

impairment-related work expenses) is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. The Social Security amendments of 1977 established a higher SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals by setting their monthly SGA amount to the monthly exempt amount for persons aged 65 through 69 under the retirement earnings test provisions of the Act. As mentioned earlier, section 102 of Pub. L. 104-121 increased the exempt amount for persons aged 65 through 69 to specific levels for 1996-2002. Section 102 further provided that the SGA amount for blind individuals be the same as it would have been if section 102 had not been enacted. Thus, the monthly SGA amount for blind individuals in 1996 is \$960—the same as the monthly exempt amount for persons aged 65 through 69 promulgated in the Federal Register on October 25, 1995 (60 FR 54751).

Computation. Under the formula in section 203(f)(8)(B) in effect prior to the enactment of Pub. L. 104-121, the monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals for 1997 shall be the larger of (1) such amount for 1996 or (2) such amount for 1994 multiplied by the ratio of the national average wage index for 1995 to that for 1992. The ratio of the national average wage index for 1995, \$24,705.66 as determined above, compared to that for 1992, \$22,935.42, is 1.0771837. Section 203(f)(8)(B) further provides that if the amount so determined is not a multiple of \$10, it shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of \$10.

SGA Amount for Statutorily Blind Individuals. Multiplying the 1994 monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals of \$930 by the ratio of 1.0771837 produces the amount of \$1,001.78. This must then be rounded to \$1,000. Because \$1,000 is larger than the current amount of \$960, the monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals is determined to be \$1,000 for 1997.

Domestic Employee Coverage Threshold

General. Section 2 of the "Social Security Domestic Employment Reform Act of 1994" (Pub. L. 103-387) increased the threshold for coverage of a domestic employee's wages paid per employer from \$50 per calendar quarter to \$1,000 in calendar year 1994. The statute holds the coverage threshold at the \$1,000 level for 1995 and then increases the threshold in \$100 increments for years after 1995. The formula for increasing the threshold is provided in section 3121(x) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Computation. Under the new formula, the domestic employee coverage threshold amount for 1997 shall be equal to the 1995 amount of \$1,000 multiplied by the ratio of the national average wage index for 1995 to that for 1993. The national average wage index for 1993 was previously determined to be \$23,132.67. The national average wage index for 1995 is \$24,705.66 as determined above. If the amount so determined is not a multiple of \$100, it shall be rounded to the next lower multiple of \$100.

Domestic Employee Coverage Threshold Amount. The ratio of the national average wage index for 1995, \$24,705.66, compared to that for 1993, \$23,132.67, is 1.0679986. Multiplying the 1995 domestic employee coverage threshold amount of \$1,000 by the ratio of 1.0679986 produces the amount of \$1,068.00, which must then be rounded to \$1,000. Accordingly, the domestic employee coverage threshold amount is determined to be \$1,000 for 1997.

OASDI Fund Ratio

General. Section 215(i) of the Act provides for automatic cost-of-living increases in OASDI benefit amounts. This section also includes a "stabilizer" provision that can limit the automatic OASDI benefit increase under certain circumstances. If the combined assets of the OASI and DI Trust Funds, as a percentage of annual expenditures, are below a specified threshold, the automatic benefit increase is equal to the lesser of (1) the increase in the national average wage index or (2) the increase in prices. The threshold specified for the OASDI fund ratio is 20.0 percent for benefit increases for December of 1989 and later. The law also provides for subsequent "catch-up" benefit increases for beneficiaries whose previous benefit increases were affected by this provision. "Catch-up" benefit increases can occur only when trust fund assets exceed 32.0 percent of annual expenditures.

Computation. Section 215(i) specifies the computation and application of the OASDI fund ratio. The OASDI fund ratio for 1996 is the ratio of (1) the combined assets of the OASI and DI Trust Funds at the beginning of 1996 to (2) the estimated expenditures of the OASI and DI Trust Funds during 1996, excluding transfer payments between the OASI and DI Trust Funds, and reducing any transfers to the Railroad Retirement Account by any transfers from that account into either trust fund.

Ratio. The combined assets of the OASI and DI Trust Funds at the beginning of 1996 equaled \$496,068 million, and the expenditures are

estimated to be \$354,615 million. Thus, the OASDI fund ratio for 1996 is 139.9 percent, which exceeds the applicable threshold of 20.0 percent. Therefore, the stabilizer provision does not affect the benefit increase for December 1996. Although the OASDI fund ratio exceeds the 32.0-percent threshold for potential "catch-up" benefit increases, no past benefit increase has been reduced under the stabilizer provision. Thus, no "catch-up" benefit increase is required.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: Program Nos. 96.001 Social Security—Disability Insurance; 96.002 Social Security—Retirement Insurance; 96.003 Social Security—Special Benefits for Persons Aged 72 and Over; 96.004 Social Security—Survivors Insurance; 96.006 Supplemental Security Income.)

Dated: October 18, 1996.

Shirley S. Chater,

Commissioner, Social Security Administration.

[FR Doc. 96-27414 Filed 10-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4190-29-M

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Generalized System of Preferences (GSP); 1995 Annual Review Public Hearings Site

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice of site for the hearings associated with the 1995 Annual Review.

SUMMARY: This notice announces that the hearings for the 1995 Annual Review under the Generalized System of Preferences will be held November 13 and 14, 1996 at the International Trade Commission, Main Hearing Room, 500 E Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20436. The hearings will begin at 10 am on November 13th.

For further information contact the GSP Information Center (202) 395-6971.

Frederick L. Montgomery,

Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

[FR Doc. 96-27410 Filed 10-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3190-01-M

[Docket Number 301-103]

Termination of Section 302 Investigation Regarding Portugal's Implementation of the Patent Protection Provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice of termination and monitoring.

SUMMARY: On April 30, 1996, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) initiated an investigation under section 302(b)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the Trade Act) (19 U.S.C. 2412(b)(1)), with respect to certain acts, policies and practices of the Government of Portugal relating to the term of existing patents. Following consultations with the United States under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Portugal issued a decree-law to implement properly its patent term-related obligations under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement). Having reached a satisfactory resolution of the issues under investigation, the USTR has determined this section 302 investigation and monitor implementation of the agreement under section 306 of the Trade Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The effective date of the termination of the investigation is October 21, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Section 301 Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, Room 223, 600 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph Papovich, Deputy Assistant USTR for Intellectual Property (202) 395-6864, or Thomas Robertson, Associate General Counsel (202) 395-6800.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On April 30, 1996, the USTR initiated an investigation under section 302(b)(1) of the Trade Act with respect to certain acts, policies and practices of the Government of Portugal relating to the term of existing patents. The United States alleged that these acts, policies and practices result in patents owned by U.S. individuals and firms receiving shorter terms than those required by the TRIPS Agreement. The United States also requested consultations with Portugal under the procedures of the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU). 61 FR 19970 (May 3, 1996).

At issue in this investigation was whether developed-country Members of the WTO are obligated under Article 70(2) of the TRIPS Agreement to apply the provisions of Article 33 of the TRIPS Agreement to all patents that were in force on January 1, 1996, and to all patents that are granted based on applications that were pending on January 1, 1996. Article 33 of the TRIPS Agreement requires Members to grant a patent term that lasts not less than 20 years from earliest effective filing date

claimed. Portugal had declined to apply the Article 33-mandated term to pending patents, and claimed that the TRIPS Agreement did not require it to do so.

On May 30, 1996, the United States and Portugal (with representatives of the European Commission present at Portugal's request) held formal consultations on this matter under the WTO DSU procedures. In those consultations, Portugal formally agreed to the United States' interpretation of the obligations in the TRIPS Agreement and announced that it would make a series of changes to its system to implement these obligations. On August 23, 1996, Portugal issued Decree-Law 141/96 confirming that all patents that were in force on January 1, 1996, and all patents granted after this date based on applications that were pending on January 1, 1996, will receive a term of protection that lasts either 15 years from the date of grant of the patent or 20 years from the effective filing date of the patent, whichever term is longer.

Based on these consultations and the measures that Portugal has undertaken to implement its obligations under the TRIPS Agreement, Portugal and the United States notified the WTO Dispute Settlement Body on October 3, 1996, that they have agreed to terminate consultations on this matter and that the United States has formally withdrawn this matter from further attention under the provisions of the DSU. On the basis of the measures Portugal has undertaken to provide a satisfactory resolution to the matter under investigation, the USTR has decided to terminate this section 302 investigation. Pursuant to section 306 of the Trade Act, the USTR will monitor Portugal's implementation of its TRIPS Agreement obligations with respect to the term of protection granted to patents in force on or after January 1, 1996.

Irving A. Williamson,

Chairman, Section 301 Committee.

[FR Doc. 96-27409 Filed 10-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3190-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Aviation Proceedings; Agreements Filed During the Week Ending 10/18/96

The following Agreements were filed with the Department of Transportation under the provisions of 49 U.S.C 412 and 414. Answers may be filed within 21 days of date of filing.

Docket Number: OST-96-1870.

Date Filed: October 15, 1996.

Parties: Members of the International Air Transport Association.

Subject: TC1 Telex Mail Vote 830, US-Venezuela Apex Fares—Reso 075ff. Intended effective date: December 1, 1996.

Docket Number: OST-96-1871.

Date Filed: October 15, 1996.

Parties: Members of the International Air Transport Association.

Subject: PTC2 EUR 0012 dated September 6, 1996 r1-2, PTC2 EUR 0013 dated September 6, 1996 r3-4, PTC2 EUR 0014 dated September 6, 1996 r5-6. Within Europe Resolutions. Intended effective date: March 1, 1997.

Docket Number: OST-96-1876.

Date Filed: October 17, 1996.

Parties: Members of the International Air Transport Association.

Subject: TC1 Telex Mail Vote 831, Brazil-Argentina/Paraguay/Uruguay Resos r-1-070j, r-2-072vv, r-3-078m. Intended effective date: November 1, 1996.

Docket Number: OST-96-1877.

Date Filed: October 17, 1996.

Parties: Members of the International Air Transport Association.

Subject: PTC COMP 0028 dated October 15, 1996, PTC COMP Fares 0028 dated October 15, 1996, U.S.-North Atlantic Add-ons (Reso 015n). Intended effective date: January 1, 1997.

Paulette V. Twine,

Chief, Documentary Services Division.

[FR Doc. 96-27499 Filed 10-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-62-P

Notice of Applications for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity and Foreign Air Carrier Permits Filed Under Subpart Q During the Week Ending October 18, 1996

The following Applications for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity and Foreign Air Carrier Permits were filed under Subpart Q of the Department of Transportation's Procedural Regulations (See 14 CFR 302.1701 et. seq.). The due date for Answers, Conforming Applications, or Motions to modify Scope are set forth below for each application. Following the Answer period DOT may process the application by expedited procedures. Such procedures may consist of the adoption of a show-cause order, a tentative order, or in appropriate cases a final order without further proceedings.

Docket Number: OST-96-1868.

Date filed: October 15, 1996.

Due Date for Answers, Conforming Applications, or Motion to Modify Scope: November 12, 1996.

Description: Application of U.S. CalJet Airlines, Inc. d/b/a CalJet Airlines,