FS&A

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E-filing in Uruguay.

Important changes are occurring at the Uruguayan Trademark and Patent Office (hereinafter "**UYTPO**") due to the incorporation of technology in the filing process. In the first months of this year, the UYTPO has undertaken two major challenges.

The first innovation has been the mandatory digitalization of all documents presented to the UYTPO, with a view to adopt an electronic file system and eliminate the current hard copy file system, which has been responsible for important delays in the filing process.

Secondly, the UYTPO is putting into practice an e-filing system -available only to Uruguayan trademark and patent attorneys- that allows the filing of applications and all documents related to trademarks and patents online. The system is known as SIWEB.

These major changes will most likely permit a more expedite access to the files and documents filed by other parties to the UYTPO.

In spite of the above, the changes do not entail a change in the procedural norms for the registration of trademarks and patents in Uruguay.

As per Resolution 01/2010 of February 8, 2010, SIWEB became operative on February 22 2010; nevertheless, the system was re-lunched this April since UYTPOs' employees required additional training. Notwithstanding the above, the e-filing system is not 100% operative at the moment.

Our firm has committed to this important improvement by being the first law firm in Uruguay to successfully file an online application by SIWEB on March 3, 2010.

Online payment of official fees is not available yet, however, the UYTPO is planning to implement online payment in the course of this year.

Regarding this issue, it is important to highlight that priority in e-filing is determined by the payment of the official fees, and not by the e-filing date and time. However, once the online payment is available this inconvenient will be solved.