

**- 32 Contracting states - Member countries of the European patent system**

- AT Austria
- BE Belgium
- BG Bulgaria
- CH Switzerland
- CY Cyprus
- CZ Czech Republic
- DE Germany
- DK Denmark
- EE Estonia
- ES Spain
- FI Finland
- FR France
- GB United Kingdom
- GR Greece
- HU Hungary
- IE Ireland
- IS Iceland
- IT Italy
- LI Liechtenstein
- LT Lithuania
- LU Luxembourg
- LV Latvia
- MC Monaco
- MT Malta
- NL Netherlands
- PL Poland
- PT Portugal
- RO Romania
- SE Sweden
- SI Slovenia
- SK Slovakia
- TR Turkey
- 5 Extension States**
- AL Albania
- BA Bosnia-Herzegovina
- HR Croatia
- MK former Yugoslav Rep of Macedonia
- RS Serbia

**- Top Filing Countries - European Patent Applications 2006 (2005)**

| Rank    | Country              | Filings       |
|---------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 (1)   | US                   | 34794 (32738) |
| 2 (2)   | Germany              | 24867 (23789) |
| 3 (3)   | Japan                | 22144 (21461) |
| 4 (4)   | France               | 8010 (8034)   |
| 5 (5)   | Netherlands          | 7237 (7799)   |
| 6 (6)   | Switzerland          | 5418 (5027)   |
| 7 (7)   | United Kingdom       | 4721 (4649)   |
| 8 (9)   | South Korea          | 4595 (3853)   |
| 9 (8)   | Italy                | 4197 (4199)   |
| 10 (10) | Sweden               | 2550 (2486)   |
| 11 (11) | Canada               | 1953 (1783)   |
| 12 (12) | Belgium              | 1817 (1658)   |
| 13 (13) | Finland              | 1618 (1514)   |
| 14 (14) | Denmark              | 1248 (1174)   |
| 15 (15) | Austria              | 1134 (1053)   |
| 16 (16) | Spain                | 1093 (972)    |
| 17 (17) | Australia            | 977 (883)     |
| 18 (18) | Israel               | 911 (775)     |
| 19 (19) | Taiwan               | 765 (679)     |
| 20 (20) | China                | 719 (538)     |
| 21 (22) | Norway               | 392 (337)     |
| 22 (21) | India                | 369 (392)     |
| 23 (23) | Ireland              | 345 (337)     |
| 24 (24) | Barbados             | 342 (311)     |
| 25 (32) | Singapore            | 223 (111)     |
| 26 (26) | Luxembourg           | 181 (181)     |
| 27 (27) | New Zealand          | 170 (156)     |
| 28 (28) | Liechtenstein        | 167 (151)     |
| 29 (29) | Brazil               | 148 (130)     |
| 30 (-)  | Turkey               | 144           |
| 31 (33) | Russian Federation   | 141 (93)      |
| 32 (31) | Netherlands Antilles | 124 (116)     |
| 33 (32) | Poland               | 122 (120)     |
| 34 (-)  | Virgin Islands (GB)  | 116           |
| 35 (30) | South Africa         | 111 (120)     |

**- Top 25 Filing Companies - European Patent Applications 2006 (2005)**

| Rank    | Filings     | Company             |
|---------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 (1)   | 4425 (4883) | Philips             |
| 2 (3)   | 2355 (1585) | Samsung Electronics |
| 3 (2)   | 2319 (1863) | Siemens             |
| 4 (4)   | 1529 (1390) | Matsushita Electric |
| 5 (10)  | 1459 (778)  | BASF                |
| 6 (5)   | 1214 (1152) | LG Electronics      |
| 7 (7)   | 1093 (1030) | Bosch               |
| 8 (6)   | 1068 (1117) | Sony                |
| 9 (11)  | 882 (688)   | Nokia               |
| 10 (15) | 768 (567)   | General Electric    |
| 11 (21) | 747 (492)   | Hitachi             |
| 12 (-)  | 740 (-)     | Mitsubishi          |
| 13 (9)  | 644 (837)   | Fujitsu             |
| 14 (18) | 604 (519)   | Bayer               |
| 15 (19) | 601 (517)   | 3M                  |
| 16 (-)  | 591 (-)     | Honeywell           |
| 17 (12) | 569 (577)   | Thomson             |
| 18 (16) | 543 (552)   | Alcatel             |
| 19 (24) | 542 (447)   | Delphi Technologies |
| 20 (17) | 513 (521)   | Seiko Epson         |
| 21 (-)  | 509 (-)     | Procter & Gamble    |
| 22 (14) | 505 (573)   | IBM                 |
| 23 (-)  | 492 (-)     | RIM                 |
| 24 (20) | 485 (499)   | Canon               |
| 25 (-)  | 485 (-)     | Ericsson            |

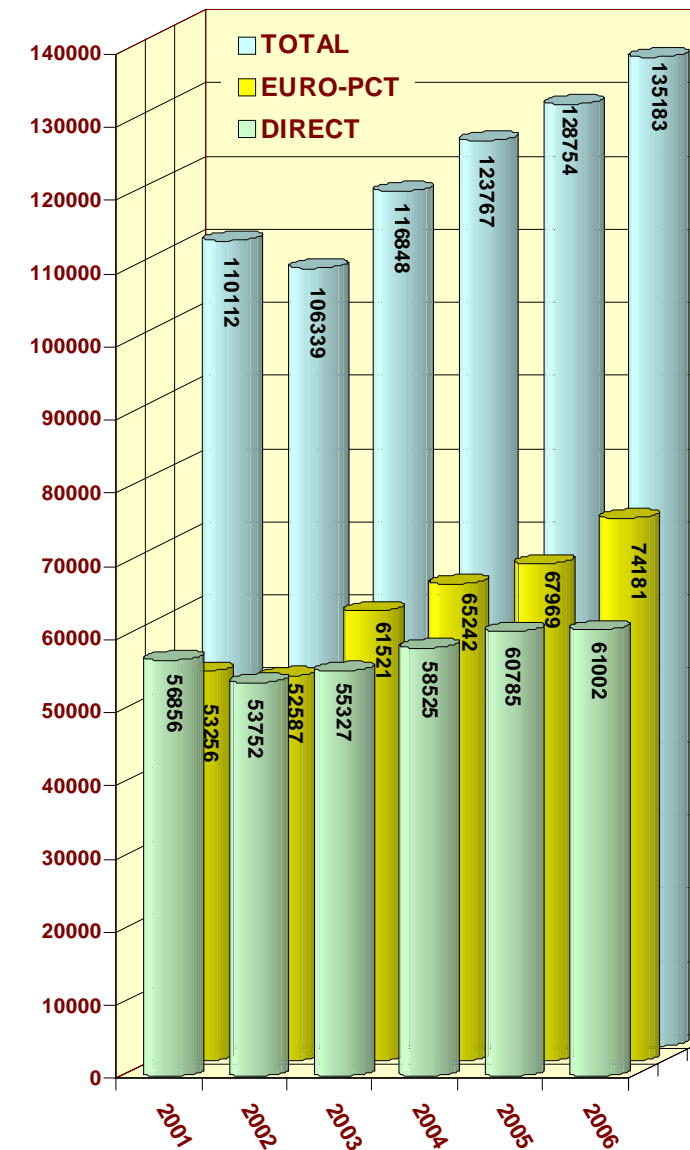
(-) means that the company concerned did not appear in the 2004 top 25. Four new entries in the 2005 top 25 – DSM IP Assets, Seiko Epson, Delphi Technologies and NEC – replace Hewlett-Packard, Procter & Gamble, Infineon and Honda, which appeared in the 2004 top 25. The top 25 companies together accounted for 18% of all European patent applications filed in 2005.

**October 2007**

**European Patent Office Annual Report – More Growth**

The EPO Annual Report for 2006 indicates that the trend of strong growth in the total number of European patent applications filed was maintained yet again and another new record high achieved in 2006. The growth continued to be driven mainly by Euro-PCT applications.

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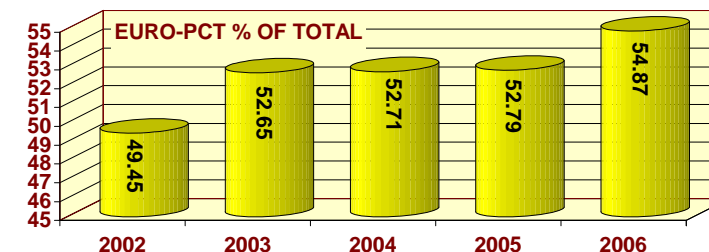
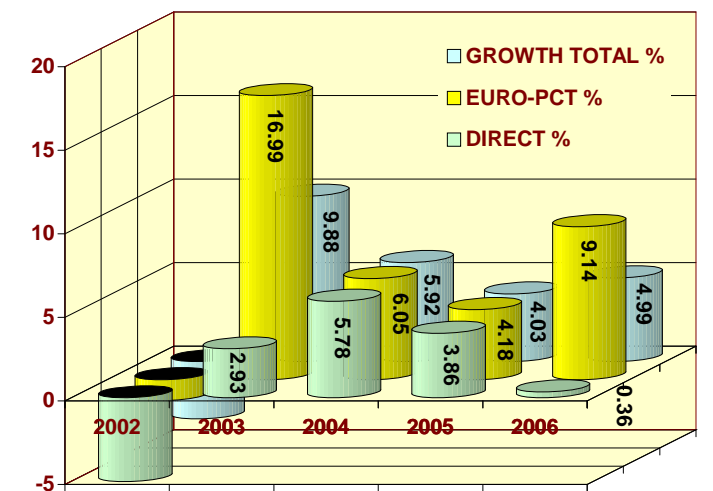
**Overall Growth**

Another new record number of European patent applications was filed in 2006.

The total number of European patent applications filed in 2006 increased over the 2005 level by about 6500 applications, growth of about 5%.

Euro-PCT applications again accounted for most of the increase in the total number of applications, continuing the trend of earlier years. Euro-PCT applications (i.e. International applications designating the European Patent Office which actually entered the European regional phase at the EPO in the year concerned) grew by over 9% compared to 2005, the strongest growth since the exceptional year of 2003. In 2003, Euro-PCT applications for the first time accounted for over 50% of total European patent applications filed. In 2006 they accounted for almost 55%.

Direct European applications grew very little in 2006, falling behind the rates of growth achieved in the previous three years.



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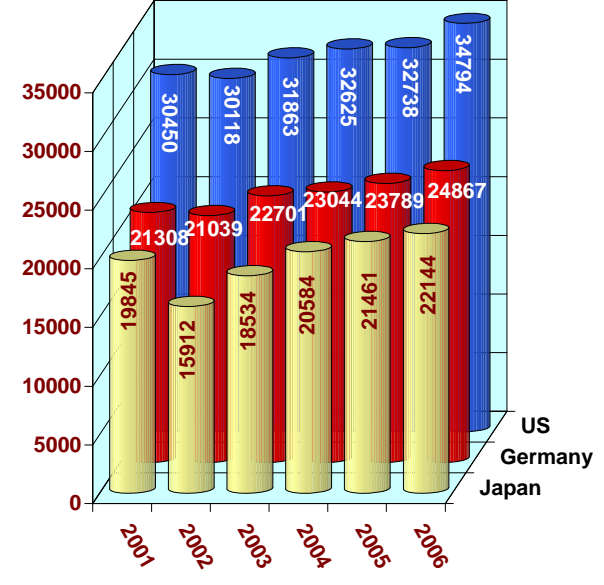
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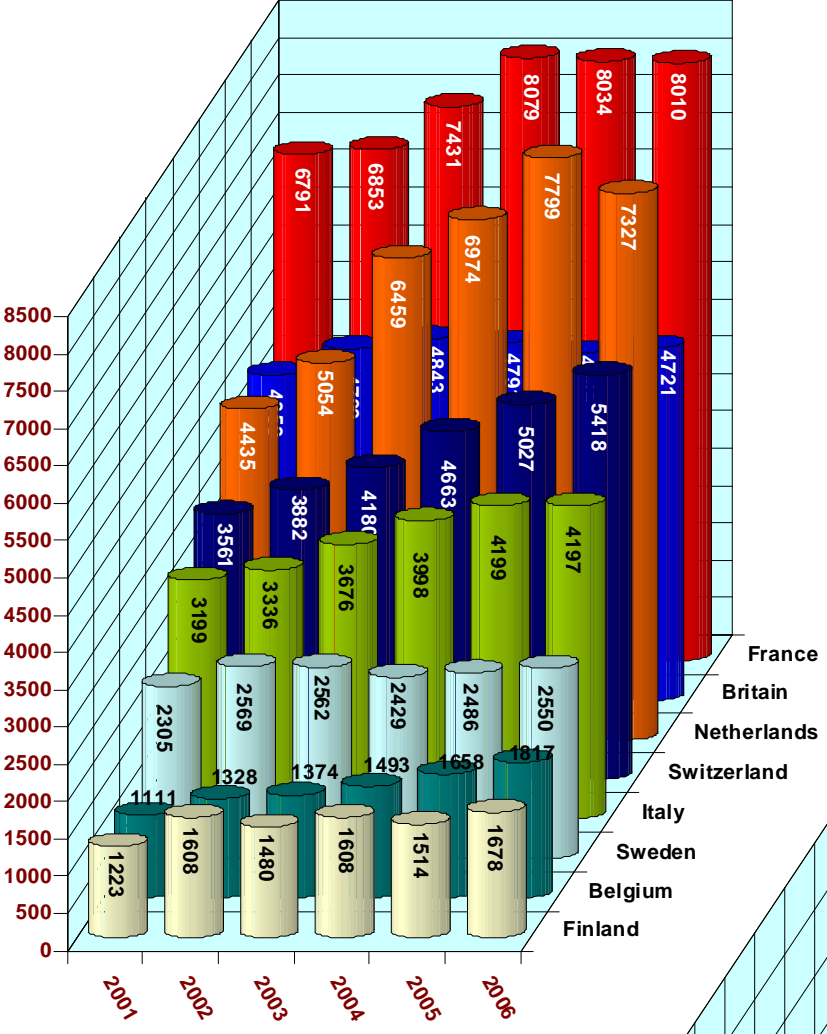
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US, German and Japanese applicants still file the greatest numbers of European patent applications. In 2006, applications by German applicants increased by just over 3% and those by Japanese applicants by 4.5%. US applications filed over 6% more applications.



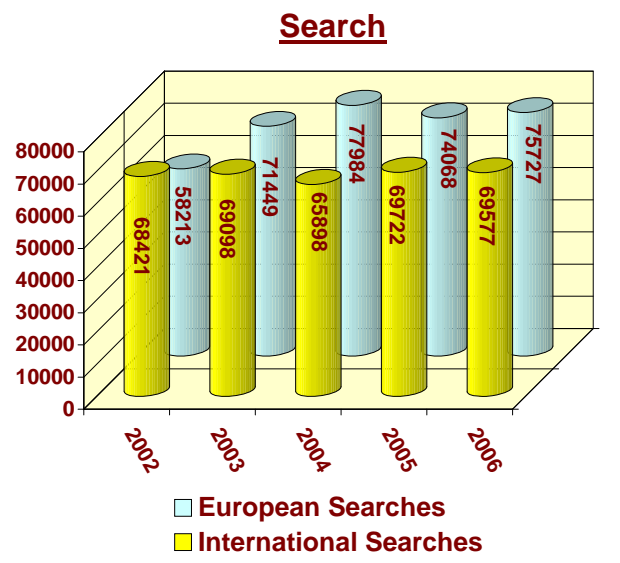
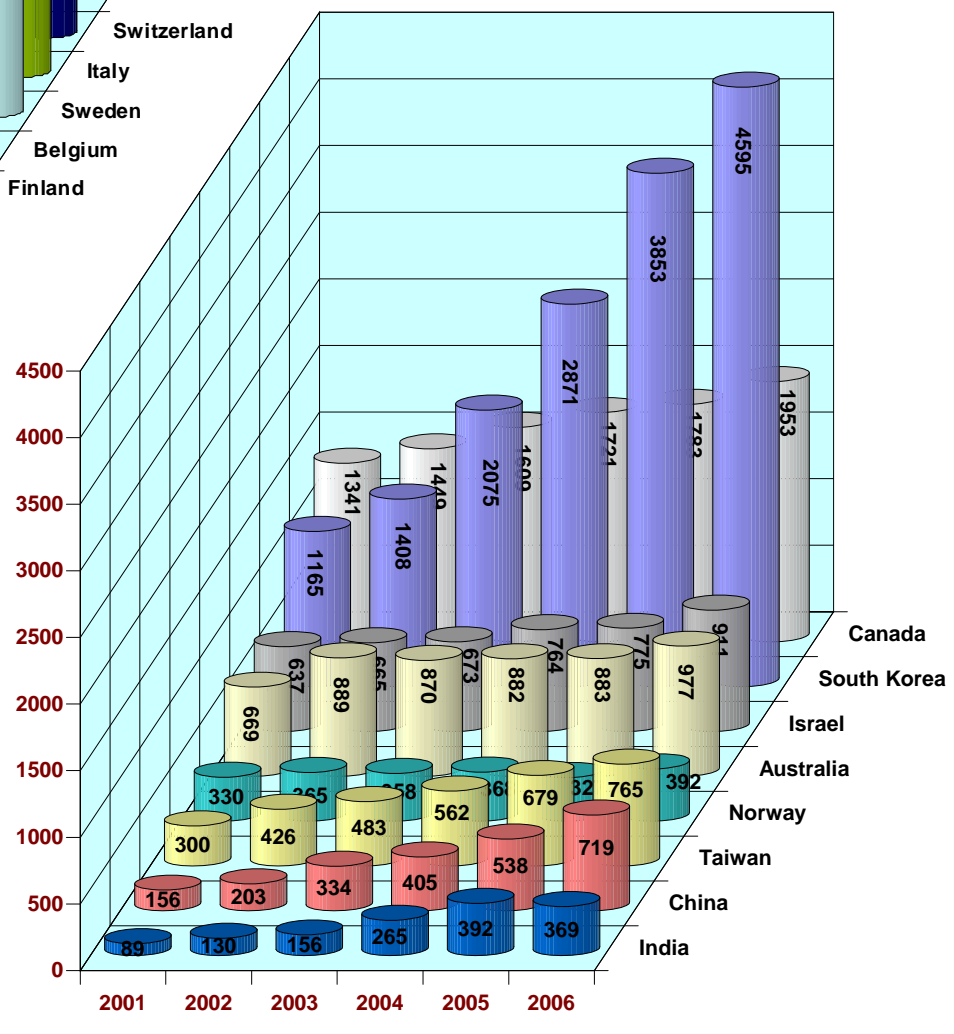
Filings by the top eight European contracting states after Germany showed little growth in 2006. Only applications by applicants from Switzerland and Belgium showed significant growth. The trend of increasing filings by Netherlands applicants was broken in 2006, with a fall of about 5%. Filing by applicants from the other states showed no significant change.



Applicants from countries - other than European contracting states, the US and Japan - which file most European patent applications generally showed significant increases in the numbers of applications filed, with the exception of India.

In terms of percentage growth over 2005, China showed the most remarkable growth - over 33%.

Filings by applicants from South Korea and Norway showed growth of about 20%, with Israel closely following. Australia and Chinese Taiwan showed growth of over 10%, with Canada only slightly less than 10%.



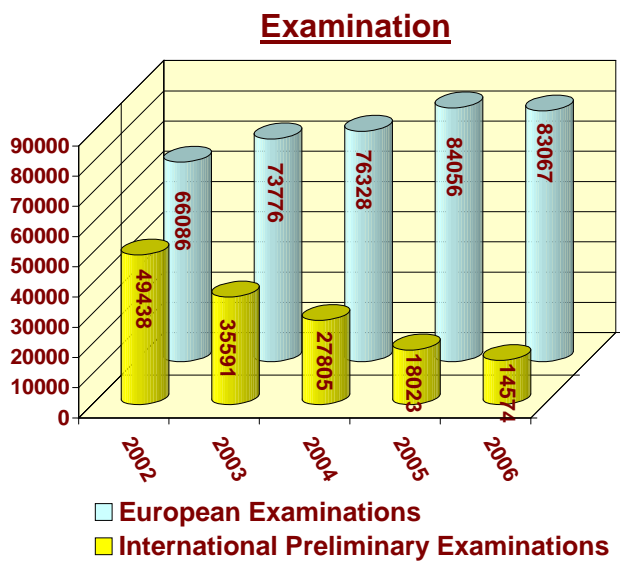
### Processing of European Patent Applications by the EPO

#### Search

The total of European searches and International searches carried out by the EPO in 2006 was almost exactly the same as the total in 2005. Compared to 2005, the number of International searches remained basically constant. The number of European searches increased slightly. Given the increase in applications filed, this means that backlogs of European searches increased again in 2006. In 50% of cases the search was completed after less than 6.6 months (2005: 6.4 months).

#### Examination

Making the longer period (31 months from priority) for entry into the European regional phase under PCT Chapter II generally available without the need to request International Preliminary Examination is still having its effect. In 2006 the number of International Preliminary Examinations carried out by the EPO continued its fall.

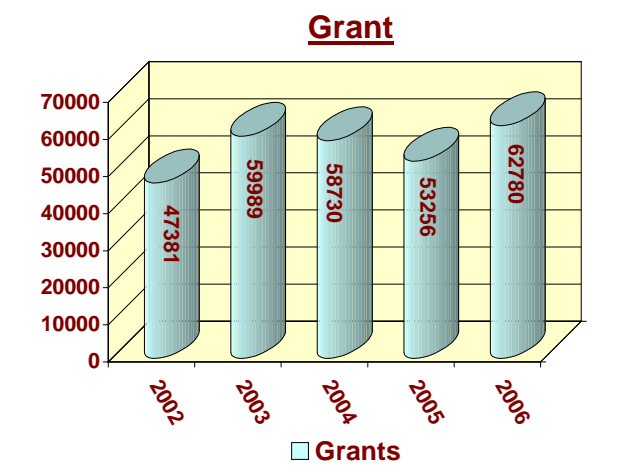


Along with other measures, this tactic of reducing demand for International Preliminary Examinations has assisted the EPO in focusing effort more on examinations of European patent applications. The number of European examinations has been increasing strongly, though the number was slightly less in 2006 than in 2005.

The introduction of the EESR (Extended European Search Report) is expected to speed up processing in future. However, it is still too early to judge the effect of EESRs.

#### Grant

In contrast to the number of European examinations carried out, the number of patents granted increased significantly in 2006, as compared with 2005. In 2006, 27.5% of grants were completed within three years of the filing of the European patent application (2005: 25.3%). The average time taken to grant a patent was 44.3 months (2005: 45.3 months).



The full EPO Annual Report for 2006 contains much more than the outline information provided here. The Annual Report is available on the EPO website: <http://www.epo.org/about-us/office/annual-reports/2006.html>.