

European Patents (EP) Coverage

Patent Office Details

Headquarters:

European Patent Office
Erhardtstrasse 27
D-80331 Munich
Germany

Other Offices:

Branch at The Hague / Département de la Haye
Patentlaan 2
NL-2288 Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Web: <https://www.epo.org>

Berlin sub-office / Département de Berlin
Gitschiner Strasse 103
D - 10969 Berlin
Germany

Kinds of Protection

Patents of Invention	Granted for a term of 20 years from submission date. Supplementary Protection Certificates are applied to the individual designations in member states
Extensions	Provisions for extension depend on the national laws of the individual countries

Convention & Treaty Membership

The European Patent Organization will recognize priority rights established under the International Convention. Applications filed first in the European Patent Office can generate priority rights under the International Convention. The European Patent Convention makes provision for acceptance of those applications filed under the procedures of the PCT and PCT applications should designate the individual countries and show that filing is through the EPO.

Filing for Patents

European patent applications may be filed either in Munich, at its branch in The Hague, or at the sub-office in Berlin. Applications may also be filed at the national office providing national law permits this. When an application is filed in a national office, that patent office is obliged to advise the Munich office immediately and to pass the application to Munich within four months of filing or 14 months from the priority date.

Under the *International Convention*, when claiming priority at the date of filing, the applicant must state date and priority country and priority documents must be supplied within 16 months of the priority date. Under the PCT Chapters I and II, international applications designating the European Patent Organization must be filed with the EPO within 31 months of the international filing date, or if priority is claimed, within 31 months of the priority date.

Applications must be filed in one of the European Patent Office's official languages, i.e. English, German or French. Contracting countries which have national languages other than these can file in the national language but must supply a translation within three months of filing but not later than 13 months from the priority date.

Applicants must designate the countries in which the patent is sought. Recently EP applications have automatically listed all contracting states as Designated States. The applicant does not have to make a final selection until six months of the date on which the *European Patents Bulletin* mentions the publication of the European Search Report.

The European Patent Organization comprises the following member states as of December 2020:

Albania	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus
Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany
Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Ireland	Italy	Latvia
Liechtenstein	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Monaco	Netherlands
North Macedonia	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Romania	San Marino
Serbia	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland
Turkey	United Kingdom				

European Patents can be extended to or validated in the following countries

Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Moldova	Montenegro	Morocco	Tunisia
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PCT applications designating EP and passed to the EPO for examination are assigned an EP application and publication number, but no specification is published if the PCT application was in English, French or German.

Where a PCT application transferred to the EPO is identical to a European application, apart from designated states, the two applications are consolidated and the second publication number is abandoned.

Applications are examined for form, novelty, patentability, utility and inventive step. The application is examined for formalities at The Hague. The applicant has six months from the publication date of the search report within which to request examination. If examination is requested, the application is transferred to Munich, although it is possible that some applications will have the preliminary stages of examination conducted in the national patent office. Opposition can be filed within nine months from the date of grant. Some countries require the filing of a translation of the granted patent (or the claims thereof) into their own language. In some cases a translation of a granted European Patent in French or German into English is accepted.

Eighteen months from the filing date or from the priority date if claimed, the application is published as the A1 (with a Search Report) or A2 (without a Search Report) specification, in one of the three official languages, but with the title given in all three languages. Delayed European Search Reports for the A2 specification are published as A3 documents, comprising the first page of the specification and the delayed Search Report. Applications filed via the PCT route may have Supplementary Search Report (A4 document) published; where the PCT International Search has not been effected by the EPO or another EPO-approved authority. The granted patent lists the countries (contracting states) in which fees for protection for the invention have been paid; these are known as Designated States.

When a European patent application is granted, it is published as the EP-B patent with the claims translated into the other two official languages, in addition to being in the language of the specification.

After grant and any opposition, a granted European Patent is treated as a national patent in each designated state. It can in any designated state lapse through failure to pay maintenance fees or through failure to meet any other requirement, such as the need to file a translation. Lapse or judicial revocation postgrant in a designated state will not affect the status of the designation in any other state.

Unitary patents - from June 2023, after grant of the European patent, the patent proprietor can request unitary effect for the territory of the participating EU Member States having ratified the Unitary Patent Court (UPC) agreement. The Unitary Patent provides uniform patent protection within the participating EU Member States.

DWPI Coverage

Coverage commenced with the first application published on 20 December 1978. Before update 199220 only the kind letter was included

Kind	DWPI Start Dates	
A	OPI application	20 December 1978
A1	OPI application with search report	Used from update 199221
A2	OPI application without search report	Used from update 199221
A3	Publication of search report	27 December 1991
A4	Supplementary search report	11 January 1989
A8	Corrected title page of A document	14 March 2001
A9	Complete reprint of A document	14 March 2001
B	Examined granted specification	9 January 1980
B1	Examined granted specification	Used from update 199220
B2	Amended specification	Used from update 199220
B3	After limitation procedure	23 July 2008
B8	Corrected title page of B document	14 March 2001
B9	Complete reprint of B document	14 March 2001
C0	Unitary patent	7 June 2023

In rare cases there can be two or more republications following limitation. In such cases the second and subsequent B3 documents are shown in DWPI as BA; BB; BC &c

DWPI Data elements	Notes
• Bibliographic data	
• English value-add title and abstract	
• Original title and/or abstract	Title (English, French, German) from 1978 onwards. Abstract: English 1978 to date; French & German 2000 to date
• Claims	Main claim 1984 to date
• Manual Codes	Chemical (CPI) and Electrical (EPI)
• Chemical Indexing	DCR, Chemical Fragmentation, Polymer and Markush

Numeration

All documents – A, A1, A2, A3, A4, A8, A9, B, B1, B2, B3, B8, B9, C0

Publication Numbers			
Original Data	Derwent Patent Search	Dialog	STN
EPNNNNNNN	EPnnnnnnn	EP nnnnnnn	EPnnnnnnn
EP0192305	EP192305	EP 192305	EP192305
EP1338987	EP1338987	EP 1338987	EP1338987

NNNNNNN 7 digit serial number
 nnnnnnn 1-7 digit serial number

Application Numbers*			
Original Data	Derwent Patent Search	Dialog	STN
YYNNNNNN.Z	EPYYYYNNNNNA	EP YYYNNNNNN	EPYYYY-NNNNNN
86200231.8	EP1986200231A	EP 1986200231	EP1986-200231
03250998.6	EP2003250998A	EP 2003250998	EP2003-250998

YY or YYYY 2 or 4 digits representing the year of application
 NNNNNN 6 digit serial number
 nnnnnnn 7 digit serial number
 Z Computer check digit after decimal point

**Full coverage of application numbers commenced from DWPI update 199216*