

# IFIA WATCH



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF INVENTORS' ASSOCIATIONS

No. 1 July-December 1996

## FEE REDUCTIONS

### USA

The American patent system provides for a **50% reduction** for those qualifying for *small entity* status. These are defined as: **1. independent inventors** **2. nonprofit organizations** (including universities or other institutions of higher education) and **3. small business concerns** (less than 500 persons). Of course the above applies to both nationals and foreigners.



### Germany

Inventors from any country obtain **50% reduction** when applying for a German patent if they show their willingness to give a licence.

### PCT (Patent Cooperation Treaty)

The PCT, administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Geneva, Switzerland, is a system which offers inventors and industry an advantageous route for obtaining patent protection worldwide.

From January 1, 1996, applicants who are nationals of *and* reside in a State with a per capita national income of less than US \$3,000 and party to the PCT, benefit from a **reduction of 75%** of certain fees due to WIPO for international applications: the basic fee, the designation fee, the confirmation fee and the handling fee. The justification is that all these countries face particular difficulties in finding the necessary funds (in convertible currencies!) for paying the various fees under the PCT system.

On October 1996, these PCT member countries are, in alphabetical order: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic

Why a fourth IFIA newsletter when we already publish *IFIA-ECO* (on inventions for the environment), *IFIA-YOUTH* (on young and technical creativity), and *IFIA-WIN* (on women inventors and innovators)? Although each of these deals with important issues which need to be encouraged – they are often neglected... if not forgotten – one main concern remains: the situation of **INVENTORS** in general.

Usually, publications bearing the word "watch" in the title draw attention to negative facts, for example, those perpetrated against human rights. Inventors' ordeals are numerous, and we shall denounce them, of course, as well as infringements to inventors' rights.

However, *IFIA-WATCH* will highlight the progress and concentrate on improvements in the field as well. *IFIA-WATCH* will be a platform for the exchange of experiences and dissemination of good ideas, good practices, good legislation. We hope that *IFIA-WATCH* will become the ever-vigilant eye on the status of inventors. Who knows? Perhaps we may create an "IFIA-WATCH Service" in the long run.

Geneva, October 17, 1996

Farag Moussa  
President of IFIA

People's Republic of Korea, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Guinea, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Niger, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam (56 States).

Any State that would become party to the PCT in the future and whose said average per capita national income is less than US \$3,000 will automatically be included in the above list.

For clarification and/or precise details, inquiries should be addressed directly to WIPO (34 chemin des Colombettes, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland).

*continued on page 4*





### CD-ROMs AND COPYRIGHT

An IFIA expert developed the following theory: patent literature, whether on paper or CD-ROMs, is based on information given and paid for by independent inventors or by industry and research institutes. It could be argued that the copyright should therefore belong to the latter, including independent inventors. If that were the case, independent inventors (and their representatives, the inventor associations, and IFIA) should not be paying more than the cost price of the CD-ROMs. IFIA will study this question.

### WHO CAN REPRESENT SMEs?

At 1995 and 1996 meetings organized by the European Patent Organization (EPO) for users of the patent system, IFIA noticed that some nongovernmental organizations representing patent attorneys, as well as patent-attorney firms, tend to give the impression that they 'represent' small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). IFIA President reacted to such allegations. It is true that patent attorneys have among their clients SMEs and know the problems they face, but in no way have they a mandate to represent the SMEs. SMEs have their own organizations at international, regional and national levels. Only these organizations can represent them and speak on their behalf. IFIA, which represents independent inventors worldwide including some who have created SMEs, stands firmly behind the interests of the SMEs.

### UNSCRUPULOUS COMPANIES MARKETING INVENTIONS

Upon request, IFIA will provide a leaflet published in 1994 by the Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, USA, on how to identify legitimate firms and how inventors can protect themselves when working with an invention promotion firm.

### THE INVENTOR EXISTS!

#### AN IMPROVEMENT IN EPO

September 11 to 12, 1995: Hearing with interested circles and users of the patent system on Strategies of the European Patent Organization (EPO). From the outset IFIA President expressed the astonishment of IFIA when it was noticed that EPO totally ignored the word 'inventor' in its preparatory documents. He wondered whether this word really existed in EPO's vocabulary. Mr. Thoft, Director General of the Danish Patent Office, who chaired the meeting, recognized that the remark was well founded.

June 4 to 5, 1996: Annual meeting of The Standing Advisory Committee before the European Patent Organization (SACEPO). IFIA President welcomed Mr. Ingo Kober, new EPO President from January 1, 1996, for having used the word 'inventor' twice in his opening statement and for having stated that one of his objectives was to 'reduce the cost of patenting for inventors.' Another expression used by Mr. Kober was noted with satisfaction: Money comes from inventors, it should therefore return to them.

### In Memoriam

The following is the text of the message sent by IFIA President to the Swedish Inventors' Association on August 15, 1996:

"IFIA is deeply moved by the loss of Harold Romanus, main founder of our International Federation of Inventors' Associations, and is sending to his family its deep sympathy.

"Harold Romanus was the man who drew the attention of Governments to the fact that there are patents only because there are inventions, and that there are inventions only because there are inventors.

"I met Harold Romanus for the first time in the second half of the 70's. He had a great influence on me and on my work with WIPO, where I was then a staff member. Today, as President of IFIA I will never forget him.

"IFIA will never forget Harold Romanus."



## TRANSLATION OF IFIA PUBLICATIONS

*International Invention Guide* (112 pages), by Clarence Feldmann (former IFIA President), published in December 1994, is being translated into **Finnish** (Central Organization of Finnish Inventors' Associations), **Turkish** (Turkish Patent Office), and **Arabic** (University of Kuwait). The first two translations will be printed end of 1996/early 1997.

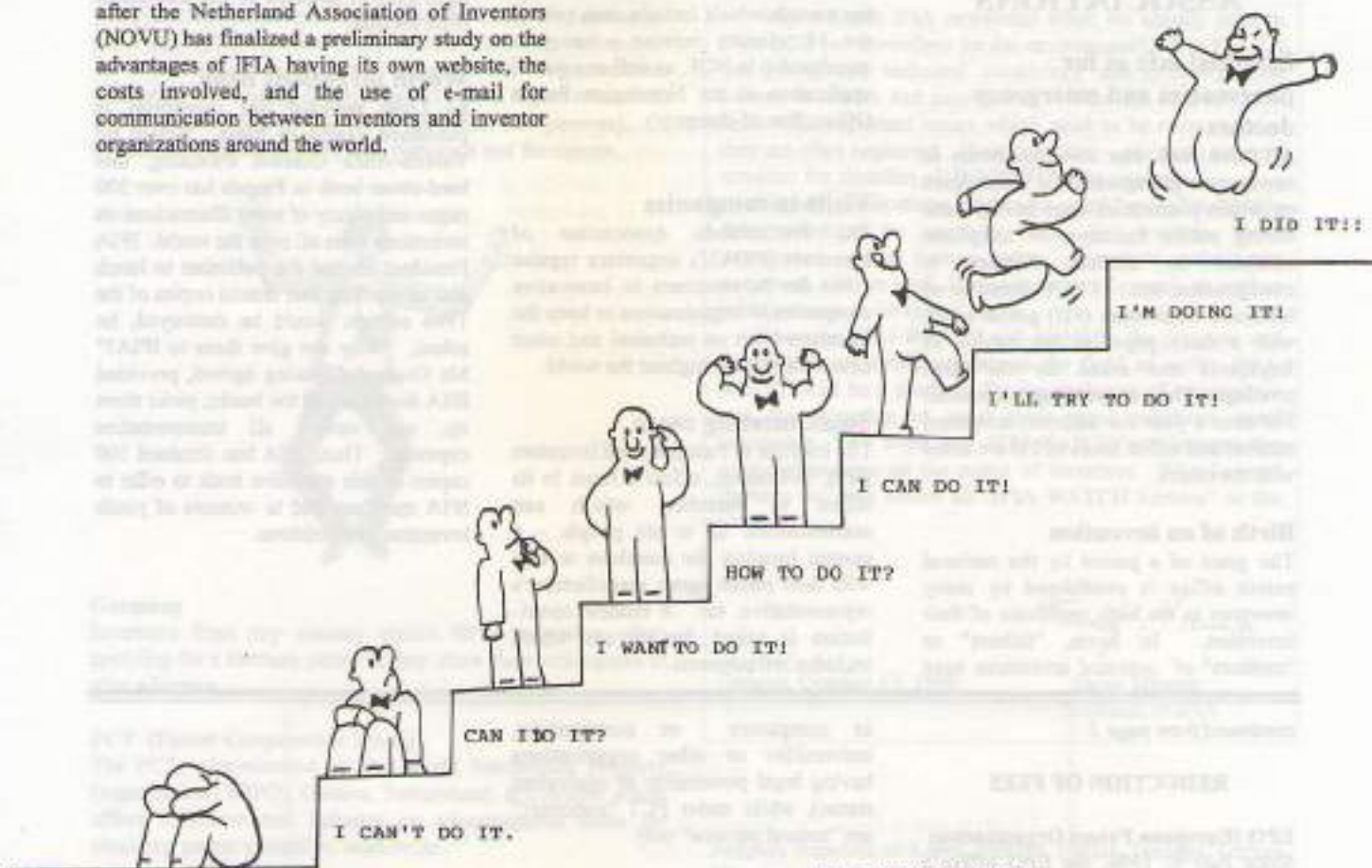
*Women Inventors Organizations* (104 pages), by Farag Moussa (IFIA President), published in 1994, was translated into **Chinese** by the China Association for Inventions and printed in 1995 on the occasion of the World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

## INTERNET

• Since early 1996, the Polish Union of Associations of Inventors and Rationalizers (PZSWIR) has been on the Internet. One of its pages gives information on IFIA in English found at:

[http://www.tenet.pl/nauka/pzswirwifia\\_pzs/ifia\\_ang.html](http://www.tenet.pl/nauka/pzswirwifia_pzs/ifia_ang.html)

• A small IFIA working group will meet shortly after the Netherland Association of Inventors (NOVI) has finalized a preliminary study on the advantages of IFIA having its own website, the costs involved, and the use of e-mail for communication between inventors and inventor organizations around the world.



## IFIA NEWSLETTERS

Each appears twice a year.

- **IFIA-WATCH**  
The publication you are now reading.
- **IFIA-ECO**  
On inventions for the environment
- **IFIA-YOUTH**  
On the young and technical creativity
- **IFIA-WIN**  
On women inventors and innovators



# GOOD IDEAS!

*Good ideas, imagined and implemented by inventors associations as well as IFIA, will be published regularly in this column. We hope to encourage many inventors associations to be as creative and inventive in management, and services rendered by them, as the inventors are in their technical fields. Remember that small can be beautiful. Some projects proved they could be achieved without spending any money!*

## ...by INVENTOR ASSOCIATIONS

### Essential info as for pharmacies and emergency doctors

All have read free announcements in newspapers giving essential information on which pharmacies open at night and during public holidays, or telephone numbers to contact doctors in emergencies, etc. The Federation of Icelandic Innovators (FII) got in touch with a daily paper in the capital of Reykjavik and asked for the same privilege. Their request was successful! For over a year the address, telephone number and office hours of FII are listed with the others.

### Birth of an invention

The grant of a patent by the national patent office is considered by many inventors as the birth certificate of their invention. In Syria, "fathers" or "mothers" of patented inventions have

the right to advertise their "new baby" 12 times, either on TV or radio (30 seconds) and/or by a boxed announcement in the press. This support was obtained by the Syrian Association of Inventors which managed to convince the Ministry of Information to instruct the media accordingly.

### Free - membership fee and patent application

The Norwegian Inventor Association (NOF) organizes yearly youth invention competitions. In addition to the awards which include cash prizes, the 10 winners receive a one-year membership to NOF, as well as a patent application at the Norwegian Patent Office, free of charge.

### Visits to companies

The Netherlands Association of Inventors (NOVI), organizes regular visits for its members to innovative companies or organizations to keep the members keen on technical and other developments throughout the world.

### Small meeting room

The Institute of Patentees and Inventors (IPI), in London, offers a room in its office to members which can accommodate up to six people - a central location for members to talk with their patent agent, manufacturer's representative, etc. A modest contribution is asked for its use which includes refreshments.

## ...from IFIA

### Used stamps

Many children love to collect stamps and through collecting learn a lot about geography, history, and local flora and fauna. Why not offer used stamps to winners of young invention contests? IFIA launched this project among members at the end of 1995. A simple idea - costing nothing to inventor associations or IFIA - it will delight school-children worldwide to receive such gifts in addition to the traditional IFIA awards.

### World inventions book

*Le Livre mondial des inventions* is published yearly in Paris. Edited by Valérie-Anne Giscard d'Estaing, this hard-cover book in French has over 300 pages and plenty of color illustrations on inventions from all over the world. IFIA President invited the publisher to lunch and on learning that unsold copies of the 1996 edition would be destroyed, he asked, "Why not give them to IFIA?" Ms Giscard d'Estaing agreed, provided IFIA does not sell the books, picks them up, and covers all transportation expenses. Thus, IFIA has obtained 500 copies of this attractive book to offer to IFIA members and to winners of youth invention competitions.

*continued from page 1*

## REDUCTION OF FEES

**EPO (European Patent Organization)**  
Since July 1, 1996, the EPO offers a reduction of 75% of its fees for the international search and the preliminary examination in respect of international applications filed by nationals of States which fulfil the requirements for the corresponding reduction in PCT fees payable to WIPO. (See page 1 for list of countries under PCT).

The main differences between the two systems are: Under EPO applicants must file a request for fee reduction, under PCT they do not. Further, the expression "nationals" has a wider application under EPO; it includes both "natural persons" (individuals), and "legal persons" (such

as companies or corporations, universities or other organizations having legal personality or equivalent status), while under PCT "nationals" are "natural persons" only.

As a reminder, the present EPO system replaces a similar system of fee reduction for nationals of developing countries which was available since 1984. As for nationals of central and eastern European States and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the decision implemented by EPO since April 1995 still applies for a period of three years.

*For clarification and/or precise details inquiries should be addressed directly to EPO (Erhardstrasse 27, 80331 Munich, Germany).*

## IFIA-WATCH Newsletter

Published by IFIA

IFIA, 3, rue Bellot  
1206 Geneva, Switzerland

Fax: 41-22-789 3076  
Tel: 41-22-789 3074