Recent developments at the European Patent Office
Valletta, Malta, 31 May 2017
Challenges for the EPO

- **Consistent growth** in demand for patents
- **Competitive** international environment
- **Technically complex** applications
- Users’ expectations in terms of costs and timeliness

**Our strategic priorities**
- Increase quality
- Increase efficiency
- Increase timeliness
- Control costs

**THE RESULTS IN 2016**
2016 = Better performance to tackle our challenges

**+8.5%**

**PRODUCTION**
Search, examination, opposition
Production increase

\[ \text{60% due to productivity gains} \]
\[ \text{40% due to capacity increase} \]

**2016 = 396 000 products**

**+40%**

**GRANTED PATENTS**
Published patents

**2016 = 96 000 patents**

**-25%**

**REDUCING OUR STOCK**
Search, examination, opposition
Stock reduction in months of work over 2 years

**-20%**

**REDUCING OUR COSTS**
Unit cost
3rd consecutive year of falling unit cost

**2016 = 80% of the unit cost of 2006**
Early Certainty: Speeding up our work processes

**Know what’s ahead**

1. Search reports
   - We deliver search reports within 6 months of receipt.
   - Actual Search timeliness: 5.1 months

**Reliable rights on time**

2. Examination time
   - We are reducing examination times to just 12 months on average by 2020.
   - Actual Examination timeliness: 23.3 months

**Challenges resolved faster**

3. Opposition time
   - We aim to conclude oppositions to newly granted patents in just 15 months on average.
   - Actual duration of oppositions: 24.8 months
Stock has been reduced by 25% over the last two years

Stock in months of work

European Patent Office
European patent applications*: stability at a high level

*Applications are the files for which applicants have decided to request a European patent from the EPO. They are a direct measure of the explicit interest of innovating firms to assert their patent rights on the European technology market. Applications refer to direct European patent applications filed at the EPO under the European Patent Convention, plus international Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) filings which entered the European regional phase (becoming a European application) in the year under review.
Origin of European patent applications in 2016

- Germany: 16%
- United States: 25%
- Japan: 13%
- United Kingdom: 3%
- France: 7%
- Italy: 3%
- Switzerland: 5%
- P.R. China: 4%
- S. Korea: 4%
- Netherlands: 4%
- Sweden: 2%
- Other EPO member states: 9%
- Others: 5%

EPO member states: 48%
Flow of patent application between EPO and IP5

Notes:
- Analysis based on applications received by the five largest patent offices (IP5 offices) in 2015.
- Source of the data: IP5 Statistics Report 2015
Granted patents: an unprecedented surge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Patents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>65,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>66,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>64,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>68,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>95,940</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: this analysis is based on granted patents published.

European Patent Office
### Quality in search and examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>4,310 examiners</strong></th>
<th>High specialisation and intensive training of EPO examiners – 4,310 examiners working in divisions of 3 – unique amongst IP Offices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>recruitment target for 2017</strong></td>
<td>184 examiners recruited in 2016 → recruitment target for 2017 is to reach 4,432 examiners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 year training programme</strong></td>
<td>Two year training programme for newly recruited examiners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **EPO does not outsource any of its core tasks – unique amongst IP5 Offices** | no outsource of core tasks |
| **World’s largest database** for patent searches (1 bn records) | 1 bn records |
| **Access to 50 million original patent documents from Asia** | 50 million documents |
| **State-of-the-art tools allowing efficient access by examiners (e.g. new Epoque)** | efficient access |
The EPO’s priorities in 2017

Patent granting process:
- First priority: to continue to deliver high quality / legally solid patents
- Implementation of the Quality and Efficiency Policy
- Moving towards a fully end-to-end digitalised “EPO 4.0”

International co-operation:
- To foster discussions with our partners for harmonised rules and practices in close connection with the user community
- Validation agreements

Preparation for the Unitary Patent