Resolution of the Executive Committee, Helsinki, Finland,
13-17 June 1999

“EPC Translation Requirements”

FICPI, the International Federation of Intellectual Property Attorneys, broadly representative of
the free profession throughout the world, assembled at its Executive Committee held in
Helsinki, Finland, 13-17 June 1999, passed the following Resolution:

continuing to take a leading role in the discussions on the reduction of patent costs,

having taken note that these discussions have focused to a disproportionate extent on the
translation requirements applicable when European patents are granted,

being aware that none of the numerous proposals for a reduction in the volume of such
translations has found consensus among the Contracting States of the European Patent
Convention (EPC), and

recognising that developments in machine translation may provide a practical solution in the
foreseeable future so that any fundamental change in the translation regime may be considered
at best an interim measure;

points out that Article 65 of the EPC already allows each Contracting State the flexibility to
decide on a longer term within which a translation may be filed, or even not to require a
translation, and indeed that some Contracting States have never had a req
uirement for such a
translation;

reminds the Contracting States that a patent must provide a disclosure that is comprehensible to
third parties in each state in which the patent is to be brought into force, and of the principle that
an enforceable right should if so required by a country be defined in a language of the country
concerned for instance for interpretation of the claims under Article 69 of the EPC;

and urges that any further Contracting State that decides to take advantage of the flexibility
already provided for by Article 65 of the EPC must take account of and protect the legitimate
interests of third parties whose freedom of action may be curtailed by an untranslated patent, in
order to provide a fair balance between patent owners and the general public.