



Europäisches  
Patentamt  
European  
Patent Office  
Office européen  
des brevets

# Recent developments at the EPO



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# European Patent Organisation




- Created in 1973
- 38 member states, including all EU = 600 million inhabitants
- 35 nationalities, 7 000 employees (4 250 highly specialised engineers & scientists)  
= 2nd largest European public service organisation
- Self financed budget via fees  
= €2 billion in 2014



# Extension of the European patent system

## Validation agreement with Morocco

- In force since 1 March 2015
- European patent can be extended to Morocco

-  member states
-  extension states
-  validation state

- brings to 41 the number of countries for which patent protection can be obtained with a single European patent application
- pending ratification of two further validation agreements with Tunisia and Moldova



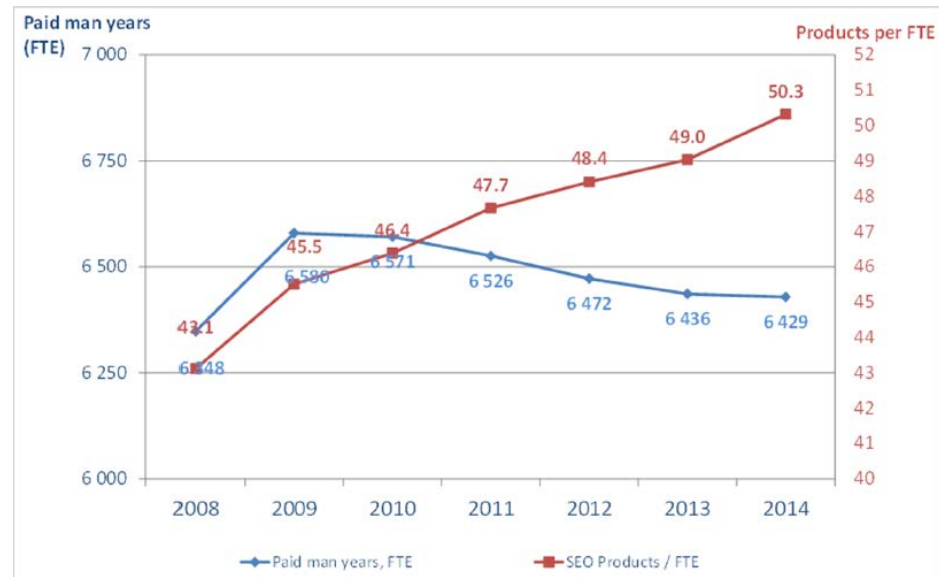
# Meeting the challenges at the EPO

## The EPO's strategic priorities:

- Maintaining a strong focus on quality
- Improving efficiency
- Harmonising the global patent system

# Quality and efficiency strategy

- To face the growing demand of patents, the EPO is modernising itself, putting a maximum effort on quality, controlling its costs and improving its timeliness in the delivery of products
- The EPO is implementing a wide range of reforms in five key areas (IT, HR, Buildings, Quality, Co-operation)
- Result: a constant increase in productivity



# Quality in search and examination

- **High specialisation** and intensive training of EPO examiners (divisions of three examiners per file)
- **State-of-the-art tools** allowing efficient access by examiners (e.g. new Epoque)
- **Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC)**: Implemented on 1 January 2013 at EPO and USPTO. KIPO, SIPO, INPI Brazil, ROSPATENT and 12 EPO Member States also classifying into the CPC
- Very comprehensive prior art coverage: over **90 million patent documents** available to examiners
- EPO is the first IP5 office to be **ISO 9001** certified (December 2014)
- Regular **“Partnership for Quality”** meetings with users in Europe, US, Japan, China and Korea

# Enhancing quality to improve certainty

## Global prior art search for higher certainty

- Enhance coverage of our patent databases including Asian data:
  - 35 million patent documents from China, Japan and Korea
  - 21% of cited prior art in EPO search reports come from Asia

## Automated translation using Patent Translate

- Free on-the-fly translations of patents for 32 languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian

## “Early Certainty from Search” to improve timeliness

- Search reports and opinions on patentability within six months of filing

## EPO Global Dossier

- Launch of EPO/SIPO data in June 2014, JPO and KIPO data in April 2015

# PCT – a top priority for the EPO

- PCT is the work-sharing vehicle of choice for the EPO
- In 2014 the EPO established:
  - 80 725 International Search Reports (38.3% of the total)
  - 7 661 International Preliminary Examination Reports (55.7%)
- Improving the services to the users, e.g.:
  - PCT Direct (reuse at EPO of national work in the PCT phase) for applications where EPO is Receiving Office
  - Freezing of the international search fee until April 2016
  - EPO joined WIPO ePCT on 1 November 2014 and will join WIPO DAS in 2015-2016
- PPH with IP5 offices (January 2014) as well as with Canada, Israel, Mexico and Singapore (January 2015)



# The unitary patent

- **Quality:** A **European patent**, granted by the EPO under the EPC
- **Flexibility:** An **additional option for patent owners**, alongside the existing European and national patent systems
- **Simplicity:** **Unitary effect** extends to the 25 EU member states currently participating, **in one single administrative step by the EPO**
- **Cost reduction:** Access to **strong and large geographical protection** with significant fee reduction
- **Legal certainty:** **Uniform litigation system through the Unified Patent Court**

# Harmonising the patent system in Europe

## The Patent Package



- Unitary patent protection (UPP)
- Unified Patent Court (UPC)
  - Preparations on-going in the Select Committee (rules, fees) and in the Preparatory Committee (establishment of UPC)
  - First UPC ratifications: **Austria, France, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Malta**
  - Several countries indicated intention to ratify in 2015
  - Entry into force of UPC Agreement will trigger start of operations of the new Court and start of unitary patent system

# Harmonising the patent system in Europe

- On 5 May 2015, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) dismissed the actions brought by Spain against the Unitary Patent (cases C-146/13 and C-147/13)
- This should give new impetus on the ratification process concerning the UPC Agreement

# The EPO – a European success story

- EPO: the European patent granting authority
  - Success for the users via strong commitment to quality and efficiency
  - Future perspective through the unitary patent and the Unified Patent Court

[www.epo.org](http://www.epo.org)



Thank you for your attention!