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# Kluwer Patent Blog

## Better translations prerequisite for Czech ratification of UPC

Kluwer Patent blogger · Thursday, October 9th, 2014

The machine translations provided by Google and the European Patent Organization have to improve considerably before the Czech Republic will ratify the UPC agreement.

Josef Kratochvil, president of the Czech IPO Office, told Kluwer UPC News reporter that the language issue is the most serious problem the Czechs have with the patent package. It is 'necessary to work on improving quality of the machine translations into Czech to provide our users of patent information with wording understandable in their own language'. He points out 'the knowledge of foreign languages (including English) in Central and Eastern Europe is very low compared with e.g. Germany, The Netherlands or Nordic countries'.

It was the Czech Parliament which insisted on high quality machine translations as a prerequisite for continued discussion on the UPP Regulation in 2010. Kratochvil explains the current version of the Google translator for patents, available via Espacenet, 'provides correct Czech expressions but, in such a way (sequence, etc.) that it is sometimes not possible to understand even the field of technique, let alone the claims.'

The Czech IPO is working hard, with the EPO, to improve the tool, Kratochvil tells Kluwer UPC News reporter. On 23-24 October 2014 EPO member states will meet with EPO representatives in Prague. 'I do believe we are able to move forward rather soon, but, in my view, some investment is unavoidable.' Several years ago, when the patent package was in the pipeline, Kratochvil recalls, the European Commission repeatedly promised huge investments in machine translations.

One of the main reasons for the insistence on high quality translations is that the Czech Republic doesn't want to face a situation of unitary patents being filed from all over the world, which are valid in the country but, are only available in English (or French or German). 'There are only about 30 000 patents valid here at the moment, while the expectation is to have many more in the future, especially from Japan, South Korea, the USA and China. Last year in China alone 800.000 (!) patent applications were filed. I am not aware of their content, but the number is really huge. It might become a reality that the number of Chinese PCT/EP applications rises dramatically rather soon.'

According to Kratochvil, the increasing number of patents which is likely to flood the UPC countries is an issue European SMEs in all member states of the Patent Package should take into account, 'regardless whether they are able to understand English, German or French.'

The Czech ratification of the UPC Agreement cannot be expected any time soon, Kratochvil

explains, even apart from the language issue.

‘According to the national rules, documents relating to the ratification of an international agreement must be (for the Parliament) accompanied among others by an assessment of the impact of the implementation of the agreement on the national state budget. Such an assessment cannot be seriously done without final outcomes from the Preparatory Committee and the Select Committee, in particular regarding financial issues. [...] Before the renewal fees for the UP, the court fees, the Czech Republic’s contribution to the UPC budget as well as the mechanism of distribution of the renewal fees among the EPO and participating countries are going to be set up, whatever impact assessments might represent more estimations than real figures.’

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This entry was posted on Thursday, October 9th, 2014 at 3:36 pm and is filed under [Czech Republic, UPC](#)

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