



PRESS RELEASE

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“Europe and ASEAN to embark on a €5.1 million partnership to protect and promote Intellectual Property Rights in the region”

14 July 2010 – The ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and the European Union (EU) today are set to start their cooperation activities through the EUR 5.1 million, or over THB 190 millions, ECAP III project to protect and promote ASEAN's intellectual property rights (IPR) over the years 2010 - 2013 upon receiving recommendations from its first Steering Committee Meeting, inaugurated by Alongkorn Ponlaboot, Deputy Minister of Commerce of Thailand, David Lipman, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Thailand, and S. Pushpanathan, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Economic Community.

The Steering Committee Meeting of ECAP III, the ASEAN Project on the Protection of Intellectual Property, focuses on reviewing the project's Overall Work Plan 2010-2013 and the first Annual Work Plan 2010, as well as giving directions on its activities in protecting and promoting IPR in the region. ECAP III is a co-funded project to the amount of EUR 5.1 million, or over THB 190 millions, over the period 2010-2013 by the EU and the European Patent Office (EPO) to support ASEAN cooperation and integration in IPR as a means to further economic development.

By promoting a reinforced IPR system in the region, ASEAN can enhance and improve its competitiveness, expand its economy, foster prosperity, and reduce poverty. By integrating and harmonising IP rules and procedures, ASEAN Member States will make progress towards building the ASEAN Economic Community.

Opening the Steering Committee meeting, David Lipman, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Thailand announced, "Today is another milestone in the long and fruitful co-operation between the EU and ASEAN in the common stride to protect and develop IPR in the region. We are laying the foundations to move to a higher level of co-operation based on mutual trust and respect, in view of strengthening IPR's contribution to the ASEAN regional economy's competitiveness."

Endorsing the cooperation, Alongkorn Ponlaboot, Deputy Minister of Commerce of Thailand said, "The extension into the third phase is an affirmation of how highly all sides value the project. ECAP III is envisaged to deepen cooperation between the EU, the European Patent Office and ASEAN and supplement national efforts by individual ASEAN countries to strengthen their IP regime."



"ECAP III is a strategic demand-driven response by ASEAN Member States to ASEAN's goals in using IP for the promotion of broad-based, equitable and inclusive economic growth, social development, poverty reduction and regional integration. It is a follow-up program which builds on the results and lessons of ECAP I and II in addressing the challenges to further a common regional footprint on IPR as well as to build long-term capacity in policy, legal, administrative and enforcement areas relating to IPR," affirmed S. Pushpanathan, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Economic Community.

"The European Patent Office confirms its commitment to support regional integration in the fields of patents and other intellectual property rights. By implementing ECAP III in co-operation with the EU and ASEAN it will be possible to achieve important synergies with the ongoing programme of bilateral co-operation between EPO and several ASEAN Member State," said Valentin Mir, Director of International Affairs of the European Patent Office.

The ECAP III Steering Committee consists of representatives of ASEAN Member States' Intellectual Property offices, including the Thai Department of Intellectual Property (DIP), the ASEAN Secretariat, the European Union Delegation to Thailand, and as observers, the European Patent Office (EPO), and the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO).

In 2010, ECAP III is expected to implement almost 30 activities focusing on enhancing knowledge and understanding on IP enforcement at the border, assisting universities and research institutions to develop IP policies and support services and increasing participants' understanding and awareness of the role of Geographical Identification (GI) control mechanisms.

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Background Information

ECAP III

The ASEAN Project on the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights (ECAP III) is based on the success achieved under the EC-ASEAN Patents and Trade Marks Programme or ECAP (1993-1997) and the EC-ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Co-operation Programme or ECAP II (2000-2007), which were funded by the EU with €13.8 million together with a contribution of €1.5 million from the European Patent Office (EPO). ECAP III was endowed with further co-funding of €5.1 million from the EU and EPO.

ECAP III was launched on 1st January 2010, based on a Financing Agreement signed on 21st October 2009 by the EU and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), and a Contribution Agreement signed on 18th December 2009 by the EU and the European Patent Office (EPO). The overall objective of ECAP III is to further integrate ASEAN countries into the global economy and world trading system to promote economic growth and reduce poverty in the region. The project aims at facilitating ASEAN regional integration by building capacity in the ASEC and the ASEAN Member States to manage and benefit from a reinforced IPR system, and intends to meet this aim by implementing activities in the following five components:

- Component I: Capacity building and regional cooperation for IP enforcement and regulation in ASEAN
- Component II: Improving the legal context and administration of IPR in ASEAN countries harmonized with international and regional commitments to IP standards
- Component III: Using IP as a tool for economic development and integration in ASEAN
- Component IV: Structured expansion of IP education, training and research institutions and programmes within a common ASEAN-wide regional network
- Component V: Enhanced capacity of ASEC to support, monitor and coordinate regional policies and work streams on IP including support to ASEAN institution building