for designs, e-services and the Back Office project – were always going to be the most challenging to implement out of all the projects.
E-filing

The trade mark e-filing system designed and built as part of the cooperation between OHIM’s ETMDN partners is available through the websites of the participating offices, and those of the rest of the partners and users of the ETMDN.

Nearly 4 out of every 10 trade mark applications to the newly integrated offices came via e-filing in 2014.

There are 5 simple steps in the trade mark e-filing system, which is easy to use for IP professionals and novices alike.

A trade mark can be filed in as little as 10 minutes using the system.

In 2012, Finland became the first national office to implement e-filing.

13 ETMDN offices now use this trade mark e-filing system, with 5 more due to join before the end of 2015.
Interview

The Spanish Intellectual Property Office has roots that stretch right back to the 17th century, and its gaze firmly fixed on the future.

The Office, which is now housed in a modern, 18 storey building in the centre of Madrid, can trace its history right back to 1679, and the establishment of a Royal Committee, which was created to stimulate economic activity in the country.

Fast forward 336 years, and the Office is flourishing, with over 400 employees and a busy portfolio of intellectual property rights to administer. Moreover, it has become an active participant in every stage of the intellectual property rights cycle, working with national and European bodies to strengthen the fight against infringements of intellectual property rights.

But this year, a key focus for the Office is design, with considerable effort going in to implement the Back Office application suite developed by the Cooperation Fund. E-filing for designs went live in the Spanish Office in late 2014, as a result of an intensive period of cooperation between OHIM and Spanish colleagues.

E-filing for designs is a natural fit for the Spanish Office. As Gerardo Penas, the Head of Unit for Utility Models and Designs at the Spanish Office, points out, “we are third in Europe in terms of industrial designs – just behind Germany and Italy”.

How e-filing is helping to power the Spanish design experience

The Spanish government’s campaign “Marca España”, which aims to promote Spain as a creative, innovative brand to international audiences is well known inside and outside the country. Gerardo Penas

“Design goes straight to the external image of a company, to the visibility of a company”

Gerardo Penas, OEPM
underlines that design, as a valuable intellectual property right, can bring huge economic benefits to businesses. “It goes straight to the external image of a company, to the visibility of a company – to many things”.

With this in mind, the hard work that went into integrating the e-filing for designs project was a labour of commitment to the Office’s clients. “With this, we have been helping our users from the very beginning”, Gerardo Penas says. “Beforehand, they were limited to filling out forms. Now, with e-filing for designs, the Office and its users are both going in the same direction – we have established a real cooperation link in which the users take an active role”.

The Spanish Office collaborates with a wide variety of partners. “There’s always been a tradition in which the Office collaborates as much as it possibly can with all IP institutions”, Gerardo Penas points out. “Not just in IP in the traditional sense, but also with anti-counterfeiting organisations. And this really goes to the heart of the role which the Office plays: not only a registry but going further than that, and collaborating in the defence of IP rights, not just granting them”.

The Spanish Office and OHIM have been collaborating for many years, most recently through the Cooperation Fund and Convergence Programme. “These programmes have helped us to deepen our joint relationship”, Gerardo Penas says. “I think they have been two great success stories, and I also think that the work we do together is really worth the effort we put in. Tools like e-Services and e-filing give us added value on their own”.

Design plays a key part in the Spanish economy, from grand architectural and construction projects to simple, everyday objects like tiles. The Spanish Office is now even better placed to meet the demand in design applications from users with the introduction of design e-filing – a high-tech service for an innovative IP right.

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Supporting the ETMDN across the EU

18 Deployed Project Managers work on the ground to assist national level IP experts to implement Cooperation Fund tools and solutions.

More recently they have been reinforced by 26 deployed developers in a number of national offices; the idea being to provide on the ground, targeted support to local staff throughout the implementation process.

Implementation of Cooperation Fund tools and solutions has always been a joint endeavour. The Deployed Project Managers, as professional consultants and experts, and the deployed developers are one part of an interlocking team which is spread between the individual national offices; the working group members which helped develop the tools and services; the Cooperation Fund rollout teams which are almost constantly on the move as implementations take place across the ETMDN; and OHIM’s Alicante-based staff.

José Frade, Neville Micallef and Maja Andalšek Košutnik are the Deployed Project Managers for Portugal, Malta and Slovenia respectively. Taken together, their three offices have committed to 52 separate integrations, including many components of the Software Package – 14% of the total intents to implement tools and solutions across the ETMDN.

The work is similar but varied, as the three explain: “It all started three years ago when within the Cooperation Fund it became evident that some National Offices wouldn’t be able to fully benefit from the projects offered under the Programme”, Neville Micallef points out. “The Deployed Project Managers were introduced to bridge this gap. The Maltese office is very small, with just 17 staff, and it’s always a challenge to find people who can contribute to the various projects, but we have found creative ways to maximise the limited capacity”. 
Already, the Deployed Project Managers have worked with their host offices to achieve concrete results. Malta already has 18 out of their stated 19 intents to implement in place, and Maja Andolšek Košutnik and her colleagues in Slovenia have implemented 16 Cooperation Fund tools; a job she says, that does not end once the tools themselves have been activated.

“After the majority of CF tools have been implemented, continuity assurance transition support becomes very important for the National Office to assure full and long-term usage of the implemented tools”, she points out.

José Frade stresses that implementation of the Cooperation Fund tools and solutions is not just a purely technical or mechanical job. “Now, in the Portuguese Office, we are focused on increasing the knowledge and the ability to extend the viability of the tools and services. Additionally, we work on the contextualization of the office and people in the network, taking every opportunity to increase the synergies and centrality of each stakeholder. That means more relationships and shorter paths to the relevant knowledge”, he says.

The Cooperation Fund projects are collaborative at their core, and the Back Office implementation in Malta was no different. “It was a massive exercise which involved over 50 stakeholders between OHIM, the Maltese Office, the Ministry and the local agency responsible for IT”, Neville Micallef recalls. “Being one of the earliest adopters in this implementation proved to be an even bigger challenge as we could not benefit from lessons learnt and ideas from the wider ETMDN. The project took over a year, with the biggest effort happening in the last quarter of 2014, once the development and migration exercises were running in parallel. The trade mark Back Office (named IPSys) was a game changer for the Maltese Office, and there was no room to get it wrong. The whole team went through some difficult moments to make this happen but it has been fruitful and the NO has now been using this tool for a few months”.

“My biggest challenge so far certainly has been the implementation of the Software Package Front Office”, Maja Andolšek Košutnik says. “We started evaluation of activities in 2012 with the Slovenian Office. Taking into account the benefits for the users and the Office, as well as the available Cooperation Fund resources, help and support, the Office management decided to go for the implementation of the front office project”.

That was just the beginning of a process which continues to this day. “At the beginning of 2012, we jointly started with the business analysis for the implementation of e-Filing for TMs in SIPO”, Maja Andolšek Košutnik explains.

“The main challenge is the reconciliation of the operations responsibilities in the office context and strategy.”
José Frade, DPM INPI - Portugal

“In mid July 2013 two deployed developers joined our team and we started with the implementation of e-filing for trade marks, which was followed by the implementation of e-filing for Designs and seven e-Services (trade marks and designs)”. A round of workshops with the roll out teams followed, incorporating office-specific requirements and user acceptance testing.

But even though the role of a Deployed Project Manager is challenging, the benefits – both professional and personal – are very clear. “The work of liaison and enabler at INPI Portugal has been rewarding”, José Frade stresses. “The main challenge is the reconciliation of the operations responsibilities in the office context and strategy, together with everyone’s expectations for their participation in a sustainable ETMDN”.

Building a sound, durable Network is a process, not an event – the Deployed Project Managers are living proof of that fact. As a bridge between the Cooperation Fund and the ETMDN members, they have played a major role in forging durable relationships as well as helping in the implementation of tools and services, and the results of their work are visible to users right across the EU.
Asking the questions -
The User Satisfaction Survey

Taking the pulse of users across the EU with a harmonised survey system

Alice in Wonderland, as ever, hit the nail on the head. “The question is,” she asked Humpty Dumpty, “whether you can make words mean so many different things?” Anyone who has ever designed a survey can empathise.

Survey makers use words judiciously to form the most succinct and accurate questions. They choose their formats with the greatest of care, putting the highest premium on accessibility and usability. Confusing questions and a hard to use interface are the mortal enemies of the good survey maker.

And surveys are vital for IP offices. Feedback from users helps offices drive service quality and direction, and helps to ensure that users’ needs are met.

So into the breach steps the Common User Satisfaction Survey. Developed by the Cooperation Fund, the Common User Satisfaction Survey had a very clear objective – to create the definitive European IP user satisfaction survey by delivering a methodology, a multi-lingual basic set of questions and a tool to support these two goals.

The USS tool can be used for small or large scale surveys. A recent example is OHIM’s annual User Satisfaction Survey, which is conducted every year. The 2014 edition used the USS for the first time. Everyone who has done business with OHIM in the previous year receives an invitation to participate with a link to the survey. The survey can be completed in any of the 5 languages of OHIM, and the results are published on OHIM’s website.

The User Satisfaction Survey is a do it yourself tool for high quality, focused surveys around the EU national and regional IP offices. Like
all of its fellow Cooperation Fund tools, it was developed through a working group, consisting of experts from the European Trade Mark and Design Network, plus user associations.

“The Common User Satisfaction Survey is a do it yourself tool for high quality, focused surveys around the EU national and regional IP offices.”

The first basic set of questions was created with the input of the working group, and a careful analysis of existing surveys in the offices that make up the ETMDN.

Then the team behind the tool swung into an intensive user panel testing phase. This was complemented by the input of survey experts and qualitative telephone interviews performed by a survey service provider.

The final set of questions was completed after analysing the results of the pilot with answers from 18 participating countries. The questions were then translated and reviewed by the participating offices.

The tool went live in November 2012, as part of the “big bang” of Cooperation Fund tool releases.

The methodology behind the tool helps questioners shape their surveys in a simple, user-friendly way. Questioners are given guidance as to the types of questions that can be asked (open, closed or wish questions), how to order questions, the length of a survey and the rating scale used (the team behind the User Satisfaction Survey recommends the Rohrmann scale, which is a five scale rating and which has been translated into 23 official EU languages) among other guidance items.

Surveys are a temperature gauge of continuous improvement, particularly if an office is preparing to implement a quality management system, or just seeking the views of its users on a particular product or set of services. Feedback is a gift, as the saying goes, and the User Satisfaction Survey helps collect and measure feedback from users in a multilingual, user-friendly way.

Proof of its success can be seen across the ETMDN. Every single national and regional office which expressed an intent to implement the Common User Satisfaction Survey has done so, meaning that the tool is now fully rolled out across the EU.

**USS features**

- An unlimited number of participants is possible
- Surveys can be conducted in all EU languages, with questions already translated
- Surveys can be anonymous or attributed, depending on Office and user preference
- Survey results can be exported to PDF, Excel and HTML, with filter options for customisation
- Survey invitations and reminders can be sent via email
Wander into any shopping centre, anywhere in Europe, and Spain is all around you. The cars in the car park, the shops selling clothes and shoes, the perfumes and bags on display in the department stores, the food and wine on the supermarket shelves – Spanish brands are part of everyday European life, from Helsinki to Heraklion.

Spain is the fifth largest economy in the European Union, and the thirteenth largest in the world, and despite the effects of the economic crisis which has beset the country over the past few years, its exports have continued to rise (up 4.2% in 2014 according to official Spanish government figures). Spain’s export markets are increasingly diversifying too – with merchandise trade to the Euro area standing at 47.6% of total trade in 2014 as opposed to 60.5% in 2000.

For José Antonio Moreno, however, these are not just abstract figures. In his role as Director General of ANDEMA, the Asociación Nacional para la Defensa de la Marca, he keeps a close eye on the macro-economic trends in his country, knowing very well that the work of his more than 70 members, who represent household names in Spain and abroad, plays a significant part in Spain’s export trade.

“We are engaged in defending brands”, he says. “Our work has a social dimension, particularly the work we do with the judiciary, with politicians and with consumers. Brands are important for society; citizens buy products but often they aren’t aware of the importance of brands in terms of exports and fiscal revenue”.

ANDEMA’s work, José Antonio Moreno explains, is carried out on a number of fronts. As well as the broad defence of brands, his association engages in awareness raising and training with key players in the intellectual property enforcement chain – police and customs officers among them. The association is also focused on adding to the body of knowledge on the value and contribution of intellectual property-intensive
industries in Spain; ANDEMA has already produced a study, in conjunction with the Spanish Office of Patents and Trade Marks which showed that 33% of all employment in Spain in 2010 was generated by brands.

So it’s no wonder that one of ANDEMA’s key areas of interest is in the work of the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights, a department within OHIM since 2012. According to José Antonio Moreno, “a brand signifies not just competitiveness, but also a commitment to quality with and for the consumer. It also signifies job creation, and economic creativity”. That job creation, and the benefits of such jobs, are brought out, José Antonio Moreno underlines, by the 2013 OHIM/EPO IP Contribution study which showed that jobs created by intellectual property rights-intensive industries pay, on average, up to 40% more than jobs created by industries who do not use IP rights intensively.

ANDEMA are not just active participants in the Observatory’s work, they are one of its earliest adopters, having being involved from its earliest days. “Our work with them is very, very intense indeed,” José Antonio Moreno says, “and we take part in four out of the five working groups. We are extremely happy with the work of the Observatory, its meetings and its work programmes, and its policy of transparency”.

For ANDEMA, supporting IP means backing up that support with facts and actions – which can be gleaned through the Observatory’s work. “The most important things are at the level of awareness raising, be that at the political or at the media level – and we also need rigorous, reliable data to be able to convince politicians and the media that IP is important. Without studies and research this is difficult”, José Antonio Moreno says.

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The ETMDN family unites in the Harmonised Database

At the start of 2015, the French National Institute for Intellectual Property (INPI) became part of the Harmonised Database of Goods and Services, available through TMclass.

INPI’s integration was a high water mark for the project, which aimed to provide users with a database which is not limited yet reasonable in size, and which will assist in the creation and validation of lists of goods and services.

The Harmonised Database began eight years ago, after the launch of a steering group made up of representatives from OHIM, the UK and the Swedish IP offices; later joined by Germany and WIPO.

From that early starting point, the database grew and grew. Today it encompasses all the EU national and regional IP offices, plus the TM5 ID list, which is a list of pre-approved terms from the five largest trademark offices in the world – OHIM, the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the Japan Patent Office, the Korean Intellectual Property Office and the State Administration of Industry and Commerce of the People’s Republic of China.

The Harmonised Database currently has around 66,000 terms, which are updated in an open and transparent way via the Terminology Maintenance Console (TMC). This tool allows users to suggest terms, which correspond to the needs of the market, and to suggest outdated terms to be deleted, via the national and regional IP offices which make up the ETMDN. Offices then vote on the terms, with WIPO acting as arbitrator – allowing the database to be kept as market-relevant and market-centred as possible.

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Later in 2015, the Harmonised Database will be aligned with WIPO’s Goods and Services Manager. EU national and regional IP offices are currently voting on the Goods and Services Manager terms that are not currently in the database, with the aim of incorporating the accepted terms in the coming months.

The Harmonised Database is now the largest trademark classification database in the world. It offers quick and easy classification for experts and novice users alike, and with the integration of the TM5 ID List, it has taken on a global dimension too.

The inclusion of all EU national and regional offices means that the database is truly harmonised across the EU. Terms have been translated, revised and conceptualised to the highest standards, with national and regional office feedback key to the process.

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The integration of France and the Common Communication on the Common Practice on the Accessibility of Classification Terms brings to an end the CP1 – Harmonisation of Classification project, one of seven projects nested underneath OHIM’s Convergence Programme.

Bringing down the curtain: CP1 draws to a close
MoU on Pan-European Seal

The President of OHIM, António Campinos, and the Rector of the University of Alicante, Manuel Palomar, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Pan-European Seal Professional Traineeship programme.

The Pan-European Seal bridges academia and the IP labour market, and is promoted jointly by OHIM and the European Patent Office, together with a network of strategic university partners.

The programme offers 100 traineeships each year for high-achieving young graduates from participating universities, administered by OHIM and the EPO.

Sweden implements Similarity

The Swedish Patent and Registration office (PRV) has recently implemented the Similarity tool, developed within the framework of the Cooperation Fund. With this implementation, 15 national and regional IP offices across the ETMDN are now using Similarity.

Similarity is a common database of comparisons of goods and services that allows users to assess whether given goods or services are considered similar or dissimilar – and to what degree – according to the practice of the participating IP offices. Similarity benefits users by bringing more transparency to the decision-taking process of EU national offices and OHIM. Similarity also improves the predictability of opposition decisions.

2014 Case-Law Overview:
From the General Court and European Court of Justice

The Legal Practice Service of OHIM has prepared an overview of the Case-Law from the General Court (GC) and European Court of Justice (CJ) in Luxembourg with regard to trade mark and design matters. This useful legal resource is published for information purposes, and includes abstracts of judgments, preliminary rulings and important orders rendered by the GC and the CJ in 2014.

The information is arranged in categories for easier browsing.

Users can find more detailed information in the eSearch Case Law, OHIM’s search tool for decisions of the Office, GC and CJ judgments and from the national courts.
IP Mediation Open Day

OHIM’s first ever IP Mediation Open Day will take place at its headquarters in Alicante on June 15, 2015.

The programme of the event is now available, and registration is available here.

The event features activity sessions with experienced mediators and focuses on the practical uses of mediation in IP.

Philippines joins TMview

As of 23 March 2015, the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHIL) has made its trade mark data available to the TMview search tool.

IPOPHIL first joined ASEAN TMview which was developed by the Intellectual Property Offices of the ASEAN Member States with the support of the EU-ASEAN Project on the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights (ECAP III Phase II) administered by OHIM.

This latest extension brings the total number of offices participating in TMview to 38 and with the addition of about 325,000 trade marks from the Philippines, TMview now provides information and access to almost 25.3 million trade marks in total.

Thanks to its link to ASEAN TMview, users can search trade mark records of 46 IP offices from all around the world.

Since the introduction of TMview on 13 April 2010, the tool has served more than 12.1 million searches from 151 different countries, with users from Spain, Germany and Italy among the most frequent visitors.

OHIM joins EU Agency “troika”

OHIM has taken up its role in the “troika” of the coordination network of EU agencies, at a ceremony in Dublin.

The troika includes Eurofound, which currently coordinates the network, and the outgoing coordination agency, the Fundamental Rights Agency.

OHIM will serve as chair of the network in 2016.

Over 40 agencies work across a variety of issues which affect EU citizens on a daily basis, including education, food safety, industry, working conditions, health and safety, justice, transport, business and innovation.

The EU Agency Network was established to improve coordination, information exchange and agreement of common positions on issues of shared interest across EU agencies, further improving their efficient and effective functioning.
Italy implements e-Learning for SMEs; UK implements USS

The implementation of e-Learning for SMEs by the Italian National Office successfully closes implementation of the tool in all offices that have expressed intent to implement the tool, that is now in use in 21 Offices across EU.

Meanwhile, UKIPO has completed implementation of the User Satisfaction Survey. With this implementation all the EU IP Offices are able to offer this service to their users. An analysis of the completed survey will allow the participating office to measure customer satisfaction, draw attention to areas for improvement and plan future work of the office.

The Republic of Turkey joins Designview

As of 16 March 2015, the Turkish Patent Office (TPI) has made its design data available to the Designview search tool.

With TPI on-board, there are now 28 participating offices in Designview. With the addition of 450,000 designs provided by TPI, Designview now provides information and access to around 4.1 million designs in total.

Since the introduction of Designview on 19 November 2012, the tool has served more than 920,000 searches from 139 different countries, with users from Spain, Germany and the UK among the most frequent visitors.

More information is available at: tmdn.org
**Estonia**

New Director of the Estonian Patent Office

Margus Viher has been appointed as the new Director of the Estonian Patent Office. The appointment was made by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Estonia, and took effect as and from April 1, 2015.

Mr Viher replaces Matti Pāts, who retired on March 31 after more than fifty years of public service.

**Bulgaria**

Inventor of the Year awards in Bulgaria

Inventions related to human health and the environment and security and industry, received awards from the Bulgarian Patent Office and the Union of Inventors at the 2014 Inventor of the Year ceremony.

Nominees fell into three categories – chemistry and biotechnology, electrical and electronics and engineering and construction.

The list of winning innovations included inventions to purify exhaust emissions, innovation in microtechnology, and the invention of a method and a machine for grinding rotary surfaces.

**Spain**

Convention signed between OEPM and the Canary Island Special Zone

The President of the Special Economic Zone of the Canary Islands and the Spanish Under Secretary of State for Industry, Energy and Tourism have signed a convention on collaboration with the aim of promoting greater knowledge and use of intellectual property. A focus of the agreement will be companies which operate in the Zone.

The agreement will make it easier for organisations in the Zone to obtain information on how to protect their intellectual property.
On March 24, the Latvian Patent Office (PV) and Riga Technical University (RTU) today, 24 March, signed a cooperation agreement aimed at raising awareness among students and researchers on the protection of industrial property and its importance in successfully commercialising inventions.

The Director of the Latvian Patent Office Director Sandris Laganovskis expressed the Office’s pleasure in having entered into a cooperation agreement with the RTU, which is the leader in terms of the number of Latvian patent applications.

Under the agreement the two institutions agreed to cooperate in the following areas - intellectual, educational, scientific activity and innovation, as well as international cooperation.

RTU Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre Manager Laila Elin underlined that the agreement would allow the Office and the University to work together even more closely and productively.

Czech Republic

Seminar on the Madrid System

The Czech industrial Property Office, in cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) is organising a seminar on the Madrid System on April 27 in the Congress Hall Office.

The seminar will be followed by a workshop, which will focus on practical issues and which is aimed at delegates who already have experience with international trade marks.

The seminar will be held in English, with simultaneous interpretation available, and participation is free of charge.

Latvia

Cooperation agreement signed between Latvian Office and Riga Technical University

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UK IPO advisers based overseas have helped protect £400 million worth of IP

Baroness Neville-Rolfe DBE announced that the IPO’s specialist attaché network has helped protect £400 million worth of IP assets for UK businesses.

Speaking at the Taylor Wessing Brands Forum on March 12, she outlined how the attachés had helped 8,400 businesses. They also provided direct practical support for 537 British firms to manage IP issues in four of the world’s fastest growing markets.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe DBE said: “Boosting trade is vital to our continued economic growth. But operating and investing overseas can be a difficult and daunting process for some. The IP attachés are successfully helping UK businesses navigate new markets and are proving a real asset when it comes to helping business protect their IP overseas.”

The campaign is available at http://www.cnac-contrefacon.fr/

Croatia

Croatia implements CESTO

The Croatian National Office has recently implemented the Common Examiner Support Tool (CESTO).

CESTO was developed under the framework of the Cooperation Fund to aid examiners with absolute grounds examination.

This is the fifth tool to be implemented by the Croatian Office.

From October last year Croatia has also joined the Deployed Project Managers Network within OHIM to facilitate the tool implementation process in the Office.
Calendar of Future IP Events

**Annual Meeting**
San Diego, USA  2-6 May 2015

**EU Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights Regional Seminar**
Alicante, Spain  12-14 May 2015

**34th Annual Conference**
Hamburg, Germany  10-13 Jun 2015

**IP Mediation Open Day**
Alicante, Spain  15 Jun 2015

**TM5 Annual Meeting**
Vienna, Austria  15-18 Sep 2015

**Annual Meeting**
Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany  23-26 Sep 2015
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*National & Regional IP Offices: implementations as of 21 of April 2015 - Implementation figures do not include OHIM.*
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*National & Regional IP Offices: implementations as of 21 of April 2015 - Implementation figures do not include OHIM.
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Total Implementations: 327
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