

On 4 October 2023, the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) met at the EPO headquarters in Munich, Germany, for their 41<sup>st</sup> Trilateral Conference. A session of the meeting was attended by the associations of Trilateral Industry, namely BusinessEurope, the Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA), the American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA) and the Intellectual Property Owners association (IPO). The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) participated in the meeting in an observer capacity.

The focus of this 41<sup>st</sup> annual meeting was United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The morning session included a keynote speech by the EPO's Chief Sustainability Officer, who underlined the importance of SDG 4 not only for patent offices, innovation and intellectual property (IP), but also for societies and economies as a whole. Discussions focused on knowledge sharing and voluntary technology transfer to regions in need, as well as youth-focused IP education and outreach. In addition, the Offices reviewed the contribution of Trilateral co-operation to date towards helping achieve the UN SDGs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Enhancing the next generation's understanding of IP was underlined as crucial to facilitating innovation and enabling sustainable development. Exchanges highlighted the importance of youth-oriented initiatives, voluntary technology transfer, and identifying collaborative actions for the Offices to contribute to SDG 4. How best to foster greater interest of young generations in new technologies and IP, including through regular co-ordination among the Trilateral Offices, was also discussed. In addition, the group addressed how technology transfer systems can help transform ideas into products and services that can benefit society and drive economic growth. This led to deeper consideration of how the Offices together with Industry can build on their current activities with a view to foregrounding the link between education, innovation, entrepreneurship and IP.

Looking ahead, the Offices envisaged activities and products under the framework of a Trilateral strategic work plan. These include collaborative initiatives with global impact, such as launching a network of the Trilateral Offices to link programmes and exchange on best practices regarding outreach to younger generations; organising a dedicated Trilateral Conference on topics related to the SDGs on a rotating basis; and increasing knowledge sharing by building synergies around public smart search platforms and compiling available resources.

Updates were also provided on digitalisation efforts across the Trilateral Offices, with a focus on enhanced user services. Further topics of discussion included how to maximise the impact of the IP intensive industry reports.

The next Trilateral Conference will be held by the JPO in 2024.