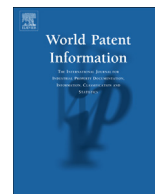




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News from the EPO

A selection of material from the President's blogs, press releases, Patent Information News and the EPO Newsletters

1. PCT authorities committed to enhancing quality



In February, the EPO had the pleasure of hosting the 20th session of the PCT Meeting of International Authorities (MIA) in Munich. 2013 is a significant year, with the 35th anniversary of the first ever PCT filing and the 40th anniversary of the signing, in 1973, of the European Patent Convention. There have always been strong links between the two patent systems, which were negotiated and adopted in parallel. The PCT was even enshrined in the European Patent Convention.

The PCT, which today has 146 member states across the globe, continues to be praised by users as the best international platform for protecting patents. For the EPO, too, the PCT is a top priority. The EPO established more than 72,000 international search reports in 2012 and is the main provider among International Search Authorities. To ensure that our services continue to meet the expectations of users, especially with regard to quality, efficiency and timeliness, we presented last year a set of concrete proposals for strengthening the PCT system. The MIA, bringing together 20 years of experience in the efforts of PCT authorities to improve the PCT, is a particularly appropriate forum for discussing these suggestions.

In the view of the EPO, emphasis should be placed on the consistency issue in PCT procedures, and on raising the quality of PCT products. We have already submitted a proposal for the development of a PCT metrics framework and the regular publication of quality reports by all ISAs to facilitate the monitoring of progress. I think that the PCT authorities, which have a specific mandate and status, conferred by the Assembly of the PCT Union, have a particular duty to address quality at the highest level. I am sure this work will also support the progress of the discussions on the PCT Roadmap currently being conducted by the PCT Working Group in Geneva.

These efforts at international level complement the EPO's internal endeavours to improve its PCT products and services in

accordance with the high expectations of our users. This aim is especially reflected in the EPO's IT Roadmap, which identifies PCT support as a main objective.

Benoît Battistelli
President
(From one of the President's blogs)

2. A record year for the EPO

The number of patent filings at the EPO originating from the 38 EPO member states reached a new peak in 2012, beating the previous record set in 2008.

"The growth of filings from European businesses is a clear indication that industry here has opted to innovate its way out of the economic crisis", EPO President Benoît Battistelli said, as he presented the EPO's 2012 annual results in Brussels on 6 March 2013.

The patent filings of today are shaping the innovations of tomorrow. These results confirm that Europe is not only a prime location for R&D activities but also valued as a stronghold of innovation by both technology generating and exporting companies."

Last year, the EPO received a total of 257,744 patent filings from all over the world. This represents a 5.2% increase over 2011 (244,934) and sets a new record. The EPO also published 65,687 granted patents, 5.8% more than in 2011 (62,115).

2.1. Europe consolidates its position as strong technology region

36.5% of all filings came from the 38 EPO member states (2011: 37.5%). The top five countries in 2012 were the US (24.6%), Japan (20.1%), Germany (13.3%), China (7.3%), and Korea (5.6%). The most active European countries after Germany were France (4.7%), Switzerland (3.2%), the UK (2.6%) and the Netherlands (2.5%) – see also [Fig. 1](#).

With 2.3% growth, the number of filings from Europe has recovered well from the slight decline in 2011 (–0.9%). The steepest growth rates, however, again came from Chinese (+11.1%), Korean (+9.3%) and Japanese (+9.1%) companies. Accordingly, Asian countries accounted for more than half of total growth – see also [Fig. 2](#).

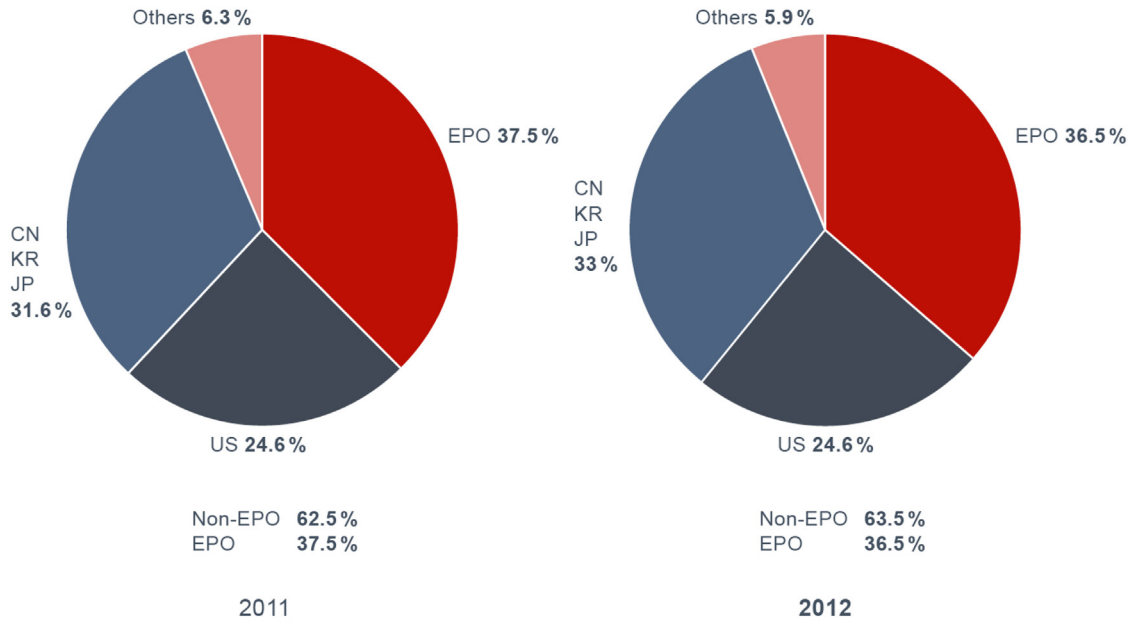
The EPO also published a new record of granted patents: 65,687. The lion's share of 49.7% (2011: 52.5%) again went to European companies, whose total of 32,628 was more than the grants to US (14 605) and Chinese, Korean and Japanese firms (15,509) taken together.

2.2. Europe dominant in automotive sector and environmental technologies

The major technology fields are shown in [Fig. 3](#).

European companies were leading applicants in eight of the ten most active technology fields – see [Fig. 4](#).

Patent filings from across the world

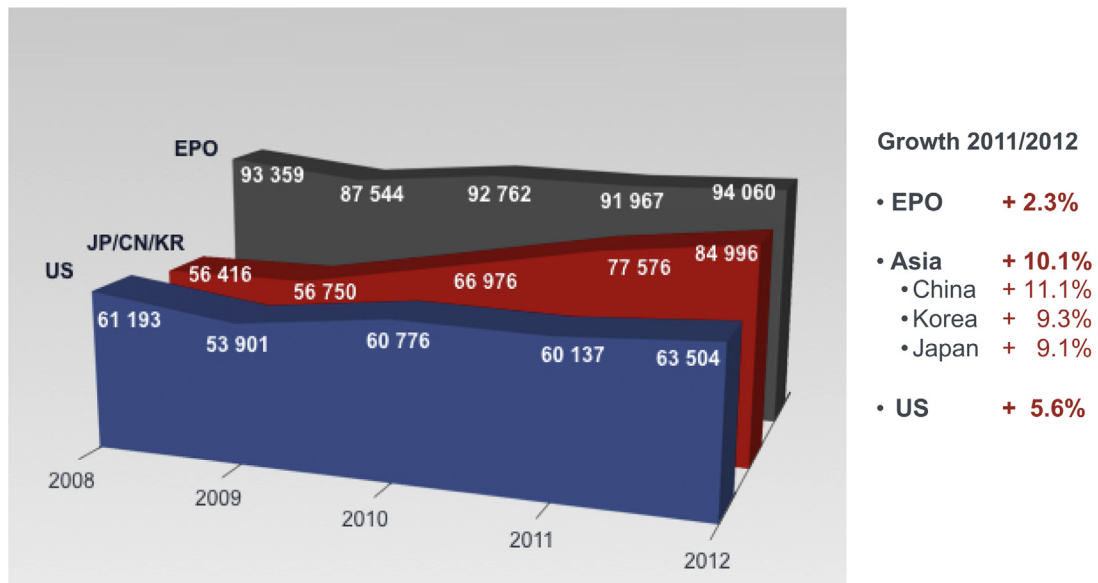


CN: People's Republic of China (China)
 KR: Republic of Korea (South Korea)
 JP: Japan
 US: USA
 EPO: the 38 member states of the European Patent Organisation

Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO

Fig. 1. Patent filings from across the world.

Boom from Asia fuels growth at the EPO



CN: People's Republic of China (China)
 KR: Republic of Korea (South Korea)
 JP: Japan
 US: USA
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Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO

Fig. 2. Boom from Asia fuels growth at the EPO.

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