



Meeting Notes of the **CEPIUG 27th Users Meeting** on the 2nd December 2021

1. Welcome

Muriel welcomed everyone to 27th CEPIUG meeting, her last meeting as she is now stepping down from the Board. She reviewed her tenure, mentioning the conference in Milan, and links to the PIUG and the PDG. She reflected that the pandemic has allowed attendance at conferences we wouldn't normally attend; but enforced new ways of working do not replace face to face meetings. She thanked everyone for messages of goodwill, flowers and chocolates.

She gave a brief overview of the agenda for the meeting.

There are currently 10 member user groups, and 11th should follow soon with the Polish users hopefully creating their own group shortly.

The roles of the current Board members were reviewed. The current board is small, with only 7 people, and observers as required. Muriel stepped down as chair as she reached the time limit and will become an observer, Alexander has been appointed as chair by the board. Frank will remain as Vice-Chair, Carla remains as treasurer and Kathy has been appointed as secretary.

At this meeting there are 2 candidates to join the board (bring it to 8 people in total), plus an observer (Muriel) as well as Guido.

Alexander thanked Muriel for her hard work as chair over the past 6 years. He invited anyone with ideas to approach him.

We were reminded that the members are not individuals, but organizations. Each can nominate 2 representatives for meetings, but each organization has only 1 vote. Groups vote for Board representatives, and the roles within the board are appointments of the board.

2. Elections to Board

2.1. Philippe Bodart

Member of CFIB, working for Total, and a QPIP. He will be retiring from Total in 2022, having more time as a result. He will remain as part of CFIB until at least 2023.

Philippe was unanimously elected to the Board

2.2. Daria Wagner

Daria has been on the board of the Danish user group for many years now. The Danish group has decided it should have a representative at Board level, and hence Daria is standing for election.

Daria was unanimously elected to the Board

3. Treasurer's Report (Carla)

CEPIUG has no source of income and no bank account. Some money is left over from 10th anniversary conference organized in 2018. The money is in the bank account of the Italian group. It is used for website domain fees, some travel expenses, and last year we didn't spend any money.

4. Mission (Alexander)

Strategy Development

Alex has given a lot of thought to the strategy for the next few years. He has reviewed current mission statement with the board, and worked on a revision which has already been shared. In summary, the objectives are to support formation and cooperation of patent information user groups within Europe. CEPIUG should represent user groups with organisations such as the EPO, WIPO, and ISBQPIP.

After reviewing the objectives – we added an explicit objective to represent user groups at EPO, WIPO etc. It was also felt that CEPIUG should influence the development of patent searching tools and data.

The Vision statement has also been reviewed – as not all user groups are national – and as we work with WIPO and PIUG, the inclusion of the phrase 'at a European level' isn't fully accurate.

The suggested Vision led to questions, and therefore the revised Vision statement proposed is: To Represent European Patent Information User Groups

Dirk pointed out that the Mission still has the old wording – should this be changed?

Frank answered that the cooperation is between European user groups, but supports removal of the terminology, after all QPIP is not restricted to European members, and we work with QPIP.

Frederic suggests that we should continue with European. Gerard pointed out that the Vision and Mission are not limiting.

4.1. Vote

New Mission Statement was approved unanimously

5. User Group Presentations

5.1. AIDB - Guido

Despite the pandemic, membership has increased a little. The membership is mainly composed of corporate members. Established in 2004 – celebrated on 12th Feb with an online party. New mission approved last year – switched to Intellectual Property. Now vendors are included in the membership and can participate in all activities (Italian law prohibits different levels of membership).

The group has adopted a legal domicile in a business centre, and is working to comply with GDPR. There is an improved website with event calendar. An area has been created for sponsors on website and Newsletter. There has not been an in-person conference, but have had lots of webinars on a variety of topics. The group has participated in CEPIUG Board, ISBQPIP, WIPO round table, SACEPO-PDI. They have also organized a lecture on IP, and sponsored the Bernardo Nobile Award. They group participated in the public consultation about the strategic plan 2021-2023 of the Italian Patent Office. They are also working on a guide to Italian IP information, the first release of which will be on 16th December at the group meeting.

5.2. BEPIUG – Dirk Rattat

Founded 2010, so had to cancel 10th anniversary event due to the Pandemic. There has been a break of almost a year when the activity level was very low. Events have restarted recently, with the first user meeting since start of covid just 2 weeks ago. It was a hybrid meeting, which worked very well. Will keep hybrid format for at least next meeting. The Anniversary meeting will be rescheduled in due course. There have been some changes in membership, but numbers remain stable. Vendors are not allowed according to BEPIUG rules. A key part of the mission to connect smaller users to help people working alone. All meetings are held in English to avoid language issues.

5.3. BPIP – Stephen Adams

There may well be changes in the leadership, as the current chair and secretary are due to stand down by the end of this year, so BPIP is in need of new Board members for the group. Most activities are entirely voluntarily. Prior to pandemic, the annual meeting rotated around the employer companies of individuals. We were planning a large even to celebrate our 50th meeting. This has been deferred, and will be hosted by the UKIPO in 2022. The 50th meeting was held as a standard meeting entirely virtually. There are a large proportion of freelance search agents as members. The Unitary patent is causing angst, as UK has formally withdrawn from the agreement following Brexit. In particular, the increased difficulty of mail service, use of

.eu domain, etc. have created issues for small businesses. Asian prior art is also an issue – as is concern over how our work is viewed by senior management of corporations.

5.4. CFIB – Frederic Baudaur

CFIB was created in 1988. For a long time had an annual meeting and existed without a formal structure. The group does not accept vendors, and has had a formal structure for 10 year. Members are mainly corporate sector. The group organized a 1 day virtual meeting. Anticipating holding a physical meeting next year, but not very optimistic regarding this. The decision will be taken in Q1. The group has hosted webinars. Had one in October, and 1 planned for Q1. There is a bimonthly e-mag. and working groups, including an active group on AI and one on Landscapes. There is an online forum, and they have also run training activities. Have been developing videos – ‘marketing our job’ addressing issue of management not knowing what we do. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hT38wulzpKw>) This is the first in the series, there are 3 or 4 others and links will be shared when available. They are free to access to members, so that people can explain their role to management. The first was aimed at senior management. Other audiences are targeted in upcoming videos.

5.5. CHPIUG – David Borel

This group also has English as the national Group language. It is a small group with 31 members. The pandemic led to a break in activity, coming on top of several board members stepping down. As a result, the group has been in ‘survival mode’. Charles Madore has stepped into Board, and Emanuelle has joined the board. The main goal is to gain new members. Membership fees have been suspended for 2 years due to the pandemic, and virtual meetings have been held. This year they have had virtual coffee rounds to exchange information. There is a quarterly newsletter, including a job board. Interested to share with others, as they have a good number of job postings. Attended WIPO round table. QPIPs are potential new members

5.6. PIF – Daria Wagner

Klaus will be retiring sometime next year, so will also step down from Danish board. The group is very active, and kept to the anticipated meeting schedule throughout the pandemic, but with meetings held online. There is also a landscaping group. The group is growing, with new faces at recent meetings. The group recently undertook a Semantic Benchmarking exercise, where different tools were used by different members – the more tools you have available, the better. There is surprisingly little overlap, with each tool giving some unique results.

5.7. PING – Alexander

Founded in 2016 as an informal group. There are currently 29 members in the group, with an additional 100+ members in an informal group that is an online discussion group. No meetings have taken place in the last year. The group has been trying to become a registered organization with tax exemption under new legislation, but no one seems to know how to do this. There have been several virtual user group meetings that were very well attended.

5.8. SIPIG – No one to present

5.9. SPIP – Marta sent apologies

5.10. WON – Gerard Ypma

This year the group had its 55th meeting, with one face to face meeting in Utrecht with 40+ participants. Last week there was an online seminar on AI, which was well received, with an introduction from Wolfgang Thieleman, and vendor presentations. The Won is one of largest groups and most open. It is open to vendors and people outside the Netherlands. The number of members has decreased, but due to the shrinking of patent departments rather than covid. Since 2002, WON has organized a patent information course in Netherlands, with one running right now. They didn't stop members fees over the last 2 years, and will spend on drinks/snacks after members meetings to promote networking once meetings are face to face. They are also Interested in coverage of Asian literature – linking to Stephen's comments.

5.11. Member Statistics

Alexander compiled stats from all member groups and shared. A lot of patent Attorneys in some groups. In Germany the Attorneys have strong groups, so do not join the information user groups. Members of WON may also be members of their own country's organization.

6. CEPIUG/QPIP Questionnaire

There has been a questionnaire created to gather feedback on perceptions of what ISBQPIP is actually doing. We want to understand how PER process working, and how it is perceived, separate to ISBQPIP. It is important to look at facts, but also perception. ISBQPIP doing a lot of hard work – the Supervisory Council putting in a huge amount of work.

Alexander Invited anyone to provide input into the Questionnaire. There may be a working group in 2022. Dirk Rattat commented that asking about PER will be only looking back. He thinks it is interesting to see how the exams are perceived. Stephen responded by saying that there is still value in surveying experience of PER process, as feedback could feed into the possibility of opening up PER to other parts of the world. It was reported that some people felt they were unfairly treated by process, but we don't know how many.

If people want to contribute, we would be happy to have others working on this.

7. Newsletter 2022

Alexander has been considering the possibility of a CEPIUG Newsletter. This could lead to more regular communication with member groups, as well as leverage the work done by member organisations in the production of their own newsletters for the benefit of all European PIUGs. We are looking for editors and contributors, and anticipate maybe 2 or 4 issues per annum. Guido Moradei said that the Italian newsletter shares upcoming events, so could not be adapted to less frequent publication. Alexander explained that there is interesting content, beyond notification of

upcoming events. Short time notices that may be relevant for a number of user groups, and could be shared on the CEPIUG website (Frank).

8. A.O.B.

Stephen: In light of the new mission, and the statistics presented: Most user groups have a proportion of membership who are freelance searchers, or people within firms who only have a small amount of their time on searching. Could the Confederacy take on promoting the awareness of freelance search firms, similar to a 'yellow pages'? There might be enough interest across Europe, that could be part of confederacy work in promoting patent searching.

A discussion followed around the role of the Confederacy in commercial advertising. Alexander proposed that discussion of this topic should be postponed due to time constraints and instead be discussed by the board at a future meeting.

Alexander again thanked Muriel on behalf of the CEPIUG board and members for her 6 years of leadership. Alexander presented a slide of achievements against the goals of the CEPIUG, and then Guido presented photographs from the CEPIUG Milan conference.

Alexander then thanked all user group representatives for attending.

Thank you for your participation.

CEPIUG Board

Confederacy of European Patent Information User Groups