

AIPPI World Congress 2016 – A Recap

September 2016 marked the annual gathering of intellectual property professionals from across the globe at the AIPPI World Congress. This year, the congress took place from September 16 to September 20 in Milan, Italy – fashion mecca and home of industry and design. More than 2,500 participants attended the Congress this year, and the ever increasing number of participants each year is a testament to the growing popularity of the association as well as the Congress meetings. This year, there were five participants from Malaysia, three of which were from the present ExCo.



The magnificent Duomo di Milano – the fifth largest church in the world & largest in Italy

The congress kicked off with a grand opening ceremony – participants gathered in a large hall with a long catwalk, and one would have immediately thought fashion show. But instead, the catwalk-like stage was beautifully used with large screens on both walls to showcase the many cultural delights of Milan and Italy – art, invention, music and fashion. Afterwards, the welcome reception featured a variety of Italian delicacies to satiate hungry stomachs and complete the opening day.



The next few days of the Congress was a flurry of events – participants were spoilt for choice with a packed program of interesting topics and key issues. There were numerous seminars and panel sessions on new and upcoming areas of intellectual property and key issues and hot topics of interest to practitioners, including topics close to Italy's heart like IP in food and IP in fashion, over to hot topics of interest such as the implications of IP in view of Brexit and the upcoming Unified Patent Court (UPC). Apart from these sessions, AIPPI places a strong focus on its working questions, where delegates from all participating countries gathered to engage in deep discussions on the prepared responses to the working questions for the year, and where the outcome is a joint

resolution on the question at hand. This is in line with AIPPI's objective to spearhead harmonization of IP regimes across its member countries, and these working questions and resolutions are a key step in that direction. Last but not least, the exhibition area featured booths featuring an assortment of products and services on offer, as well as some hospitality space to rest the weary minds and feet over a cup of coffee.

The Malaysian delegation was also kept busy – there were official meetings for Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers and the Exco, and our delegate Zaraihan Shaari represented Malaysia in the Working Question on patents this year.

Of course, where there is work, there is always play. Evenings were not left out either – participants are typically treated on the second evening to a cultural evening, and Milan was certainly waiting to show a good time. Participants had a choice of two events – a music-filled or an art-filled night. Music goers were treated to a classical concert at the famed Teatro alla Scala, which was inaugurated in 1778 – it was a classic opera house, with box seats overlooking the stage area and it was certainly a spectacular evening being treated to the music of famous Italian composers. The art-goers had the opportunity to visit the Pinacoteca di Brera, which is the main art gallery for paintings in Milan, and houses many famed art collections and pieces by Italian artists.



Scenes from La Scala



Discussions, discussions...

All too soon, the final day arrived and while it is usually a lighter day for participants, members of the various ExCos from all member countries spent the afternoon deliberating and voting on administrative items relating to the association, as well as making final comments and confirming the various resolutions on the working questions that had been discussed over the past few days.

Finally, the curtains had to come to a close for the Congress, but not without a final farewell. The gala dinner was held in the Pirelli HangarBicocca, which was a former industrial space that housed factory buildings that manufactured locomotives and also war planes during the First World War. This famous space has now been converted into an exhibition space for contemporary art. The warehouse-like space featured the Anselm Kiefer installation of *The Seven Heavenly Palaces*, with sculptures rising to the sky, and to dine in such a space was certainly a special experience. At the dinner, AIPPI also welcomed its new President Mr Hao Ma, and new Second Vice-President Renata Righetti Pelosi.



Our ExCo members at the Gala

As we look forward to the new year, the World Congress also makes its traverse across the globe, and will be landing in Sydney, Australia from October 13 - 17. It is the hope that with the location being closer to our region, that we will see more participation from Malaysia and countries in our region, and it is surely measuring up to be yet another exciting conference event.

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