



**Draft Minutes of the 2017-2018 PatCom AGM**  
**Vienna, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

1. Welcome and Approval of the Agenda  
The Secretary welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Agenda was approved.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the Vienna 2017 AGM  
The minutes of the 2016-2017 AGM were approved.

**3.**  
**President's statement:**

Delivered by Ann Chapman (AC), Acting President

Firstly, a big thank you to Martine Massiera for her very capable, long stint as PatCom President. Since the October EPO meeting, I have acted nominally as President. I re-read the comments Martine made at the last AGM about newcomers to the industry and new types of services, including analytics and text mining, which are bringing new entrants into the IP information industry. This trend is continuing and existing players in the market are branching into new tech as well. In this respect, the industry looks healthy and is growing overall. Most of the growth may be in more established countries, but markets are springing up in many other parts of the world – such as China, where professional patent searching is a relatively new job type but looking as though it is going to develop fast.

I thought it would be useful to re-cap where PatCom is finding its challenges:

PatCom has existed for 19 years, coming up to a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, quite an achievement for a group of competing companies meeting several times each year to discuss the sector and especially, data provision by PTO's. Clearly, PatCom began in another Internet Age, where products developed by the PTOs especially EPO and USPTO, were aimed at non-professional users and as a service to make information public but at a very basic level, so as not to compete with the Private Sector. That has remained the case for the USPTO and the delivery of data has improved greatly for all players in the market.

Regarding the EPO, there has been a change, which provides a challenge to the Private Sector at the same time as offering new opportunities by getting access at a very low or free cost (marginal cost basis) to a large amount of patent data, not only EP data, and not only from EP Contracting States. Generous and widespread provision is to be welcomed and the EPO applauded for the consistent approach to harmonise and improve data quality. As a partner in the industry, the EPO does outstanding work that all players benefit from. There is however a concern that the goalposts are moving as far as public service provision is concerned. This continues to be a challenging aspect for the Private Sector to monitor, have time to react and especially, to safeguard existing business as well as ensure growth by constant investment. Papers such as that discussing "Paradise / Maggots in the Garden" by Frau Dr Schoch-Gruebler, former Director at BASF AG, helped crystallise the situation also from the point of view of professional patent searchers, who require services that cannot be provided by the public PTO's. A new Espacenet is in development and will be launched soon. We are not yet well-informed about the new, more advanced search functionality that has been programmed into this new service. A full list of the changes to previous system limits and field

restrictions plus the new features is required. We requested information in our October meeting and this needs to be followed up, as one of the tenets of PatCom's regular meetings with the EPO is to ensure a flow of information so we can react in a timely manner and not be taken by surprise.

The EPO's Legal Status project and improved data has been very welcome, as has the USPTO Legal Status /PAIR developments. In our last meeting with WIPO it was also a hot topic and will no doubt lead to new products and enhancements to existing data for thousands of professional patent searchers around the globe. In this regard, we need to be able to access the Global Dossier data servers to locate File Histories using links, similarly to PDF collections. We have asked if there is searchable data we could access/index but at present that does not appear possible. This should stay on our radar.

Our services have changed and evolved out of all recognition in these 19 years, as have those provided by the PTO's. But unfortunately, we are not able to get all the digitised data being made available. While WIPO is pursuing a very useful, active programme granting funding or physically providing technical production to small, but nevertheless interesting PTO's around the world, we seem unable to get hold of it collectively for our services. This is a topic we need to work on as a group and co-ordinate our efforts, to ensure that any patent data digitised can in principle be obtained at a reasonable fee for our various patent products and databases. Indeed, as patent documents are publicly available documents that should be "open to the public" to inspect, it makes no sense to erect barriers to this public provision. This should be an area to target effort on in 2018/2019. It would be a fitting milestone for PatCom's 20 year anniversary.

I would like to open up the debate now at the AGM and gather more thoughts and requirements.

### **3.1 Discussion points following the President's statement:**

#### **China as a market**

The professional patent search scene in China is rapidly developing. Those attending the annual PIAC (now CPAC) conference have witnessed the growth.

#### **WIPO and accessing data**

All agreed that this is key. It was agreed that PatCom members should write individually to the offices from which they would like to obtain data and / or data enhancements.

It was agreed that PatCom would draft a template letter which would be sent by PatCom to office of interest and which members could adapt. In the letter PatCom will request a standard fair price for the data; a direct feed, a transparent price list, and point out the benefits to the office of providing access to the data via commercial platforms which are used by thousands of patent information users worldwide.

Action: JL/AC to draft letter for approval at next ExCo meeting.

#### **More visibility for PatCom and the commercial sector**

The EPO and WIPO speak directly to users. They are providing services aimed at SMEs. PatCom should play a more visible role. One way to do this is to update the PatCom website, making it more of a portal with articles and summaries of topics of interest to the patent information community, and giving more visibility to the role of PatCom in the patent information supply chain.

Action: JL/ AC to prepare content for the website

Other routes to visibility are for PatCom members to speak and teach at conferences and through other avenues. E.g. through the European Patent Academy.

## **4. Report of the Treasurer and Financial Issues (AF)**

See the attachment for the Treasurer's Report.

All fees for 2017-2018 are now paid.

### **4.1 Discussion following the Treasurer's Report:**

The next invoices will be sent in July for 2018-2019 period. The finances are in a good position. No

changes to the fees are needed. The expenditure for 2018-2019 will be reviewed. The Treasurer is looking into moving away from RaboBank which charges a transaction fee. PatCom has a surplus in the account, so the option to open a savings account should also be investigated. AF plans to retire as Treasurer in 2020 so a new Treasurer will be required at that time, ideally someone based in The Netherlands where PatCom is registered as an organisation. The accountant is based in NL too.  
Action: AF to review options with other banks.

## 5. **Report of the Secretary (JL)**

See the attachment for the Secretary's Report.

### 5.1 **Discussion following the Secretary's report:**

Seeking meetings with additional IP Offices. (UKIPO and SIPO)

We should continue efforts to reestablish a meeting with the UK IPO to find out their plans regarding Brexit and IP and because they are a member of the CA, AU, GB examination sharing group.. A meeting with SIPO could also be beneficial. This could be pursued either to coincide with the CPAC meeting, which this year is in August, or via WebEx or similar. One issue with CPAC is that there is not standard price for data. Meetings with IPPH and SIPO would be useful. To establish the meeting some diplomacy will be required. Possibly a conversation, informal over dinner, with a high ranking official would be the best introduction.

Action: JD to provide a contact for IPPH to JL. JL/AC to identify contacts at UKIPO .

## 6. **ExCo meetings**

It was agreed that we should convene at least two ExCo Meetings again this year, in Paris in June and in Vienna in September / October. This leaves Geneva as an option in case we need a third ExCo meeting. There is no technical working group for PatCom at the moment. Should it be needed, ExCo will reestablish the group.

## 7. **New members**

PatCom could accept new members who fulfill the criteria for membership, and are prepared to meet obligations such as active participation, including in meetings. It was confirmed that new members can only join following approval at a PatCom meeting. Companies suggested following discussion were Anaqua, Acclaim IP, CPA and Aistemos.

## 8. **PatCom Constitution**

It was agreed that the PatCom constitution should be formally revised to allow for the President and Treasurer to run for more than two terms.

Action: JL to provide re-wording for 7.1.1 and 7.3.1 (President and Treasurer).

## 9. **Election of the ExCo for 2018-2020**

The following members were elected to the ExCo for 2018 -2020:

JD, AF (Treasurer), AB, RF, PP, AC (President).

Bob Stembridge (BS) was not present at the meeting, his position on the ExCo will be confirmed after the meeting. Should BS wish to stand down AMV is willing to join the ExCo.

In any case, all members are invited to attend ExCo meetings, but they will not vote.

## 10. **Secretary Appointment and Fees.**

JL was confirmed as Secretary for the 2018-2020 term with 5% increase in fees awarded.

## 11. **AOB**

PatCom's participation in the CEPIUG 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference in September was discussed. Members have been invited, and may be presenting workshop(s), the meeting programme is being organised by the member countries.

WIPO Observer Status

PatCom have been invited to apply for Observer Status in order to attend any meeting which is open to observers. This will permit PatCom to interact with other stakeholders in the patent information supply chain, and could lead to better understanding of our goals. Members should participate at their own company's expense. PatCom may consider paying expenses if necessary. Action: JL to prepare information on PatCom for the application for approval and submission prior to 26<sup>th</sup> May deadline.

**PatCom AGM 2017 – 2018 Agenda)**

- 1: Welcome and Approval of the Agenda
- 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Vienna 2017 AGM
- 3: Annual Report of the Acting President (AC)
- 4: Report of the Treasurer and Financial Issues (AF)
- 5: Report of the Secretary (JL)
- 6: ExCo meetings
- 7: New members
- 8: PatCom Constitution Amendment to President / Treasure Term limits.
- E9: lections for the next term 2018-2020 ExCo, President and Treasurer.
- 10: Secretary appointment and fees for 2018-2020.
- 11: A.O.B.  
Wipo – observer status.

**Attendees:**

President	Ann Chapman, Minesoft
Secretary	Jane List, Extract Information
Treasurer	Armin Foerderer, FIZ Karlsruhe
	Robert Fokkema, Lighthouse IP
	Miriam Plana, CAS
	Lee Smith, RWS
	Anna Maria Villa, PatentSight GmbH
	Aurélie Brunet, Questel
	Jurjen Dijkstra, LexisNexis Univentio

*Jane List, PatCom Secretary, Cambridgeshire, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018*