

Preface

The IP5 Statistics Report (IP5 SR) is jointly produced by the “IP5 Offices”, a group that consists of the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the State Intellectual Property Office of the People’s Republic of China (SIPO), and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) along with the support of the International Bureau (IB) of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). It follows on from a provisional 2015 key IP5 statistical data report that was made earlier in 2016. The latest reports along with other data exchanges and information about the Group can be found at www.fiveipoffices.org.

Collaboration between the IP5 Offices has proven to be successful in many areas³. The Common Patent Classification (CPC) is now used by more than 45 offices. The IP5 Offices have been key players in developing and expanding the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH). They recently launched a more specific IP5 PPH project to help applicants to obtain patents faster and more efficiently while exploiting the work previously done by another IP5 office. More can be found on the IP5 Offices homepage. On May 22, 2015, the 8th Meeting of the IP5 Heads of Office was held in Suzhou, China. At the meeting, requests from users were discussed to expand the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) program to more offices and to improve the operation of the PPH. The meeting decided to discuss PPH initiatives within the IP5 with the aim of improving accessibility for users. In addition, the IP5 Offices reached common recognition on plans on collaborative new IT-related collaborative services.

Collaboration was successful also in the area of patent statistics. In addition to promoting a better understanding of patenting activity both at the IP5 Offices and worldwide, this report explains each office’s operations and informs about patent grant procedures. It discusses background activities at each office, reviews worldwide patenting developments and then compares the patent related work at the IP5 Offices. The IP5 SR supplements annual reports for each of the IP5 Offices and also presents specific statistics that are collected and published by the WIPO.

There are diverse factors that influence patent filing trends. In the past, trend breaks have been mainly caused by changes to patent rules and fees as well as by sudden changes in the economic climate. Every year there is a background of changes at one or more of the IP5 Offices. As the global patent system becomes more harmonized, common economic driving forces have been a major influence on patent filings at the offices.

According to the World Economic Outlook⁴ of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), global growth remains moderate and is projected to be 3.1 percent in 2016, which represents a slight downward revision and causes some current problems like further downward pressure on interest rates in advanced economies. On the other hand there is improved financial market sentiment towards emerging market economies and China, with some signs of firming of commodity prices. It seems likely that the drivers for patent filings will remain positive. Worldwide patent filings grew 4 percent in 2014. More recent data are available from the IP5 Offices (see Chapter 2 and 4 of this report). In 2015, filings grew 21.0 percent for the SIPO, 2.0 percent for the KIPO, 1.8 percent for the USPTO and 1.6 percent for the EPO. But the filings decreased by 2.7 percent at the JPO, which shows that applicants were more selective in filing applications, meaning that intellectual property strategies of companies, there are further shifting from quantity to quality. The data showed a total annual growth of 8.6 percent for overall filings at the IP5 Offices.

³ www.fiveipoffices.org/activities.html

⁴ World Economic Outlook October 2016, www.imf.org.

Although patent filing is closely tied to economic growth, political and technological factors are also influential. Globalisation of markets and production continues to be a key business trend. There is a worldwide tendency to harmonize patent laws with common international standards and to facilitate filing of applications across borders. These factors have had a positive impact on worldwide patent growth over recent years.

The IP5 Offices hope that this report provides useful information to the readers. The IP5 Offices will continue to improve and refine the report to better serve expectations and objectives of the public. Definitions related to the terminology used in the report are given in annex 1 and 2 that appear at the end.

When reading this report, please bear in mind that the procedures and practices among the IP5 Offices differ in a number of areas. Therefore, care should be taken when analysing, interpreting, and comparing the various statistics.

Materials from this report can be freely reproduced in other publications, but we request that this should be accompanied by a reference to the title and the web site location of this report, www.fiveipoffices.org/statistics.html.

An additional annex appears in the web version that gives a glossary of patent related terms. A data file is also available that contains statistics covering more years.

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