

Press release

Number of patent applications in Europe hits all-time high

Filings at the European Patent Office grew by 11% in 2010 - Swedish applications grew by 2.3% - Dental implant pioneer nominated for prestigious European award

Brussels, 19 April 2011 -- The European Patent Office (EPO) received 235 000 European patent filings in 2010, up 11% from 2009, and the highest number ever in the Office's 34-year history. Some 39% of these filings originated from the 38 member states of the European Patent Organisation, 26% from the US, 18% from Japan and 5% from each of China and South Korea.

"The figures are clear: growth is back," said EPO President Benoît Battistelli. "In 2010 there was an increase in demand for patent protection from every region of the world. After a two-year slump, the EU and US are nearly back to their levels of patenting of before the crisis. This combined with a massive rise in patent applications from Asia — led by China — has made 2010 a record year at the EPO," he said.

Filings by country and region

With 92 500 or 39% of the total patent filings received by the EPO coming from the Organisation's 38 member states (EU 27: 82 800), the share in filings of the Europeans in their own market dropped slightly below the level of the previous year (2009: 41%/EU: 35%). Germany, however, once again clearly topped the table with 14% (33 100 applications; +8.5% over 2009), followed by France with 5% (11 700; +1%), and Switzerland, the UK and the Netherlands with approximately 3% each.

Swedish businesses filed 4 279 applications with the EPO, an increase of 2.3% on the previous year (2009: 4 182). Most applications from Sweden were filed in the areas of Information and Communication technologies, medical technology and transport (vehicles). Among the companies, Ericsson was leading the field with 1088 filings, followed by Sony Ericsson Mobile Communication (329) and Astra Zeneca (134).

Among non-European countries, the US and Japan were by far the largest countries of origin of European patent applications, with the US accounting for 26% (61 000 filings, +12%) of the total and Japan for 18% (42 000; +10%), whilst China and South Korea each accounted for 5%.

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There was an impressive growth in applications from South Korea (12 000; +21%) and especially China (13 000; +54%), which overtook Korea in number of applications.

European companies on top

Looking at individual company performance, European firms continue to be the champions of patent protection in their home market, with three European companies, Siemens (2 135 applications), Philips (1 765 applications) and BASF (1 707 applications) topping the list of most prolific applicants in 2010. The strong position of European industry in the EPO league table is underlined by the fact that out of the top 50 applicants, 21 are from Europe, followed by 16 from Asia and 12 from the US.

Medical technology leading field

All of the major technical fields saw a growth in EPO patent application filing in 2010. Medical technology led the pack with 10 500 applications, followed by computer technology (8 300 applications) and electrical machinery, apparatus and energy (8 200). The strongest growth rates were noted for biotechnology (7 400 applications; +42.6%), pharmaceuticals (6 700; +20%) and digital communication (8 000; +11.2%). The areas of telecommunications, transport and computers have not yet reached their 2008 (pre-crisis) levels.

Nomination for "European Inventor Award"

Underlining Sweden's strong position in medical technology, Per-Ingvar Brånemark was recently nominated as one of the 15 candidates for the prestigious European Inventor Award. Professor Brånemark is one of the pioneers of osseointegration, a method of dental treatment which creates a stable connection between the bone tissue and a titanium fixture that holds the implant. Today, this method is the gold standard of dental implantation globally. He was nominated in ten category "Lifetime Achievement". The award winners will be announced at a ceremony which takes place on 19 May in Budapest at the Academy of Science. The trophies will be remitted by the President of the EPO, Benoît Battistelli, and EU Commissioner Michel Barnier.



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Please find more information, photos, videos and TV footage about the European Inventor Award 2011:

- Nominees 2011
<http://www.epo.org/news-issues/european-inventor/finalists/2011.html>
- The Jury
<http://www.epo.org/news-issues/european-inventor/about-1/jury.html>
- Stock Clips
<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm?page=1&date=03/03/2011&institution=0#93909>
- Full TV Footage
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