The European patent grant procedure

Invention

European patent application
- Request (obligatory), preferably on EPO Form 1001
- Description (obligatory)
- Claims
- Drawings (if any)
- Abstract

Filing offices
- EPO Berlin
- EPO Munich
- EPO The Hague
- National patent offices

Filing fee (possibly incl. additional fee for the 36th and each subsequent page)
Search fee (Claims fees for the 16th and each subsequent claim)

Examination on filing and as to formal requirements

Search relating to the state of the art
- Search report and non-binding opinion on patentability

Publication of application
- 18 months after filing date or earliest priority date
- Provisional patent protection can be obtained in all states designated. Applicants may claim reasonable compensation from competitors who infringe their patent applications through imitation.

Examination fee
- Designation fee
- Extension fees (if applicable)

EPC contracting states

Examination of application
- Opportunity to amend claims and description
- Renewal fees for the third and subsequent years
- Translation of the claims into the official languages of the EPO and fees for grant and publication of patent specification

Grant of patent
- Publication of patent specification
- Full patent protection against infringement (unlicensed use of invention by competitors)
- Validation in the designated states
- Opposition by third parties within 9 months from publication of the mention of grant
- Patentee may limit or revoke the patent

Detailed information on the European patent grant procedure can be found at: www.epo.org/patents/One-Stop-Page.html