



Europäisches  
Patentamt  
European  
Patent Office  
Office européen  
des brevets

# Update from the EPO: Focus on quality and efficiency



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# Patent protection in up to 42 countries

**European Patent Organisation**  
**Founded in 1973**  
**Some 650 million inhabitants**

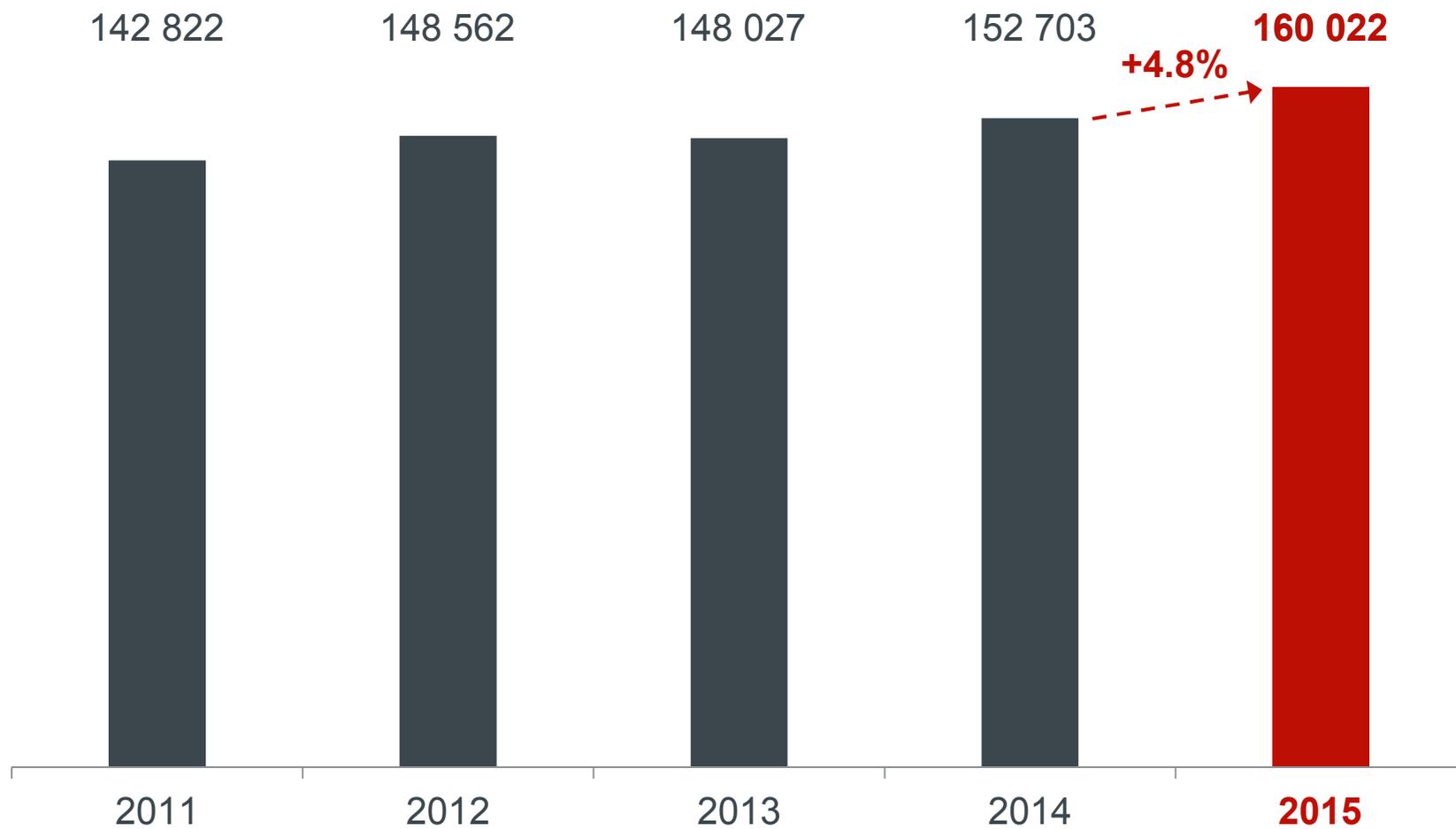
**European member states (38)**

European extension states (2)

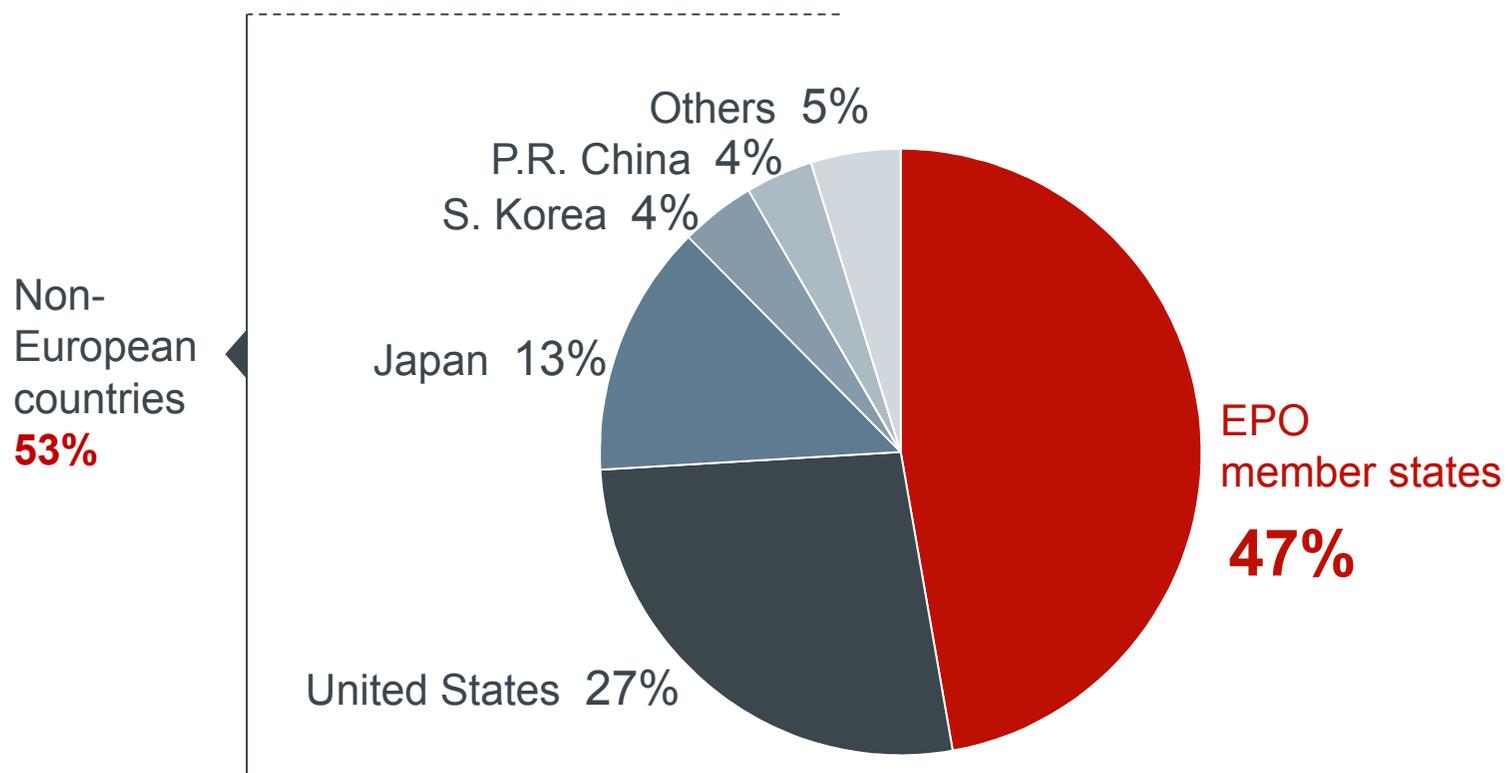
**Validation states (2)**  
**Republic of Moldova**  
**Morocco**



## Growth of European patent applications\*



## 47% of the patent applications originate from EPO member states



# IP Challenges

Increasing number of applications

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More **complex** applications

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Growing **amount of prior art** especially from Asian countries

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**Competitive** environment

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High expectations of users in terms of **cost and timeliness**



**The need for reforms that address these challenges  
of the modern IP system**

# The focus of the EPO's reforms

Increase our **quality**

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Increase **efficiency**

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Improve **timeliness**

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Control **costs**

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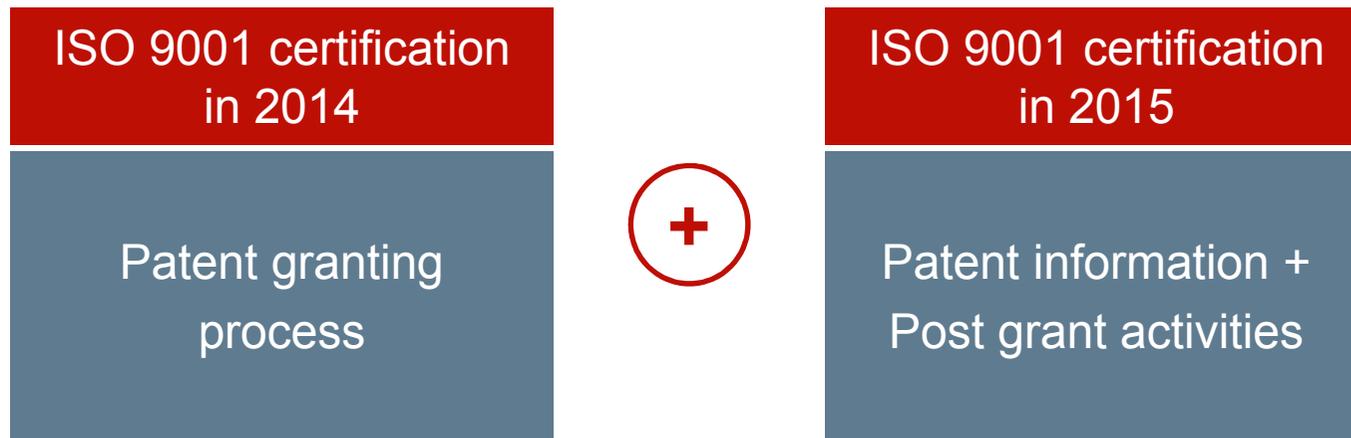
Modernise the **legal and social framework**



**All designed for the EPO to be both  
business-friendly and fit for the future**

# Quality – a core value of the EPO

- ISO 9001 certification for **entire patent granting process**



# Enhancing Quality by improving certainty and timeliness (I)

## Global prior art search for higher certainty

- Enhance coverage of our patent databases including Asian data:
  - ca. 40 million patent documents from China, Japan and Korea
  - 22% of cited prior art in EPO search reports come from Asia

## “Early Certainty from Search” to improve timeliness

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

## PACE – accelerated examination

## Enhancing quality by improving certainty and timeliness (II)

- After ECfS ... **next step in strategy**: Paris Criteria
- By 2020 the EPO aims at finishing examination within about one year from a valid request for examination
- A streamlined opposition procedure will enable opposition decisions within 15 months for most cases

### *B – Shortening the grant procedure*

The Intergovernmental Conference,

considering that the conditions of international competition require patents to be granted within a period that is in keeping with the interests of users,

invites the Organisation to undertake every possible effort to shorten procedures, so as to bring the average time it takes to grant a European patent down to three years, whilst maintaining the level of quality.

# EPO commitment to users: new tools to meet the needs

- **Automated translation using Patent Translate**

- Free on-the-fly translations of patents for 32 languages - 28 languages of EPO member states + Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian.

- **Global Dossier**

- Access to patent files (the “file wrapper”) in a federated manner for all applications in the five major offices pertaining to an invention.

- **The Federated European Patent Register**

- Post-grant legal status information on EP patents via a single point of access collected direct from the online national patent registers of the EPO member states.

# The EPO is ready to deliver the unitary patent

## EPO preparations

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► **Completed**

- Adoption of EPO's proposal on **renewal fees**
- Breakthrough in December 2015 – adoption of complete secondary legal framework, including: **implementing rules, budgetary and financial rules, the level and distribution of the renewal fees.**

## Member States preparations

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► **Ongoing**

- Ongoing ratifications of UPC agreement by participating Member States
- 9/13 of the necessary states have ratified so far
- **5 to 6 states, including, UK and DE, have planned to ratify in 2016**



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Thank you for your attention!