

Annual Report 2015

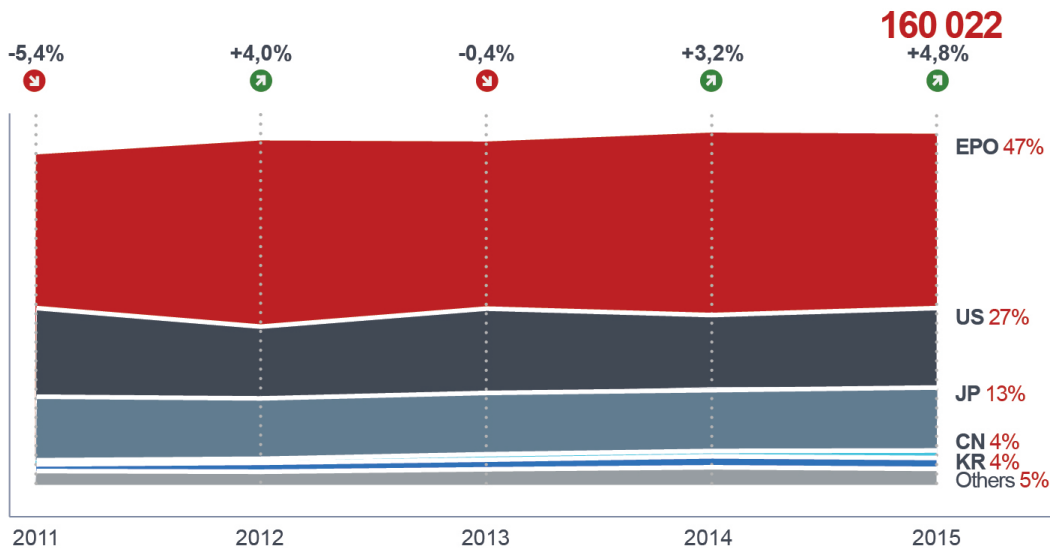
Statistics at a glance

Total Filings

European patent filings, which are an indicator of the overall demand for patent protection, grew again in 2015 (+1,6%) reaching a new high of nearly 279 000.

Total European patent applications

Patent applications at the EPO also grew in 2015, to reach 160 000. This was an increase of 4,8% over 2014, and the highest ever number. The total applications included close to 98 300 international Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) filings which entered the European regional phase (becoming European applications) in 2015, and some 61 700 European patent applications filed directly at the EPO under the European Patent Convention (EPC).

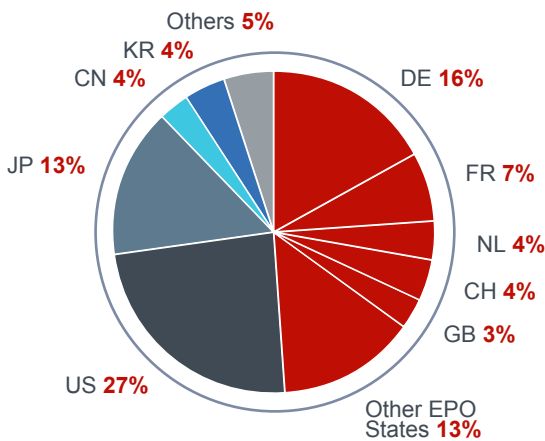


Analysis based on the European patent filings 2014-2015 (Direct European filings under the EPC and international filings under the PCT) The filings have been allocated to the country of residence of the first-named applicant. Figures are based on data from the EPO and WIPO (for PCT filings) as available on 26/01/2016. The PCT filings for 2015 are therefore estimates. EPO: the 38 member states of the European Patent Organisation, including EU28.

Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO (Direct European applications and International (PCT) applications entering the European phase). Applications have been allocated to the country of residence of the first-name applicant. EPO: the 38 member states of the European Patent Organisation, including EU28.

Origin of the European patent applications

Almost half of all European patent applications came from the EPO member states, followed by the US, Japan, South Korea and China. Applications from Europe grew modestly overall, with marked differences among the larger economies. The most significant growth came from Italy, the UK, Spain, the Netherlands and Switzerland. France grew moderately, while Germany and some of the Nordic countries filed fewer applications. The US and China were the main drivers of growth for applications. Growth from South Korea was moderate and Japanese companies filed fewer applications.



Country	2015	2014	Change
● US	42 692	36 668	16,4% ↗
● DE	24 820	25 633	-3,2% ↘
● JP	21 426	22 118	-3,1% ↘
● Other EPO states	21 271	20 790	2,3% ↗
● FR	10 781	10 614	1,6% ↗
● Others	7 675	7 486	2,5% ↗
● NL	7 100	6 874	3,3% ↗
● CH	7 088	6 910	2,6% ↗
● KR	6 411	6 166	4,0% ↗
● CN	5 721	4 680	22,2% ↗
● GB	5 037	4 764	5,7% ↗

Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO (Direct European applications and International (PCT) applications entering the European phase). Applications have been allocated to the country of residence of the first-name applicant.
 EPO: the 38 member states of the European Patent Organisation, including EU28

Top technical fields based on European patent applications

Medical technology was still the field where the most applications were filed and was also one of the fastest growing areas. Other fields with strong growth were Engines, pumps and turbines, Pharmaceuticals, Measurement and Computer technology. Only Transport and Electrical machinery and energy showed a slowdown in the number of applications.



Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO (Direct European applications and International (PCT) applications entering the European phase). Based on the WIPO IPC-Technology concordance. Methodology available at: http://www.wipo.int/ipstats/en/statistics/patents/pdf/wipo_ipc_technology.pdf

Ratio per million inhabitants based on European patent applications

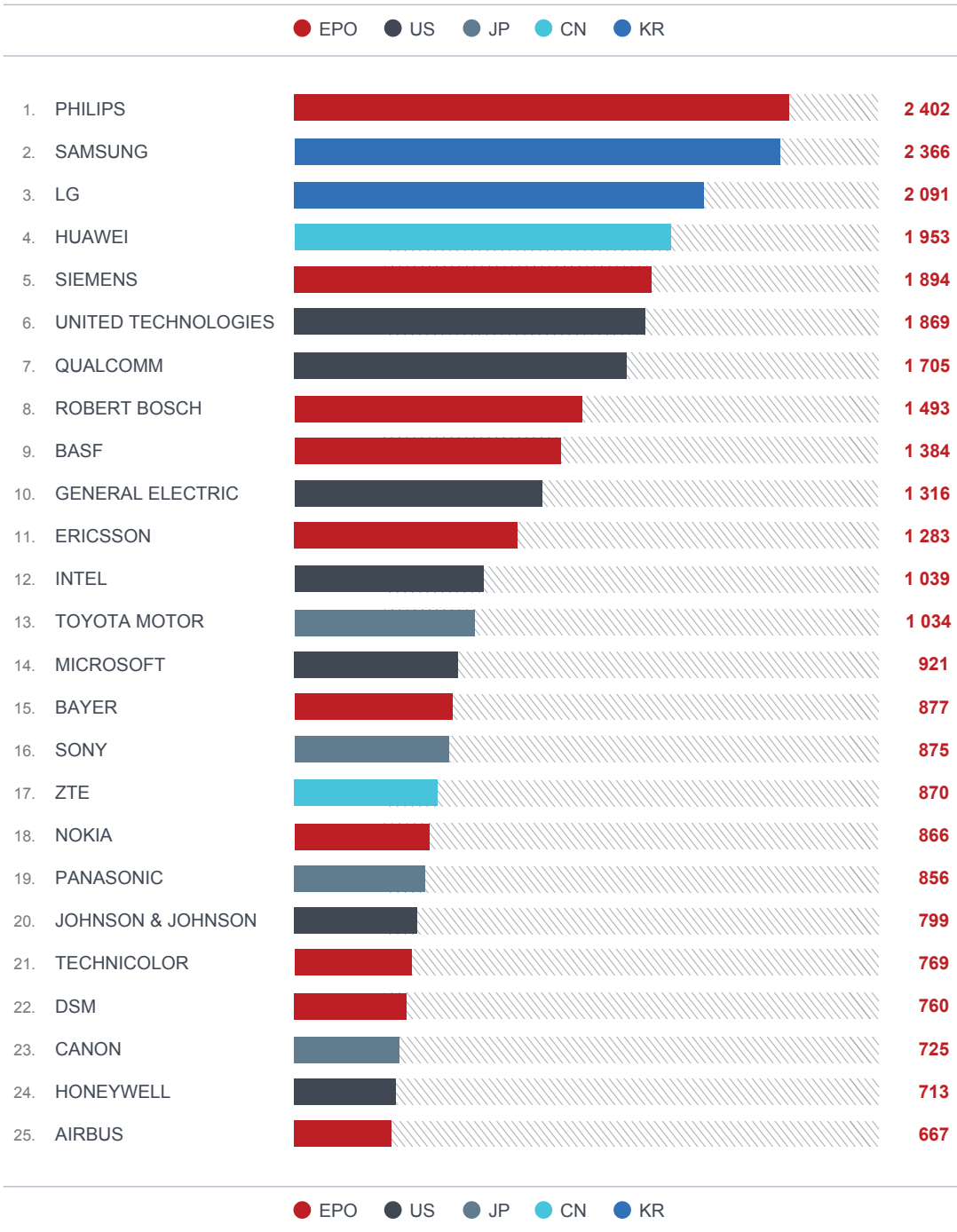
The inventiveness of Europe's leading economies is also reflected in the ratio of European patent applications to population. Switzerland (with 873 applications per million inhabitants), the Netherlands (419) and some of the Nordic countries topped the list again in 2015. Japan (169) was the first non-European country in the ranking with a ratio higher than the EU average (132), and also ahead of the US (133), South Korea (130) and China (4).

Rank	Country	Applications per mio inhabitants	Population	Applications
1	Switzerland	872.7	8 121 830	7 088
2	Netherlands	418.9	16 947 904	7 100
3	Sweden	391.7	9 801 616	3 839
4	Finland	365.2	5 476 922	2 000
5	Denmark	345.8	5 581 503	1 930
6	Germany	307.0	80 854 408	24 820
7	Austria	229.9	8 665 550	1 992
8	Belgium	180.2	11 323 973	2 041
9	Japan	168.8	126 919 659	21 426
10	France	162.0	66 553 766	10 781
11	Israel	136.7	8 049 314	1 100
12	United States	132.8	321 368 864	42 692
13	Korea, Republic of	130.5	49 115 196	6 411
14	Ireland	119.0	4 892 305	582
15	Norway	98.3	5 207 689	512
16	United Kingdom	78.6	64 088 222	5 037
17	Singapore	68.9	5 674 472	391
18	Italy	64.3	61 855 120	3 979
19	Slovenia	59.5	1 983 412	118
20	Chinese Taipei	53.8	23 415 126	1 260

Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO (Direct European applications and International (PCT) applications entering the European phase) Source of population figures: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base

Top 25 applicants with indication of origin

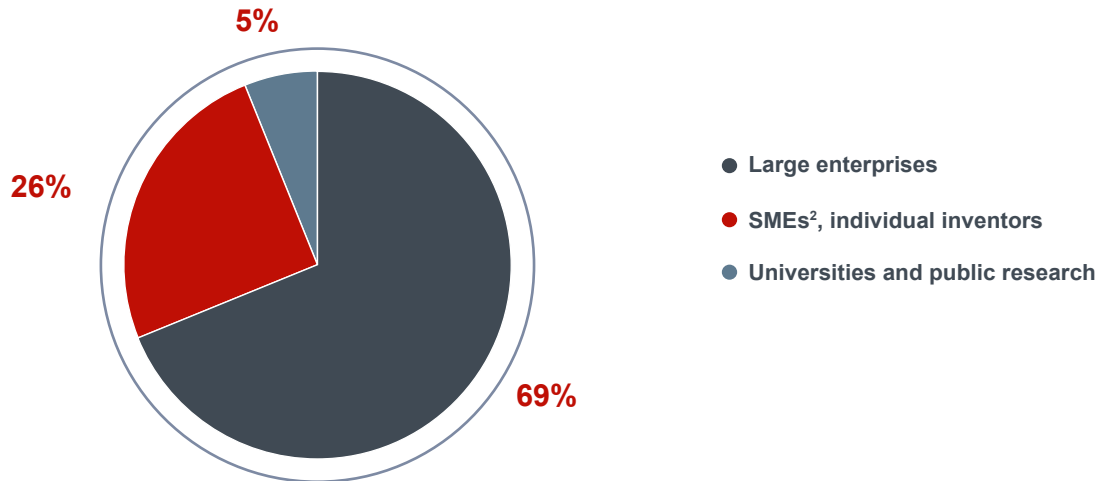
Philips moved into the top spot in the list of companies with the most patent applications at the EPO in 2015. Samsung ranked second, followed by LG, Huawei and Siemens. The top 10 was made up of four companies from Europe, three from the US, two from South Korea and one from China.



Analysis based on European patent applications filed with the EPO in 2015 (Direct European applications and International (PCT) applications entering the European phase in 2015)

Share of SMEs

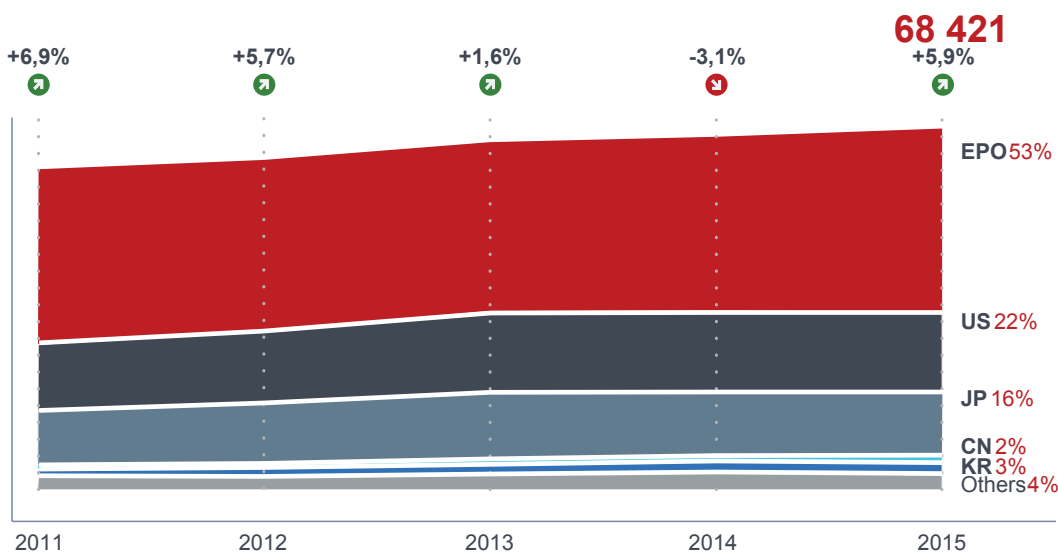
A breakdown by category of applicants requesting services from the EPO shows that 69% were carried out for large companies, 26% for SMEs and individual inventors, and 5% for universities and public research institutes. This shows that a significant proportion of applicants at the EPO are smaller entities.



1. Evaluation based on the analysis of a representative sample of patent applications treated by the EPO in 2015
2. This analysis bases on the definition of SMEs of the European Commission:http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm

Granted patents over 5 years

The EPO granted approximately 68 400 patents in 2015, an increase of nearly 6% over 2014, and the highest ever number.

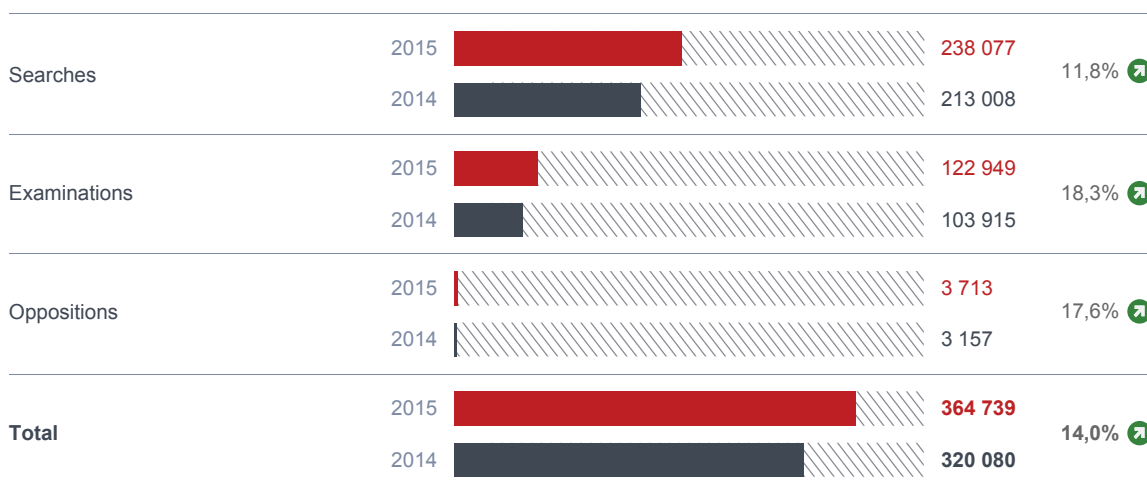


Analysis based on granted patents published. Patents have been allocated to the country of residence of the first-named patentee.

Production

Total products – Searches, examinations, oppositions

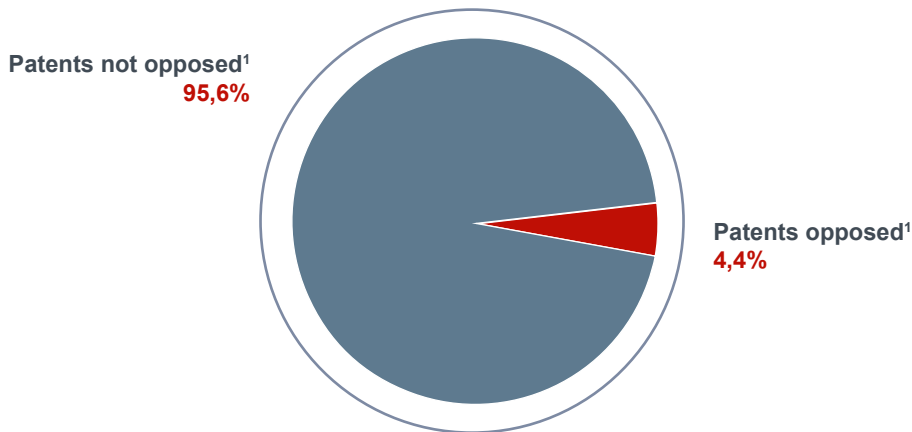
In response to the ongoing continued growth in demand for patent protection in Europe, the EPO has taken significant steps in the past few years to modernise its internal structures and increase efficiency, while further improving its patent quality. The 2015 annual results show that the reforms are paying off: The number of products delivered by EPO patent examiners grew by 14% in 2015 to 365 000.



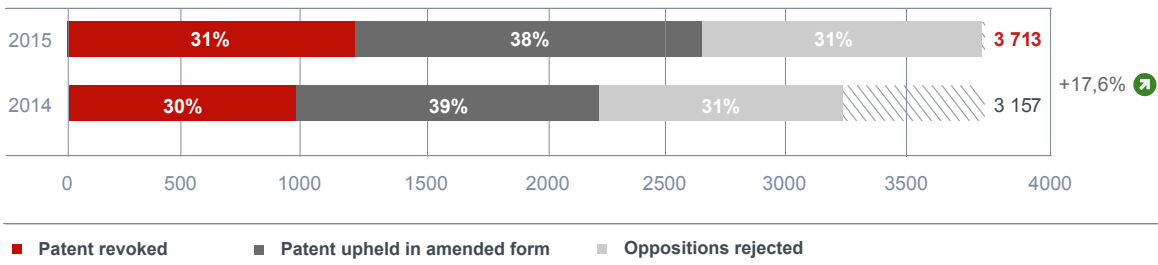
Decisions in Oppositions

The EPO offers a system of internal legal remedies to review its procedures and safeguard the quality of its patents. Anyone may oppose a European patent within a period of nine months from the mention of its grant. In 2015 the EPO issued around 3 713 opposition decisions and the opposition rate was 4,4%. In these cases, some 70% of the patents were upheld either as granted or in an amended form.

Patents opposed



Decisions in opposition cases



1) Oppositions must be filed at the EPO within nine months of the grant of the respective European patent. www.epo.org/applying/european/oppositions

Technical appeals

The EPO offers a system of internal legal remedies to review its procedures and safeguard the quality of its patents. Decisions reached in examination and opposition procedures may be appealed before the EPO's boards of appeal. In 2015, the EPO's technical boards of appeal settled 2 387 cases, 1,4% more than in 2014.

