

ASSEMBLIES OF THE MEMBER STATES OF WIPO
Sixty-First Series of Meetings
September 21 to 25, 2020
Written General Statement (Agenda Item 5) – AUSTRIA
(First part delivered orally)

(Check against delivery)

Thank you, Honorable Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Delegation of Austria would like to align itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B as well as the statement delivered by Germany on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We would also like to express our thanks to the WIPO Secretariat for the preparation of these Assemblies under these extraordinary circumstances and to all WIPO staff for upholding services to the IP Community in the last months.

As this session of the General Assemblies will be the last for Director General Francis Gurry, we would like to thank him for more than 35 years of professional dedication and commitment to the world of IP and to this Organization. We would especially like to express our appreciation in regard to the outstanding achievements in administrative and legislative matters during his last 12 years at the helm of WIPO. Our best wishes for his future endeavours.

Our thanks also go to the senior management team – especially to those members prepared to serve for another 3 months to assist Director General-elect Tang in managing a smooth transition to his new team.

We look forward to working and cooperating closely with Director General-elect Daren Tang taking up his duties with 1st of October. We would like to assure him of our full support for the challenging task of maintaining but also further improving and developing all IP protection systems under the auspices of WIPO.

Mr. Chairman, in order to save time we have submitted the rest of our statement in written form to the Secretariat.

Thank you.

Additional written statement:

Emphasizing the ability and actual role of IP to stimulate creativity and innovation and thus contributing to economic, cultural and social development of all countries especially in difficult times like now we note with appreciation the record of WIPO's activities and positive achievements outlined in the **Report of the Director General to these Assemblies**, highlighting activities and programs in regard to technical assistance, information about continuing adherences to WIPO-administered treaties and growing use of international IP-systems based on these treaties and Unions.

In this respect we note with satisfaction the continued effective functioning of the **international IP registration and filing systems** operated by the International Bureau and the introduction of specific services in response to COVID-19-related new demands, like the COVID-19 search facility. We would like to encourage WIPO to continue and even enhance work dedicated to effective responses to the global health and economic crisis from IP-perspective in cooperation with all other international organizations concerned like the WHO and the WTO.

We positively take note of the reports provide by the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC), the External Auditor and the Director of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) and especially would like to thank all persons involved for the timely presentation and

comprehensive content of the information provided which attests the Organization's financial health and ability to react to unpredictable circumstances like the current COVID-19-pandemic.

With regard to the **Madrid System** we stand ready to adopt the proposed amendments to the Rules of the Regulations under the Madrid Protocol as contained in Document MM/A/54/1 requiring applicants, holders and their representatives to indicate an e-mail address for electronic communication with the International Bureau thus avoiding disruptions due to suspension of postal communication. In this regard we note the assurance of the IB that e-mail addresses provided will not be published.

In view of COVID-related uncertainties in regard to the timely claiming of priority under Article 4 of the **Paris Convention** and its application in the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the Madrid System and the Hague System we very much welcome the proposed non-binding guidance from the Paris Union Assembly as contained in Document P/A/56/1 confirming the ultimate competence of Member States Offices but providing helpful information and guidance on how to face the challenge at national level.

Austria, as a member of the **WIPO Coordination Committee**, has taken good note of the proposed **exceptional re-appointments** of 7 members of the current senior management team for additional 3 months as contained in Document WO/CC/78/4 and - convinced by the arguments provided - is prepared to react positively to the proposals in Paragraphs 11 und 12 of the said document to allow the re-appointed DDGs and ADGs to assist the Director General in managing the transition to his new team until the end of 2010.

Finally, we like to assure the membership and the present and future top management of WIPO of Austria's on-going support to the pursuit of WIPO's global goals.

[Thank you.]