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## 2016 – Study Question (General)

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**Security interests over intellectual property**

Responsible Reporter: Ralph NACK

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### I. Current law and practice

You are reminded that **IPRs** refers to patents, trademarks and registered designs only.  
If more than one type of security interest is available under your Group's current law, please answer the questions for each type of security interest, as applicable.

#### Availability of security rights

1) Does your Group's current law provide for the possibility of creating security interests over IPRs?

no

Please explain:

there is nothing specific in any local IP Law

If yes, please answer Questions 2) to 14) inclusive before proceeding to question 15) and following.  
If no, please proceed directly to question 15).

2) Are the available types of security interests defined by specific provisions relating to security interests over IPRs or by general commercial law principles (e.g. specific provisions in your Group's patent legislation rather than general commercial provisions that are applicable to tangible personal property as well as to patents)?

3) Under your Group's current law, what types of security interests are available for IPRs?  
In addressing the questions in sub-paragraphs a) to c) below, please specify briefly the main characteristics and differences of the available types of security interests.

a) Does your law provide for security interests which are characterized by the full assignment of the

underlying IPR to the security taker? For example, an assignment of the IPR for the purpose of security or authorization to dispose/use fully in the event of default.

b) Does your law provide for security interests that authorize the security taker to realize the security interest only in the event of default? For example, a pledge over an IPR that authorizes the pledgee to liquidate the pledged IPR in the event of default (but not to otherwise dispose of the IPR).

c) Does your law provide for security interests that authorize the security taker to use the underlying IPR? For example, *usus fructus* rights that authorize the creditor to use and/or realize proceeds from the exercise of the IPR only during the term of encumbrance. Is any right to use the encumbered IPR conditional upon default of the security provider?

4) If more than one type of security interest is available under your Group's current law, what types are commonly used for IPRs? Please also specify if certain types of security interests are exclusively used for certain types of IPRs in your country. For example, patents may commonly be encumbered with pledges, while trademarks may commonly be assigned to the security taker.

#### Effects of security interests

5) Is the security provider restricted in their right to use their IPR after providing a security interest over that IPR? For example, in respect of their right to grant licenses, or the right to use the protected subject matter. Please answer for each available type of security interest.

6) May encumbered IPRs be assigned to third parties by the security provider?

7) If yes:

a) under what conditions may an IPR be assigned (e.g. obligation to obtain consent from the security taker, public notification or registration)?

b) does the IPR remain encumbered with the original security interest for the benefit of the security taker?

8) What are the rights of the security taker before default (e.g. entitlement to damages, injunctions against infringers, or license fees)?

9) Who of the security provider or the security taker is responsible for maintenance and defence of the IPR provided as collateral?

10) What are the legal consequences if the underlying IPR expires or is revoked? For example, the security right lapses simultaneously; the creditor has a compensation claim against the security provider.

11) Can any of these effects of security interests over IPRs before default be modified by contractual provisions between the parties? If so, which effects?

#### Applicable law

12) Does your Group's current law provide for conflicts of laws as to the availability and effect of security

interests over IPR portfolios containing foreign as well as national IPRs?

13) Which national law applies as to creation, perfection and effect of security interests over foreign IPRs? For example, where a US patent is provided as collateral in respect of a financial transaction in Europe.

14) Can a choice of law provision in a security interest agreement over IPRs overrule the applicable law as to availability and effect?

#### Additional question

15) Regardless of your Group's current law relating to security interests over IPRs, is it possible to create a solely contractual regime for security interests over IPRs (i.e. beside the types of security interests defined by law) that is enforceable between the contracting parties?

yes

Please explain:

This is a question as yet untested before the Court of Law, however in our opinion the answer to your question is YES

## **II. Policy considerations and proposals for improvements of the current law**

16) Is your Group's current law regarding security interests over IPRs sufficient to provide certainty and predictability to the parties?

17) Under your Group's current law, is there an appropriate balance between the rights between security takers and security providers? For example:

a) are there situations in which the rights of security takers should be limited or extended (e.g. if assignment of an encumbered IPR is possible by the security provider without involvement of the security taker)?

b) are there situations in which the rights of security providers should be limited or extended (e.g. if the security taker is authorized to dispose of existing licenses without involvement of the security provider)?

18) Are there any aspects of these laws that could be improved? Are there any other changes to your Group's current law that would promote transactions involving IPRs as collateral? If yes, please briefly explain.

## **III. Proposals for harmonisation**

19) Does your Group consider that harmonization of laws concerning security interests over IPRs is desirable?

no

If yes, please respond to the following questions without regard to your Group's current law. Even if no, please address the following questions to the extent your Group considers your Group's laws could be improved.

Security system regarding IPRs

20) Should there be specific provisions regulating security interests over IPRs (i.e. separate from security interests over tangible property) generally?

yes

Please explain:

21) If no, should there be general commercial law principles that also apply to IPRs? If not, why?

22) What types of security interests should be available as minimum standard in all countries?

Pledge over registered Trademarks/Patents/Designs.

23) Should the law be applied differently depending on the type of IPR? For example, should patents be encumbered exclusively with pledges, should trademarks be assigned to the security taker for the purpose of security?

no

Please explain:

Effect of security interests

24) Should the security provider be restricted in their right to use their IPR after providing a security interest over that IPR (e.g. in respect of their right to grant licenses, or to use the protected subject matter)? If so, how?

no

Please explain:

25) Should the security provider be able to assign encumbered IPRs to third parties?

yes

Please explain:

26) What should the rights of the security taker be before default (e.g. entitlement to damages, injunctions against infringers, or license fees)?

This question can only be answered after detailed study on the subject of legislative reform in this area in Malta.

27) Should the security provider or the security taker be responsible for maintenance and defence of the IPR provided as collateral?

28) What should the legal consequences be if the underlying IPR expires or is revoked (e.g. the security right lapses simultaneously; creditor gains a compensation claim against security provider)?

This question can only be answered after detailed study on the subject of legislative reform in this area in Malta.

29) Should it be possible to modify these effects of security interests over IPRs before default by contractual provisions?

Applicable law

30) Which law should apply as to the availability and the effects of security interests where a foreign IPR is provided as collateral? Why?

This question can only be answered after detailed study on the subject of legislative reform in this area in Malta.

31) Should a choice of law provision in a security interest agreement over IPRs overrule the applicable law? If yes, why?

Additional considerations and proposals

32) To the extent not already stated above, please propose any other standards your Group considers would be appropriate to harmonize laws relating to security interests over IPRs.

n/a

33) Please comment on any additional issues concerning any aspect of security interests over IPRs you consider relevant to this Study Question.

n/a

Please indicate which industry sector views are included in part “**III. Proposals for harmonization**” of this form:

Summary