

Answers from the candidate Dr. Gjorgji Filipov on questions posed by Intellectual Property Watch on the matter of general IP Policy:

What actions are needed in the international IP systems, such as those that govern patents, trademarks and copyrights?

The fundamental challenge for IP experts, state administration and WIPO at this time is to find the right concepts and procedures, to harmonize the differences we have in today's international IP system. WIPO has to play a key role in that process.

A thorough harmonization of the well-known divergences is unavoidable - not only concerning questions as "first to file" vs. "first to invent" or the framework of trademark protection in the EU and the US, but also to find the right concepts and procedures for the protection of traditional knowledge and techniques.

Therefore it is essential to find a common international basis to consolidate the different interpretations of the necessities and tasks, laying ahead. Apart from the evident basic requirements, i.e. the best protection of IP rights and in a concise concept of state-of-the-art-procedures, the following may give an idea for an outline of requirements of such a new structure:

- lowest costs and most simple possible procedures for protection;
- strongest possible support in developing IP systems for less developed countries;
- strongest possible connection between various research and development institutions and industry.

One year after you take office, what do you expect to have changed in WIPO's management, staffing and procedures?

Being an "outsider" at the moment it is very difficult for me, to evaluate WIPO's internal procedures and possible problems in administration. In the wake of my extensive experience as a manager I learned that the best way to discover the roots of internal problems and conflicts is a mind mapping process of all affected team members.

Most difficulties can be eliminated and work can be brought back to efficiency by a careful and open-minded mediation. Key factors are trust in the staff, motivation among the staff and ideas for further development of the organization from the staff.

Although I do not want to deny the complexity and sensitivity of the agenda laying ahead for WIPO, I am very confident that with the support of the member countries, other stakeholders, as the business community, and the highly qualified personnel in WIPO this will be achievable within a year.

How do you see the future of WIPO Development Agenda?

When I participated as a representative of the International Federation of Inventor's Associations (IFIA) at the WIPO General Assembly in 2004, I expected more frequent activities concerning the Development Agenda. Nevertheless, as the Committee on Development and IP was finally established last year, the process has now commenced. I look forward to the acceleration of its work on the Agenda as I consider it to be crucial not to loose anymore time, and to start immediately with respective assessments.

We should also rely on the experience of WTO as a natural partner for cooperation, a cooperation, which is to be understood as a proactive approach from both sides on an eye-to-eye-level, and which can be the basis for success in this area. TRIPS was a very important early step in that direction, which has now to be filled with life.

What are the three biggest obstacles to WIPO achieving its goals and potential, and how will you engage with members and other stakeholders?

Honestly, I don't like to think about obstacles, I prefer to see challenges which can be tackled in a mutual approach.

I see the main challenge in overcoming the different perceptions of the developing and developed countries. A geographical representation of the staff of WIPO might be a step towards a better mutual understanding.

An often debated challenge is the one concerning experts in IP matters in the executive level of the Secretariat of WIPO. WIPO has excellent human resources and so I am confident that a solution can be found.

This is closely connected to the third challenge which is the requirement of a close cooperation between the Member States representatives' and the WIPO Secretariat.

The main task of the Director General of WIPO should be to harmonize the interests of all stakeholders for a more efficient and dynamic institution in the world of intellectual property. A trustful relationship here is the basis for efficient and thriving business and political surroundings to promote future developments. Therefore the Director General should understand the requirements of the inventors, the business communities, as well as the procedures in administration. Should I be honored with the trust to be elected Director General I will do everything in my capacity to re-establish WIPO as the respectable and powerful organization it was known. With the background of my personal experience in all of these areas, I am convinced about the worth and the necessity of international cooperation in the field of intellectual property.

How will you keep WIPO relevant to international policy debates and work with other global institutions?

It is not a question of keeping WIPO relevant to international policy. WIPO is an UN Agency with the same standing as the WHO, ILO or WTO. It plays in the same league as the International Monetary Fond or the World Bank.

WIPO's central function, apart from the protection of intellectual property, is to use that assignment also to support the developing countries in their efforts to cooperation. It is a wonderful platform for countries which have a lot to contribute to the international policy structures and – thanks to their innovation capacities - to the development of the worldwide economy.

Coming from Macedonia, a country in transition, I can cherish such a contribution as well as I am aware of the necessity and requirements within established institutions. I would appreciate the chance to share my experiences to the best of WIPO's future.