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# Kluwer Patent Blog

## Ratification by Belgium of the UPC agreement

Pieter Callens (Eubelius) · Friday, April 4th, 2014



On 2 April 2014 the parliamentary committee Foreign Affairs of the Belgian House of Representatives voted in favor of the ratification of the UPC agreement. The vote in plenary session is planned for the week of 22 April 2014, but should be no more than a formality. This means that after Austria and France, Belgium will be the third member state to actually ratify the UPC Agreement.

The ratification law comes just in time as the Belgian parliament shall be dissolved at the end of April in preparation of the upcoming national elections of 24 May 2014. Although the government already decided in May last year in principle to ratify the UPC agreement, it took some time to politically agree on the financial aspects of setting up a local division of the Court in Belgium. In Belgium the ratification of a treaty is to be adopted by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. In February 2014 the Senate already approved the ratification law and this week the Committee Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives gave its blessing. Many Belgian patent practitioners feared that Belgium would miss the first group of 13 ratifying countries. But eventually, Belgium shall be amongst the first group of member states to ratify.

The ratification law merely declares the UPC agreement to have effect in Belgium, but does not mention anything about what kind of division Belgium shall set up. However, the Belgian Council of Ministers agreed in May 2013 that Belgium shall set up a local division of the Court in Brussels with the national languages (French, Dutch and German) and English as the languages of proceedings. The extensive language options can be one of the big advantages of the Belgian local division of the Court.

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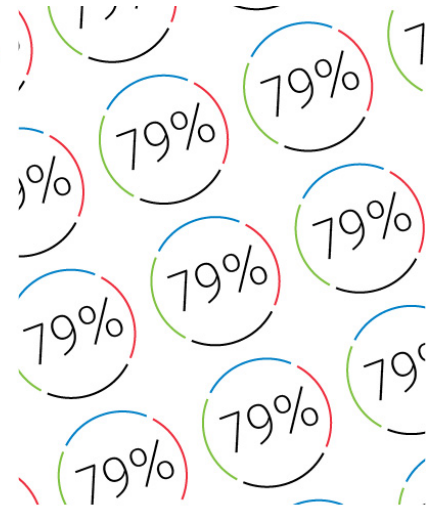
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