What's in the EPO's databases?

With data from over 90 different patent offices, it is not easy to grasp immediately exactly what is in the EPO’s databases. Is the data up to date? Are there gaps? Exactly which data is being delivered from a particular country – just the bibliographic data, or are abstracts also available?

Understanding the coverage of a database is essential to good searching. You might think you are searching, say, data back to 1970, but what if the database only has data back to 1980, or what if there is a gap between 1990 and 1995? If you search using an applicant’s name, does a low number of hits mean that the applicant hasn’t filed many patents, or that the data is missing?

The EPO offers some ways for you to get an answer to many of the questions that arise on coverage.

Espacenet bibliographic and character-coded full text
To find out the data coverage in Espacenet, go to epo.org/espacenet and click the “Further information” tab, where you will find two links:
– Latest bibliographic data coverage
– Latest full-text data coverage
These pages are updated daily. They display the first and last publications of each country and type of kind code. The full-text data coverage page also shows you all the character-coded full-text country collections that are available, as well as the languages they are available in.

Legal status data
For users of legal status data, there is also a comprehensive resource showing what’s in the EPO’s worldwide legal status database, country by country, legal event by legal event. Simply go to epo.org/useful-tables.
A new feature in Espacenet’s Smart search allows you to use keywords to search the full text of an entire patent document (title, abstract, description and claims) using the extftxt field identifier. This is in addition to the existing ftxt field identifier for searching keywords in descriptions and claims simultaneously, and in descriptions and claims separately using the desc and claim field identifiers respectively.

**How to do a full-text search using Smart search**

Begin by searching as usual with one or more keywords. This will search in title and abstract only.

Then click on “Refine search”, bringing you back to the Smart search screen, which this time will include a drop-down menu for you to choose your full-text database. Once you’ve selected a full-text database, you can perform your search using the field identifiers shown in the table.

**Field identifiers for full-text searching in Espacenet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extftxt=</td>
<td>Retrieves keywords found in the title, abstract, description or claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ftxt=</td>
<td>Retrieves keywords found in the description and claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desc=</td>
<td>Retrieves keywords found in the description only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claim=</td>
<td>Retrieves keywords found in the claims only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Espacenet: free access to over 100 million patent documents**

[Image of search interface]

Items appearing in your result list from a full-text search in Espacenet may be patent applications or granted patent documents. In cases where Espacenet has the full text of the granted patents, they will be available in HTML. This means that they can be translated into other languages using Patent Translate.
The importance of maintaining dialogue

It has always been a characteristic of the EPO that it puts great emphasis on listening to its users' views. This is especially true in the field of patent information.

Dialogue does not, of course, always have to be formal or official. There are many informal occasions to pass on your views. You will see in this issue that the EPO Patent Information Conference 2018 will take place in Brussels from 12 to 14 November and we are hoping to see as many users there as possible. We will also have a booth at a number of exhibitions around the world.

I never cease to be amazed at how positive people are about our outreach work. We often hear remarks like, "It is so great that the EPO is here, and to have this chance to talk about your services".

So, keep in touch with your SACEPO/PDI members, come to our conference, and visit our stand at one of the many fairs and exhibitions we’re attending this year. We’ll be delighted to see you.

1) For a list of SACEPO/PDI members go to page 7 of this issue or epo.org/about-us/services-and-activities/Consultingourusers/sacepo/members/pdi
2) For a list of events where the EPO will exhibit this year go to: epo.org/learning-events/events/fairs

Richard Flammer
Principal Director Patent Information and European Patent Academy

Searching in Espacenet for inventors or applicants in a specific country

You can use Espacenet to find partners located in countries that are of interest to your business. In Advanced search, enter the country code between square brackets ([CC]) in the “Inventor(s) or Applicant(s)” field. In Smart search, use the following query: in=[CC] or pa=[CC].

About 40% of the documents in Espacenet are indexed with countries of residence for inventors and applicants. Coverage varies from country to country.
Changes to the IPC from 1 January 2018

WIPO has announced a revision of the International Patent Classification (IPC) scheme that entered into force on 1 January 2018.

Full details of the changes to the classification symbols are available on WIPO’s website: wipo.int/classifications/ipc/ipcpub

This platform also includes the former IPC2017.01 and all older versions. Just click “2018.01” to open the drop-down version menu.

Once you’re on the page for the 2018 version of the IPC, click the “Compilation” tab. The French version can be selected in the left-hand column.

Under the “Compilation” tab, the changes are shown in a tabular format, using the following codes:

- **D** – deletion
- **C** – modification with a change of scope, i.e. involving recategorization
- **M** – modification without a change of scope, i.e. not involving recategorization
- **N** – new
- **U** – unchanged in this language version, but changed in the other language version of the IPC

The table shows IPC subclasses/main groups that have undergone substantive modifications. Some additional changes (not in the table) fall into the “M” category and only involve clarification of the title of the entries.

### IPC subclasses/main groups that have undergone substantive modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Subject-matter affected by the changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A01D 45/00</td>
<td>Harvesting of standing crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A01H</td>
<td>Angiosperms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A41D 1/00</td>
<td>Garments for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B05B12/00 to 16/00</td>
<td>Spraying apparatus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B06N 2/00</td>
<td>Seats specially adapted for vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C03C 25/00</td>
<td>Surface treatment of fibres or filaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C08K 3/00</td>
<td>Use of inorganic substances as compounding ingredients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C09D 7/00</td>
<td>Features of coating compositions; Processes for incorporating ingredients in coating compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C09J 7/00</td>
<td>Adhesives in the form of films or foils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12Q 1/00</td>
<td>Measuring or testing processes involving enzymes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F16L 53/00</td>
<td>Heating/cooling of pipes or pipe systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F21S 41/00 to 45/00</td>
<td>Vehicle lighting devices specially adapted for vehicle exteriors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F21W 101/00 to 131/0</td>
<td>Exterior vehicle lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F24F 11/00 to 140/00</td>
<td>Air-conditioning or ventilating; control or safety arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F24S</td>
<td>Solar heat collectors or systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F24T</td>
<td>Geothermal heat collectors or systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F24V</td>
<td>Heat collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F25C</td>
<td>Producing, working or handling ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G01N 23/00</td>
<td>Investigating or analysing materials by the use of wave or particle radiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G06F 8/00</td>
<td>Arrangements for software engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G16H</td>
<td>Healthcare informatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HoX 4/24</td>
<td>Electrically conductive connections using contact members penetrating or cutting insulation or cable strands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H04N 13/00</td>
<td>Stereoscopic or multi-view video systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H04W 4/00</td>
<td>Services specially adapted for wireless communication networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H04W 76/00</td>
<td>Wireless communication network management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 1 January 2018, the EPO has been publishing documents classified under the new version of the IPC. For the documents in the backfile affected by these changes, a gradual reclassification will take place. Users may wish to supplement their IPC search with a further search using the symbols from the previous version. Together with the USPTO, the EPO will endeavour to bring the CPC scheme into line with the new IPC in the first half of 2018.
SEARCH TOOLS AND RESOURCES

EP Bulletin search now free of charge

The online EP Bulletin search tool is now free of charge. With EP Bulletin search, you can perform advanced and in-depth online searching in the European Patent Bulletin. You can, for example, easily monitor European patent applications where a first examination report has been despatched or where a first intention to grant has been communicated by the EPO.

For more information: epo.org/bulletin
Priorities and patent families at the EPO

What is a patent family?
There are many definitions of the term “patent family”. This article explains how patent families are defined by the EPO for the purposes of maintaining its databases. In this context, a patent family is a collection of related patent applications for the same or a similar invention.

When building patent families, the priority is the glue that holds the family together. What are priorities and where do they come from?
How does the EPO use them to build patent families?

What is a priority?
Filing a patent application for an invention triggers a priority right. A priority confers on the applicant the right to file within 12 months the same application in other IP offices while keeping the same date of invention (i.e. the priority date).

Adopted in 1883, the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property protects the right of priority for the 170+ member states of the “Paris Union”.

The right of priority is furthermore anchored in the TRIPS Agreement (Agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights).

Priority rights are available for patents, utility models, designs and trade marks. For patents and utility models, the Paris Convention lays down a 12-month priority period.

The applicant must claim the priority when filing an application, usually by providing proof relating to the previously filed application.

Applicants sometimes also claim “multiple” or “partial” priorities.

Partial priorities
The priority is claimed for part of the subject-matter only. This occurs when only part of the subsequent application’s subject-matter is disclosed in the previous application. The remaining part will not be protected by a priority right.

Multiple priorities
The priority of two or more previous applications is claimed in a subsequent application. The patent office will then treat each claim in the subsequent application as having the priority date of the particular previous application in which the subject-matter was disclosed. Multiple priorities may be claimed for any one claim if several subject-matters are included.

How does the EPO use priorities?
When the EPO builds patent families, it uses the priority information to connect one application to another.

Simple patent families
A simple patent family is a collection of patent documents, usually related by common priorities. The aim here is to bring together patent applications and granted patents that cover the same technical content.

In a simple patent family, the members share exactly the same priorities. The family-building process will always include the first filing. That is why, in Espacenet, even a first filing is indicated as having a priority (identical to the application number of the first filing), although this will not be indicated on the patent document itself. Divisional applications will also be part of the simple family because they do not disclose new technical content.

In the case of multiple priorities, the EPO’s databases group the members of the simple patent family (“also published as” in Espacenet or “equivalents”) by identifying all priorities that are first filings or equivalent to first filings. An application is considered a first filing whenever no priority has been claimed.

Extended patent families
The INPADOC extended patent family is a collection of related patent applications, linked by priorities in any way possible, or by any other means, such as references to earlier applications mentioned on the first page of the patent document (as is the case when PCT applications enter the national or regional phase). The aim here is to include all documents that describe the same or related inventions, covering the same or similar technical content.

This means that divisional applications and US continuations will also be taken into account. When Espacenet displays the bibliographic information for a patent application or granted patent, all references to earlier applications are shown as “priorities”. US continuations-in-part will be part of the extended patent family, but will be considered first filings (and start new simple patent families) because new technical content is added.

Managing the priority picture
To ensure the correct building of patent families, the EPO has to “manage” the priority picture, and will make certain priorities “active” or “inactive”. “Active” priorities are the only priorities actually considered when building simple families, while “inactive” priorities are important for reference, but do not really influence the simple family building routine. The EPO has developed complex business rules to do this, which have been fine-tuned over the years.

Applicants may also not claim priorities if the 12-month period is exceeded, or for certain other reasons. In these cases, the Office’s automated processes will not detect the documents, because they do not share priorities.

Nevertheless, if an examiner decides that applications belong together, the Office will bring them together (“technical families”). The criterion for a technical merge is that the publications should have identical descriptions and drawings.
SACEPO/PDI: the official voice of the user community

SACEPO stands for Standing Advisory Committee before the EPO, and PDI denotes a special sub-committee mandated to study patent documentation and information issues. The 2018 meeting is scheduled to take place in Vienna on 22 March.

Two-thirds of the SACEPO/PDI sub-committee members are nominated by various organisations around Europe, with the remaining third nominated by the President of the EPO. The table shows the current list of members, whose mandate will expire at the end of 2020.

The EPO encourages SACEPO/PDI members to canvass the organisations they represent, and to use the meeting to focus on their organisation’s position on strategic questions.

So, if you have a view about patent information that you would like to express, don’t hesitate to contact one of the SACEPO/PDI members.

epo.org/about-us/office/sacepo/members/pdi.html

Susan Helliwell
SACEPO/PDI member 1995-2018

It was with great sadness that editors heard the news of the death of Susan Helliwell on 2 March 2018. Susan had been a member of SACEPO/PDI since 1995 and had just been nominated to serve on the committee again until 2020. Critical and highly professional, her contribution to the meetings will be greatly missed.
Using EPO patent information for technology analysis: CAR T-cells

Patent information can reveal trends and help us understand how a technology is developing and who the main players are. To illustrate this, the EPO commissioned a study in the field of CAR T-cells. The results of the study are outlined in the following article.

Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell immunotherapy is an emerging technique in the treatment of some types of cancer. T-cells fight infection and are part of the human body’s immune system. T-cells cannot, however, fight all types of disease because the receptor chemicals on the T-cells’ surfaces do not recognise cancer cells, for example. They can, however, be extracted from a patient’s blood, and genetically modified to produce new types of receptor molecules – the chimeric antigen receptor molecules – which can recognise cancer cells. The T-cells modified with the chimeric antigen receptors are re-introduced into the body, where they multiply and can destroy the cancer cells they recognise.

In order to illustrate the usefulness of EPO patent data, Björn Jürgens (CITPIA, PATLIB Centre Andalusia) and Nigel Clarke (EPO Vienna) studied the evolution of CAR T-cell immunotherapy in terms of patenting activity. EPO examiners Fredrik Åslund, Peter Bumb and Dominique Manu gave advice on the choice of CPC classifications.

The study also revealed that by analysing EPO patent data it was possible to:

– Illustrate the emergence of CAR T-cell technology
– Identify the current most prolific inventors
– Identify who collaborates with whom in the CAR T-cell world

This study is encouraging in the depth of insight it produced. It shows what is possible with good analysis, backed up by graphics and visualisations which present complex data in an understandable way.

Using the results of the study it is possible to predict likely trends for CAR T-cell technology.

The EPO intends to produce similar reports on different technical fields in the future. Write to the editors if you have any suggestions for suitable technologies.

Figure 1 shows the growth of patent applications in CAR T-cell technology. Figure 2 shows the geographical locations of origin of CAR T-cell inventions and innovations.
Evidence-based decision-making

IP Statistics for Decision Makers conference in Mexico
The 2017 edition of the annual IPSDM conference took place in Mexico City. It was organised by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO), the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

The conference was opened by Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal, Secretary of Economy, Mexico, who stressed the importance of IPRs and innovation for the Mexican and global economies. Speakers from academia and public institutions discussed how intellectual property data, statistics and analyses can be used to support decision-making in the public and private sector.

European trade – impact of patents
Antoine Dechezleprêtre and co-authors assessed the role of the European patent system in supporting trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) in the European Single Market, with a focus on high-tech manufacturing industries. They provided evidence that in EU countries incoming trade and FDI flows in high-tech manufacturing industries are sensitive to patent protection and that the fragmented European patent system prevents the single market for technologies from realising its full potential. They estimated that incoming high-IP trade could increase by 5% and FDI flows by 29% as a result of an alignment of EU countries on the best existing standards of patent protection. They argued that the introduction of the unitary patent could enhance technology transfer into and within Europe, and lead to significant productivity growth for EU countries.

Effect of accession to the EPC
Bronwyn H. Hall and Christian Helmers used the accession of a number of countries to the European Patent Convention between 2000 and 2008 to analyse the impact of the introduction of a regional patent system on lower and middle income economies. They established that resident applicant filings at national patent offices remained largely unchanged and patent filings with the EPO increased slightly after accession, while non-resident applicants, mostly from the chemical and pharmaceutical areas, largely shifted from the national patent offices to the EPO.

Low-quality patents – impact and countermeasures
Mark Schankerman looked at the screening mechanisms used to identify low-quality patents, which impose costs on society by negatively impacting R&D transactions and raising consumer prices. He used a framework that makes it possible to analyse the joint roles of patent examination, patenting fees and court review. His calculations showed that high-quality examination and higher front-loading of fees, together with affordable patent litigation, are the most important factors for improving patent quality and welfare.

Patents and trade secrets
Based on raw data from the Community Innovation Survey co-ordinated by Eurostat, Nathan Wajsman and Francisco Garcia-Valero found that innovating firms typically use both patents and trade secrets to protect their innovations. Strong price competition has a negative effect on patenting, but a positive effect on keeping knowledge in-house. Both instruments are used for inventions new to the whole market, but trade secrets are preferred for inventions that are new to the firm only.

Trade mark depletion
Barton Beebe and Jeanne C. Fromer analysed trade mark applications and found worrying indications that a large proportion of the pronounceable words with positive connotations had already been claimed. This raises the intriguing question whether we are running out of valid trade marks.

Databases
Benjamin Mitra-Kahn from IP Australia presented the beta version of TM-link, a new global trade mark database containing more than 10 million trade mark entries. Andy A. Toole presented PatentsView, the USPTO’s new data visualisation and analysis platform.

PATSTAT remains the world’s reference database for patent statistics. The PATSTAT user day and OECD’s STI Scoreboard prelaunch event were well received by conference participants.

More information can be found at oecd.org/site/stipatents/.

IPSDM 2018 will be hosted by the EUIPO in Alicante.

Effect of accession to the EPC

Evidence from Accession to the European Patent Convention
Rudyk, & Cristina Rujan

Damien Dussaux, Keith Maskus, Yann Ménère, Ilja Rudyk, & Cristina Rujan

Low-quality patents – impact and countermeasures

Patents and trade secrets

Trade mark depletion

Databases

1) Patents, trade and foreign direct investment in the European Union, Antoine Dechezleprêtre, Damien Dussaux, Keith Maskus, Yann Ménère, Ilja Rudyk, & Cristina Rujan
3) Screening for Patent Quality: An Economic Framework for Policy Analysis, Mark Schankerman
4) Protecting innovation through trade secrets and patents: Determinants for European Union firms, Nathan Wajsman & Francisco Garcia-Valero
5) Are we running out of trademarks? An empirical study of trademark depletion and conjection, Barton Beebe & Jeanne C. Fromer
7) www.patentsview.org
8) www.oecd.org/sti/scoreboard.htm
Academic Research Programme

The EPO Academic Research Programme provides financial support for rigorous research projects that set out to produce empirical evidence with relevant implications for policymakers and business in Europe.

The grants will be awarded to a limited number of well-defined projects addressing a specific question within seven thematic areas spanning various disciplinary fields including economics, IP management, IP law and data sciences. Interdisciplinary projects will also be considered:

- Patents and the European market for technology
- Patent services and new IP businesses
- IP strategy and IP management
- Use of patents by SMEs and universities in Europe
- Patents, artificial intelligence and the Fourth Industrial Revolution
- Patents and climate change mitigation technologies
- Advanced use of PATSTAT, patent searching, and analytics (e.g. classification, potential of IP linked open data)

Deadline for submissions: 30 April 2018
epo.org/learning-events/materials/academic-research-programme

Publication of supplementary European search reports in XML

The EP authority file contains a complete list of all published EP patent documents including A4 documents, i.e. supplementary European search reports. The latter are published along with international (PCT) applications whose international search report was not drawn up by the European Patent Office when they enter the European phase (Euro-PCT bis applications). As over half of all European patent applications are international PCT applications, about 1000 supplementary European search reports are now published each week.

To date none of these documents has been available on the Publication Server and only some have been available on Espacenet. The only certain way to consult them has been through file inspection in the European Patent Register; however, the PDF documents there are images, not machine-readable structured data.

An EP A4 document

Since mid-2012, European search reports in the case of A1 to A3 documents have been published in machine-readable XML format, which makes automatic analysis and processing much easier. The plan is to make supplementary European search reports available in the same format. At the end of 2017, a first set of these A4 documents (publication weeks 36 to 48, 2017) was made available to users of raw-data products. All supplementary search reports published since 1994 can be made available in ST.36/XML format and PDF to interested parties. It is also possible that users of commercial patent-information platforms will come across the newly uploaded A4 documents when searching. We envisage that supplementary search reports will be introduced into the European Patent Office’s publication systems in phases. As they get published, the reports will appear in Espacenet and in the Publication Server.

In addition, efforts are being made to make content dating back to 1979 available in machine-readable XML format. However, many search reports published before 1994 cannot be retrieved because they were not uploaded into the Register for file inspection and the paper files in question have since been destroyed.
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway and Sweden join the Federated Register service

2018 started with the good news that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway and Sweden have joined the Federated Register service.

Just three years on from its launch, the Federated Register service already numbers 26 participating states: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

Available within the European Patent Register (epo.org/register), the Federated Register allows you to retrieve reliable and up-to-date bibliographic and legal status information for granted European patents once they have entered the “national phase” in these 26 countries and view them together in a table.

Information on the content provided by each national patent office currently integrated into the Federated Register is available on the EPO website.1

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Bosnia and Herzegovina: the first extension state to join

Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a member state of the European Patent Organisation, so it is important to explain why it is participating in the Federated Register. The reason is that it has signed an "extension agreement" with the Organisation. Between 1993 and 2009 the Organisation signed agreements of this kind with a number of European states.

Extension agreements offer applicants a way to obtain patent protection in the countries concerned, simply by submitting a request and paying the extension fee in due time. The European patent will then in principle have the same effect as national applications and patents in the respective country, will be subject to national law and will enjoy essentially the same protection as the patents that the EPO grants for its member states.

Extension can currently be requested for

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Montenegro

Previously, Albania, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia were extension states, but these are now full member states of the Organisation. Since February this year, the Federated Register has been covering both extensions and regular European patents for these countries (before February 2018, only European patents for which they were a regular designated state were covered).

Since 2010, the Organisation has concluded further agreements, known as "validation agreements", providing for European patents to have effect in non-contracting states. These are not limited to European countries.

Validation can currently be requested for

- Morocco
- Moldova
- Tunisia

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1 epo.org/searching-for-patents/legal/register/documentation/federated-register.html
Pre-grant opposition in India vs third-party observations at the EPO: procedural differences and information retrieval

This is the first part of a multi-part series for Patent Information News that will compare aspects of procedures in Asian countries with their equivalents in the European grant procedure and show you where to find the corresponding patent information. This first article deals with Indian pre-grant opposition, third-party observations and retrieval of the respective patent information in the official sources.

Procedural differences

The ways in which third parties can influence the destiny of a patent application vary across jurisdictions. In the European patent grant procedure, it starts with the possibility to file observations immediately after the publication of the application. This option remains open during any pending proceedings before the EPO. Even though the observations – including any filed by anonymous parties – are taken into consideration, third parties do not become party to the proceedings (ex parte procedure).

This is not the case in the Indian patent procedure, where the parties become party to the proceedings after filing a pre-grant opposition (inter partes procedure). Pre-grant opposition is called a “representation” in India and a “representation” can be filed by any person at any time before the patent is granted. Pre-grant opposition in India can lead to rejection of the representation, amendment of the application documents or complete refusal of the patent application.

The table above compares third-party observations at the EPO with the Indian pre-grant opposition proceedings.

Sources of information

The European Patent Register is the most complete and up-to-date source of publicly available procedural information on European patent applications. In the Register, you can follow a particular application as it passes through each stage of the EPO’s granting procedure, including information related to third-party observations. Whenever third parties submit observations, it is visible in the “Event history” section under “Observations by third parties” together with the date the event was processed by the system (see Figure 1).

For observations filed by third parties during the examination phase, the event will be also visible in the “About this file” view, in the examination procedure section (see Figure 2).

For a detailed look at the documentation submitted by third parties and all the publically available communications related to third-party observations, consult the online file inspection under “All documents”.

(Note: it is not possible to limit your search in the Register to applications where third-party observations have been filed.)

For Indian patent applications, the Indian Patent Office provides access to details of the various procedures
in its official InPASS database. The indication that an opposition has been filed appears when you perform a search in the Application Status section. Here, you can follow the “Order(s)/Decision(s)” link (see Figure 3).

To view the documents submitted in connection with the pre-grant opposition (“representation”), visit the online file inspection available by clicking on “View documents”.

It is also possible to search for Indian applications subject to pre-grant opposition. To do this, go to the Controller’s decisions database, enter “25(1)” (the number of the Indian Patent Act covering pre-grant opposition) as your search criterion, and then perform a search (see Figure 5).

The result list containing all pre-grant opposition cases will appear, starting with the oldest one.

Click the application number to display the decision.

For more on this topic or any questions on patents in India, contact the EPO’s Asian Patent Information Services at asiainfo@epo.org.

This table does not include statistics on European patent applications filed via the PCT route (Euro-PCT applications). These are published by WIPO and are not made available by the EPO unless they are in a language other than English, French or German. Currently about 60% of all European patent applications are Euro-PCT filings.

European patent publications
January – March 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly average 2018</th>
<th>Total Jan–March 2018</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EP-A documents</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP-A1</td>
<td>1 482</td>
<td>19 267</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>66</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>–5.6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1 548</td>
<td>20 129</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage EP-A1 of total A1+A2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP-A3</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>12 099</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP-B1+B2</td>
<td>2 018</td>
<td>26 229</td>
<td>–1.8%</td>
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News from Asia

New entry point for online databases on SIPO’s official website
In early 2018, a new Government Service Platform was launched on the Chinese version of the State Intellectual Property Office’s (SIPO’s) website at sipo.gov.cn/zwfwpt/. Aimed at domestic users, this platform is a combined entry point to SIPO’s various services, such as the e-filing platform, legal services and online databases for patent information searches. Users can easily find links to all related forms and fees, along with background information on procedures (domestic, PCT and PPH) and legal texts in this one-stop shop. Information relating to patent agents, including an agency search tool, is also available via this platform.

Foreign users of the Chinese interfaces of the various online databases (official gazettes, patent search system, file inspection) will find links to them on this combined platform. The individual URLs remain unchanged, so users can create bookmarks to access these sources direct. The EPO’s step-by-step guides for searching SIPO’s online databases at epo.org/asia have been updated to reflect these changes.

IP cases at Korean Patent Court to be heard entirely in English
Under a recent amendment to the Court Organization Act, the Korean Patent Court will establish an International Litigation Chamber in which IP cases may be heard entirely in English or other foreign languages. The new regulation stipulates that non-Korean parties may submit court briefs and written and oral arguments in English without having to provide a Korean translation.

The Patent Court is the court of second instance for decisions rendered by the Intellectual Property Trial and Appeal Board with regard to appeals against a decisions to reject, invalidation trials, opposition proceedings and other cases. Since 2016, it has also been the court of second instance for patent infringement cases initiated at one of the five Central District Courts.

In about 40% of all cases at the Patent Court, there is at least one foreign party involved. The new regulations should improve foreign parties’ accessibility to court proceedings. The amended law is expected to enter into force in summer 2018.

Taiwanese patent term extension information available in English
The Taiwan Patent Office (TIPO) has recently made it possible to retrieve patent term extension information via the English-language interface of its TWPAT database at http://twpat2.tipo.gov.tw/tipotwoc/tipotwekm. According to the Taiwan Patent Act, in cases where prior government approval is necessary before a patent can be exploited, TIPO may grant an extension of the patent term for pharmaceutical or agrochemical patents for a maximum of five years. These extensions are recorded in the “transaction data” section of the patent gazette.

In the TWPAT database, a direct link to “transaction data” has recently been added to the English bibliographic information. Where an extension of term has been requested or recorded, users can follow the above-mentioned link to access the related details in English (generated by a machine translation tool). This “transaction data” is updated three times per month.

A new step-by-step guide has been added to the EPO’s Asian patent information webpages at epo.org/asia.

Indian Patent Office’s design data now available in Designview
As of 19 January 2018, design data from the Indian Patent Office is available for searching in the Designview database. The database was launched in 2012 and now contains design data from 63 participating offices. The recent integration of Indian data was supported by the EU-INDIA Intellectual Property Cooperation (IPC-EUI) project.

For more detailed information, please visit the news section of the Designview website at tmdn.org/tmdsview-web/welcome.

JPO applicants may obtain search reports prior to publication
As in other Asian patent offices, the search for a patent application in Japan only takes place once the applicant files a request for substantive examination. There is, however, now an alternative for applicants who want to have a search report at an earlier stage.

Currently, three of the registered external search organisations performing prior art searches on behalf of the JPO provide such search reports for a fee. This makes it possible for applicants to order search reports before the JPO starts substantive examination.
The quality of the search reports provided to applicants is equal to the quality of those used by JPO examiners. Applicants may order these search reports on condition that the application has been filed at the JPO but substantive examination has not yet been requested.

Based on these search reports, applicants may choose either to have their inventions examined or to withdraw the application before publication and thus keep it confidential. They may also obtain a patent right faster by requesting accelerated examination based on the search report. The JPO will reduce the examination fee by 20% if applicants submit a search report issued by these organisations.

More information at: jpo.go.jp/tetuzuki_e/t_tokkyo_e/touroku_chousa_e.htm.

For more news from Asia, see the Updates section on the EPO website at epo.org/asia.

**EVENTS**

**East meets West forum on Asian patent information**

19/20 April 2018, Vienna, Austria

Monitoring recent developments in patent information from China, Japan, Korea and emerging markets and deciphering patent documents in non-Western languages are just two of the many questions that will be addressed at the annual East meets West forum on Asian patent information hosted by the European Patent Office.

During the two-day event, participants will get an update on hot topics such as

- Artificial Intelligence – role and impact on Asian patent information searching
- Crowd searching – experiences, advantages and risks?
- IP in the context of China’s "Belt and Road" initiative

Various interactive sessions will allow participants to connect with representatives from industry and academia, information professionals and searchers, patent attorneys and data providers from all over the world. There will be plenty of opportunity for one-on-one discussions and networking with experts from patent offices from Asia and beyond.

Have a look at the programme at epo.org/emw or contact asiainfo@epo.org for more information.

**TRAINING**

**Webinar schedule 2018**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>14.00</td>
<td>Federated Register/Global Dossier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 April</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Business use of patent information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Catch up! – patent information news &amp; updates</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 May</td>
<td>10.30</td>
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<td>Accessing court decisions on patents across Europe with ECLI</td>
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<td>Patent monitoring and alerting with EPO tools</td>
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<td>10 Oct</td>
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<td>INPADOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Dec</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Catch up! – patent information news &amp; updates</td>
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The EPO’s patent information webinars are free of charge. The table shows the list for the rest of 2018.

To register, go to epo.org/pi-training.

**Recordings of webinars**

If you miss a webinar that you were interested in, don’t worry: most of them are available as recordings for up to a month after they have taken place. Simply go to epo.org/pi-videos.

For more information on all these events, see epo.org/pi-training.
Save the date – EPO Patent Information Conference 2018

The EPO Patent Information Conference will be the place to be this autumn for anyone who deals with patent data in their work.

The conference, which will be held in Brussels from 12 to 14 November 2018 (with training courses 11 November), is being organised in co-operation with the Belgian Patent Office.

A full conference programme and information on how to register will be available in June 2018.

Go to epo.org/pi-conference to register for e-mail alerts about this event.

CEPIUG 10th Anniversary Conference

Milan, Italy, 9–11 September 2018

CEPIUG, the Confederacy of European Patent Information User Groups, has announced that it will be holding a conference in Milan this September to celebrate its 10th anniversary. For more information, see cepiug.org.

EPO Discussion forum

For help, support and exchanging ideas with other users and EPO experts, the EPO Discussion forum offers you easy access to a wealth of information and discussions on all the EPO’s patent information products and services.

It is easy – it is free!

epo.org/forums