Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

The PATLIB network in Europe

An overview of the existing practice



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Directorate for International Co-operation

02.12.2015

- As an introduction

Our mission

As the patent office for Europe, we support innovation, competitiveness and economic growth across Europe through a commitment to high quality and efficient services delivered under the European Patent Convention.

From 7 to 38 Member States

38 European member states

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

2 European extension states

Bosnia-Herzegovina • Montenegro

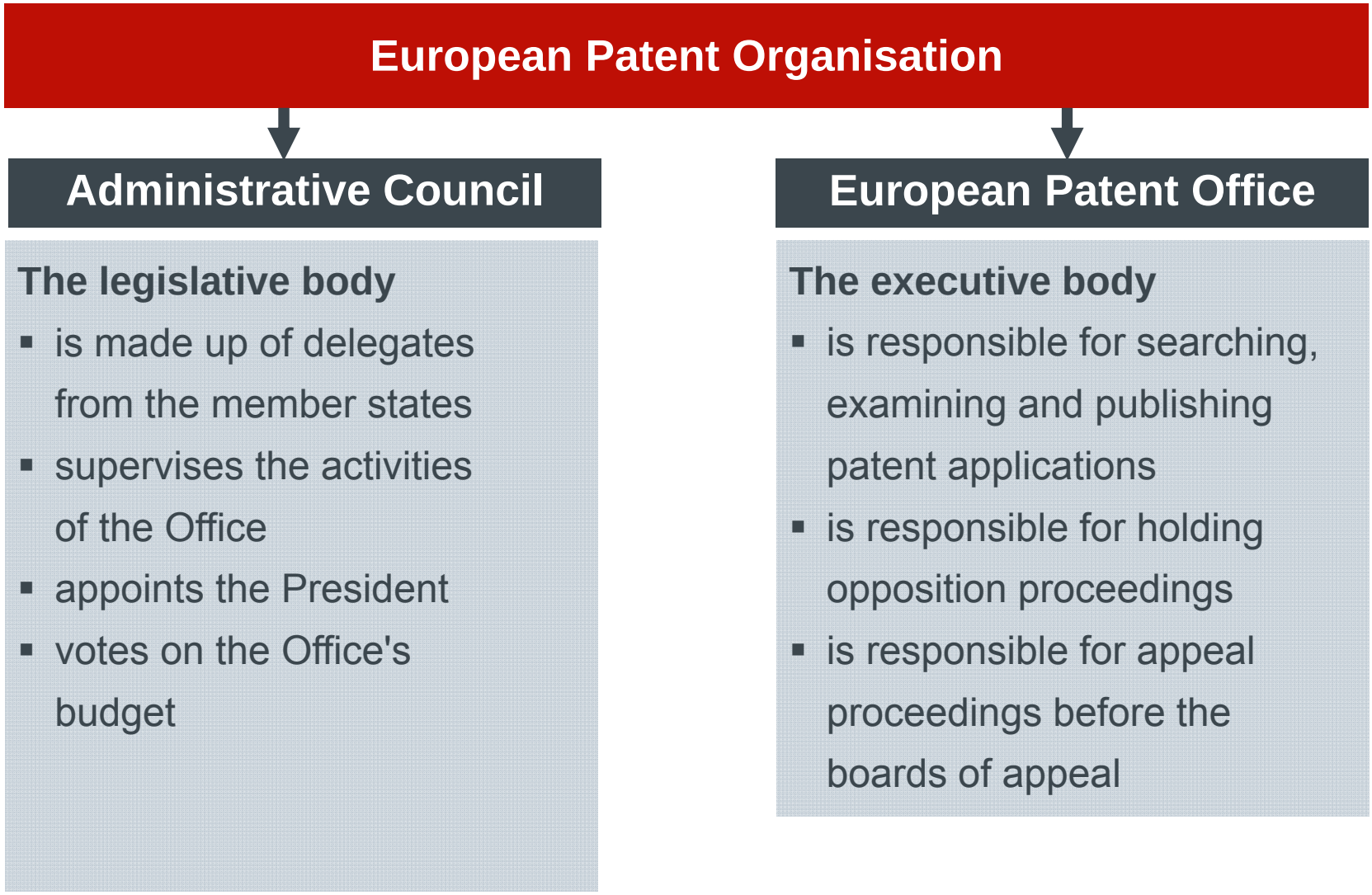
2 Validation states

Morocco
Republic of Moldova

Our status

- Second-largest intergovernmental institution in Europe
- Not an EU institution
- Self-financing, i.e. revenue from fees covers operating and capital expenditure
- 2015 budget: EUR 2 billion

Structure of the European Patent Organisation



Structure of the European Patent Office

President
Benoît Battistelli

Presidential area
DG 0

Directorates-General

Operations	Operational Support	Administration	Legal/International Affairs	Appeals
DG 1	DG 2	DG 4	DG 5	DG 3
Guillaume Minnoye	Alberto Casado Cerviño	Željko Topić	Raimund Lutz	Wim van der Eijk

Our five locations in Europe

Headquarters

Liaison office with the EU

Our staff

Munich	3 825
The Hague	2 688
Berlin	269
Vienna	106
Brussels	4
Total	6 892

Around 60% are patent examiners

Source: EPO data 2014

The EPO also processes international (PCT) applications

- We act as a receiving office for international applications (PCT)
- We carry out approximately:
  - 38% of all international search procedures
  - 56% of all international preliminary examinations
- The EPO delivers the international search report within 3 months*

* From the date of receipt of the application by the International Searching Authority.

Key components of the EPO's patent quality policy

- Highly skilled examiners
- State-of-the-art searches
- Thorough procedures and review processes
- Quality controls and an ongoing commitment to improvement

All patent documents are accessible free of charge on www.epo.org

Espacenet
over 90 million patent documents, easily searchable

Patent Translate
Automatic translation between English and 31 other languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian.

Key facts about Espacenet

- Most visited area of our website, with around 20 million visits every year

- A worldwide collection of patent data

- For beginners and experts

- Automatic translation of documents between English and 31 other languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian.

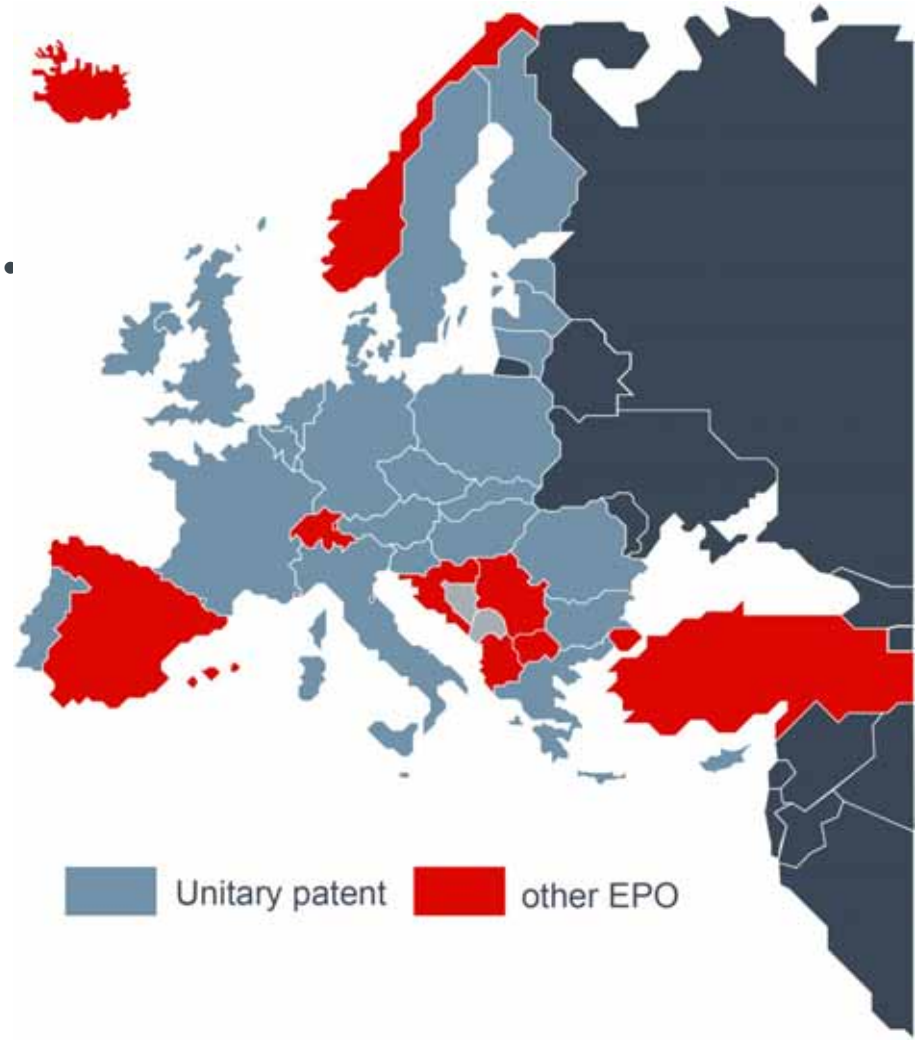
The unitary patent and the EPO member states

Unitary patent states

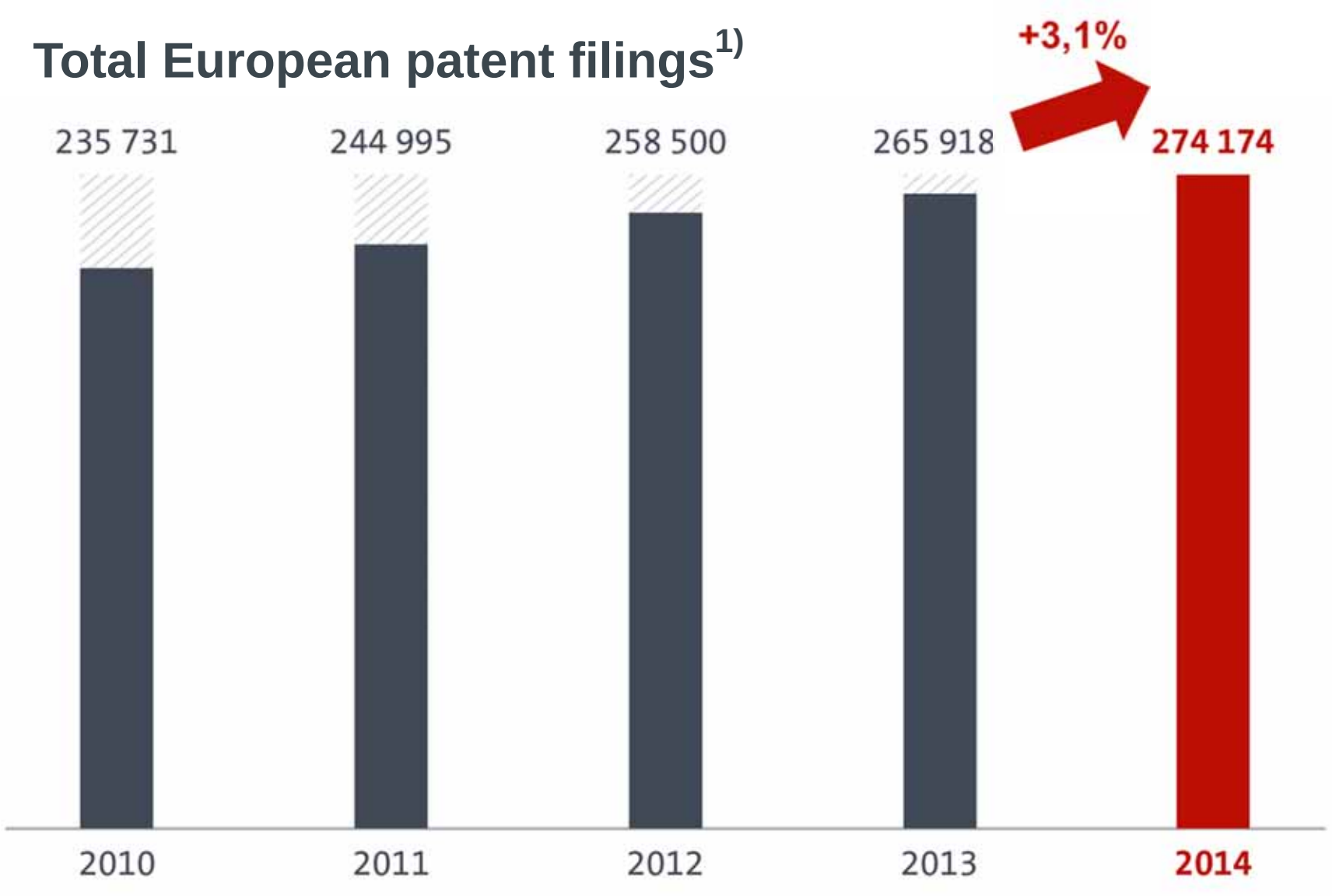
Austria • Belgium • Bulgaria • Cyprus
Czech Republic • Denmark • Estonia
Finland • France • Germany
Greece • Hungary • Ireland • Italy Latvia •
Lithuania • Luxembourg
Malta • Netherlands • Poland
Portugal • Romania • Slovakia
Slovenia • Sweden • United Kingdom

Other EPO member states

Spain • Iceland • Switzerland
Norway • Turkey • Monaco
San Marino • Liechtenstein • Croatia
Serbia • Albania • Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia

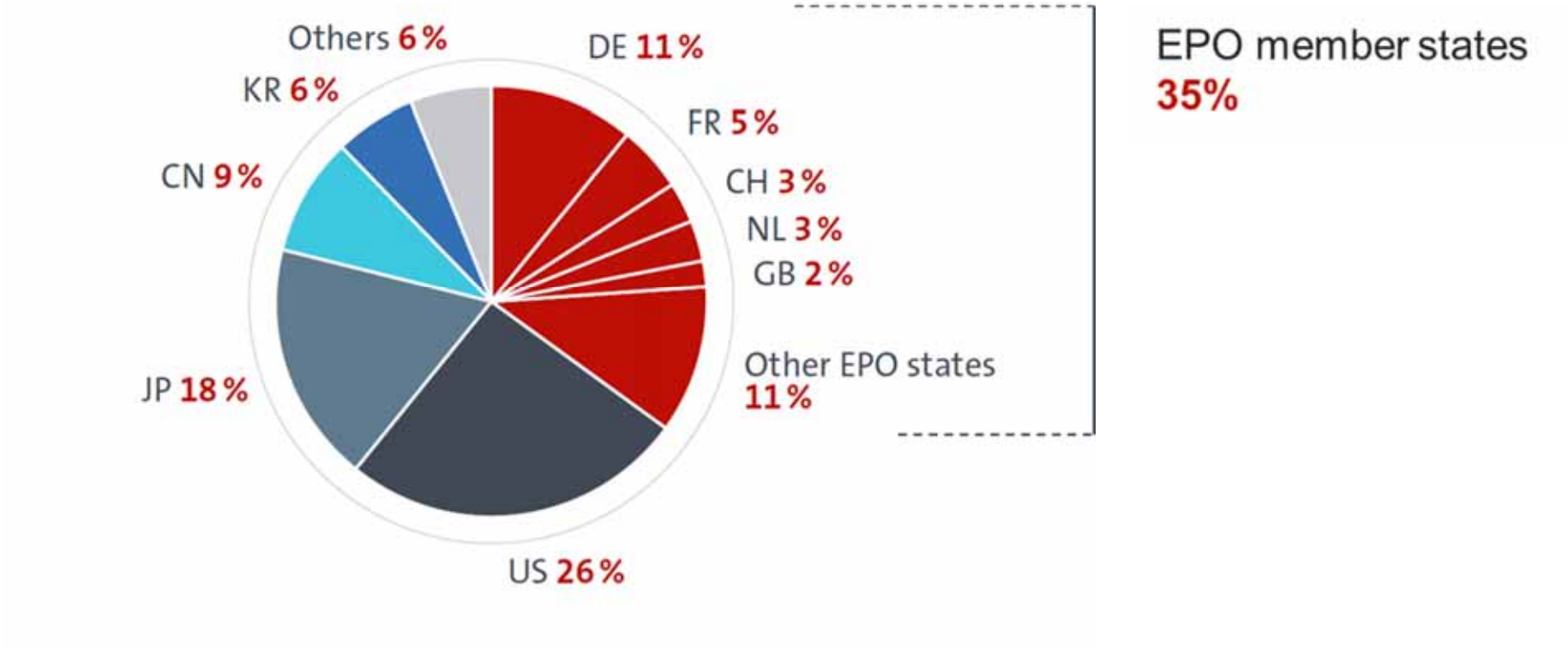


Total European patent filings[1)]



[1)] Direct European filings under the EPC and international filings under the PCT.

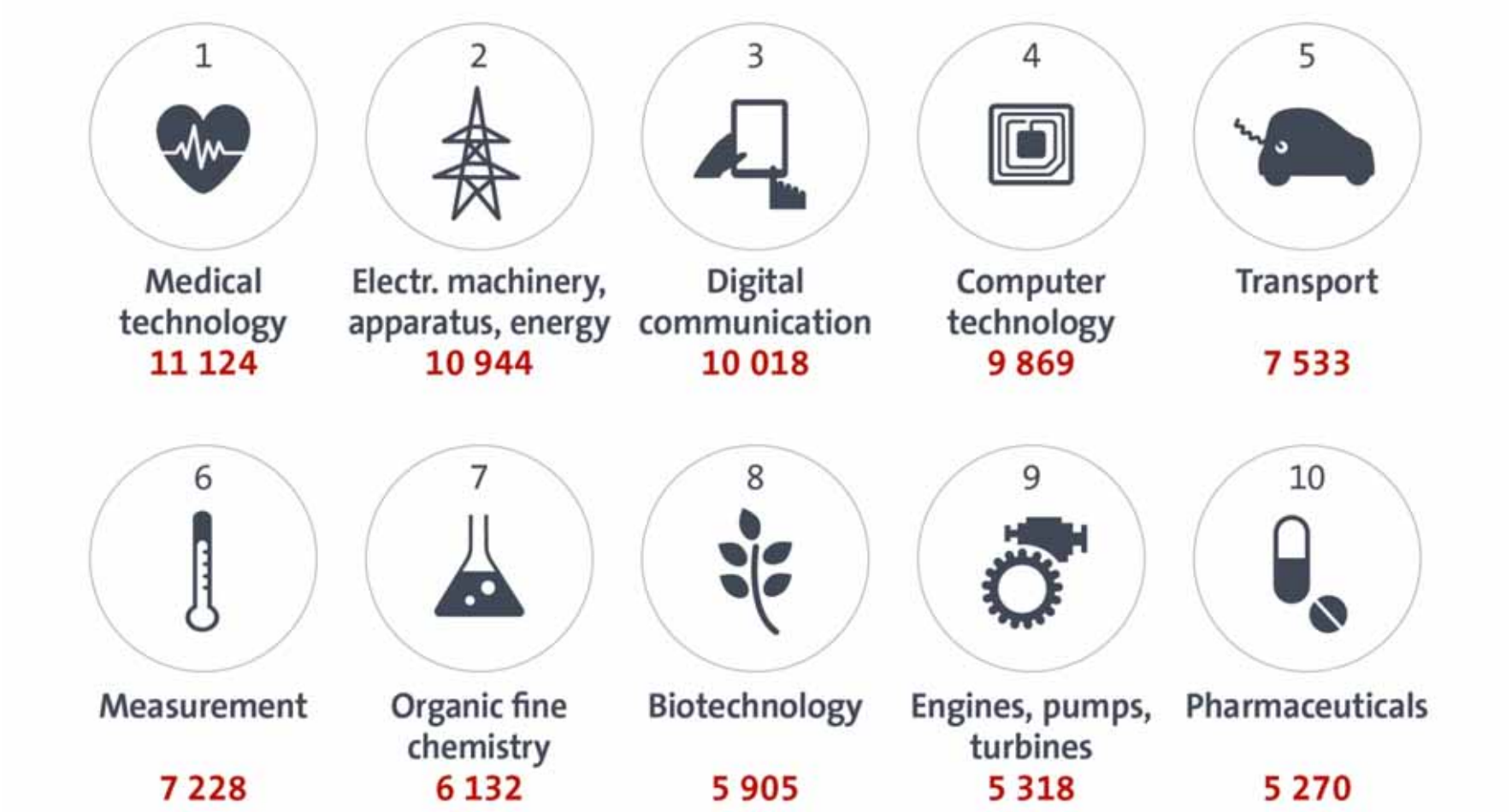
Origin of European patent filings (2014)[1)]



DE: Germany I FR: France I CH: Switzerland I NL: Netherlands I GB: United Kingdom
US: United States I JP: Japan I CN: P.R. China I KR: R. Korea I EPO: European Patent Organisation

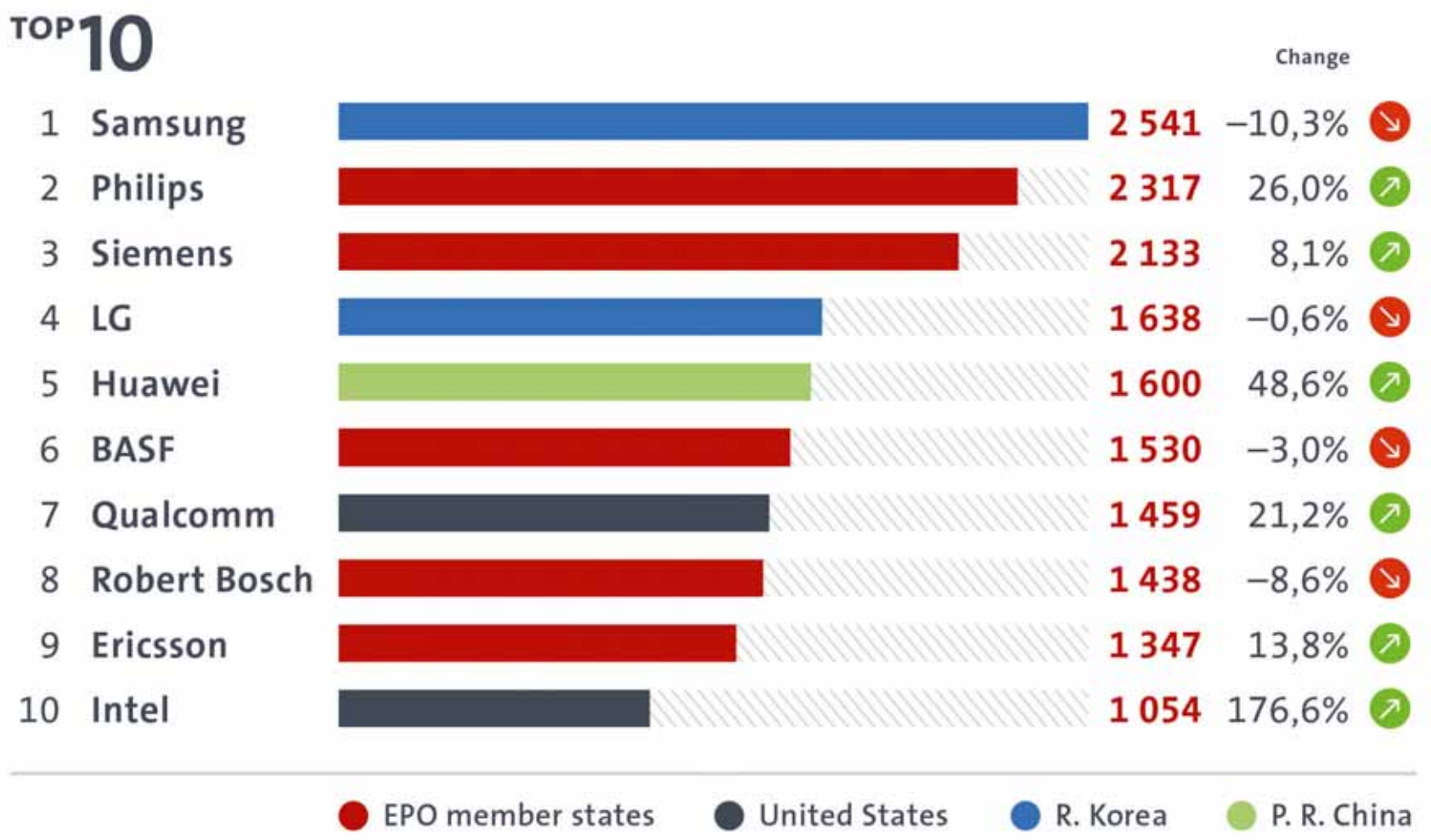
Shares in Direct European filings under the European Patent Convention (EPC) and international filings under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

Technical fields[1)] with the most applications (2014)[2)]



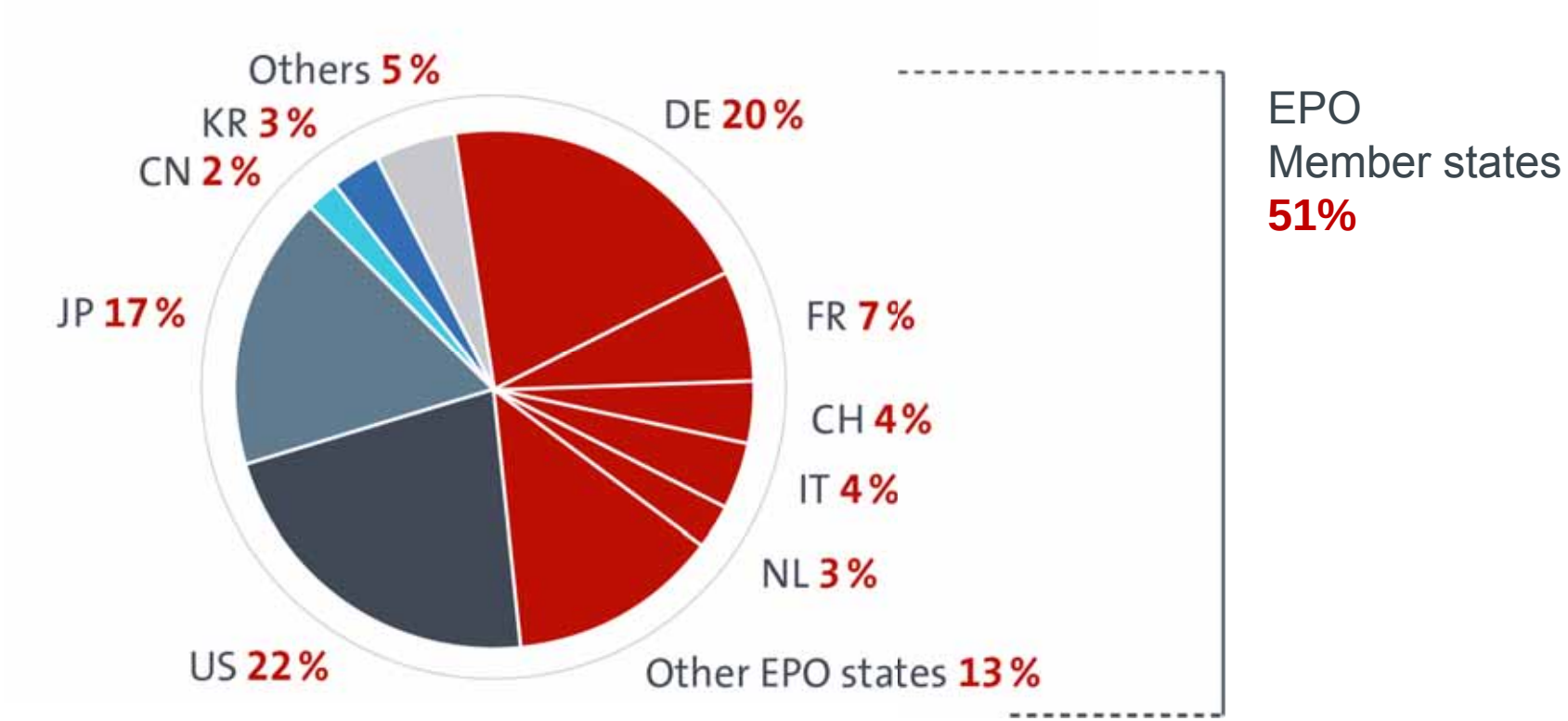
[1)] Classified according to the IPC and technology concordance table as revised in January 2013
[2)] Based on European patent applications filed with the EPO.

Top 10 applicants in 2014 (1)



1) Based on European patent applications filed with the EPO.

Granted patents (2014)[1)]



DE: Germany I FR: France I CH: Switzerland I NL: Netherlands I GB: United Kongdom
US: United States I JP: Japan I CN: P.R. China I KR: South Korea I EPO: European Patent Organisation

[1)] Analysis based on granted patents in 2014. Patents have been allocated to the country of residence of the first-named patentee.

- The network of PATLIB centres

A contrasted PATLIB network comprising over 300 centres (*)

Belgium 11 • Germany 25 • France 22•
Luxembourg 2 • Netherlands 1 •
Switzerland 1 • United Kingdom 14 •
Sweden 1 • Italy 15 • Austria 7 •
Liechtenstein 2 • Greece 4 • Spain 21 •
Denmark 4 • Monaco 1 • Portugal 24 •
Ireland 1 • Finland 10 • Cyprus 1 •
Turkey 49 • Bulgaria 15 •
Czech Republic 10 • Estonia 3 •
Slovakia 5 • Slovenia 2 •
Hungary 7 • Romania 17 • Poland 26 •
Iceland 3 • Lithuania 4 • Latvia 2 •
Malta 1 • Croatia 1 • Norway 1 •
Former Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia 1 •
San Marino 1 • Albania 1 • Serbia 1

(*) figures 2014

A contrasted network

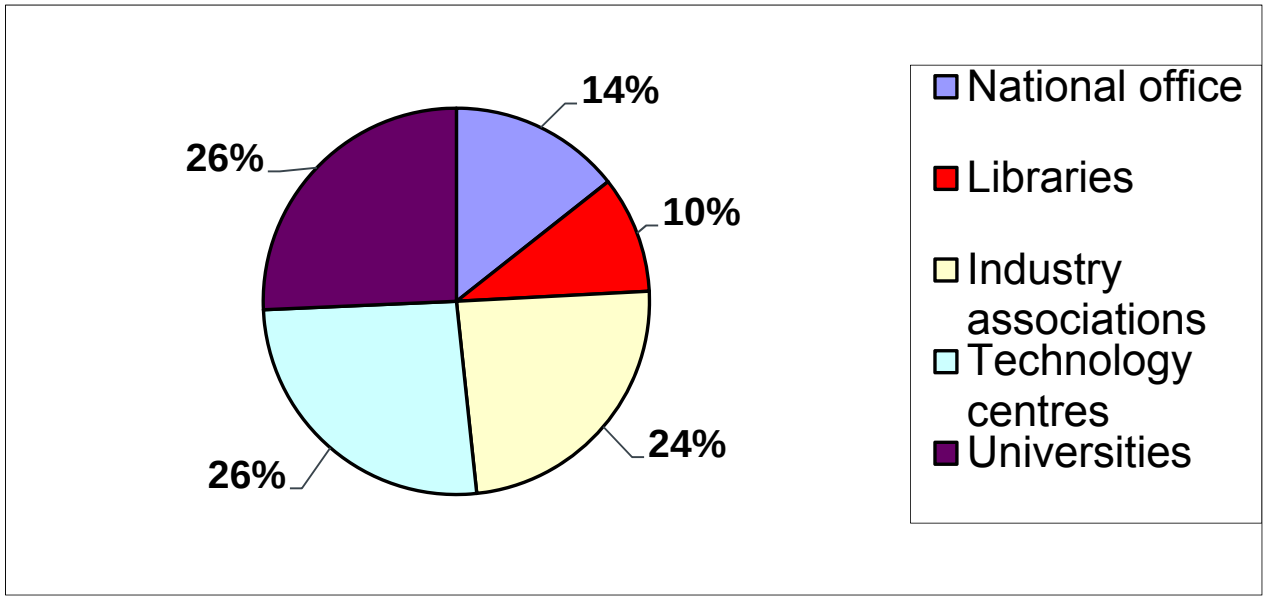
- From PATent (paper) LIBraries to IP service centres influenced by data carriers and media:

- The first PATLIBs were founded around 1900, new centres are still being created:

1975 **1990** **2015**

Different institutional models

- PATLIB centres in Europe are attached to various national or regional supervising authorities:



- PATLIB centres differ in size: from 0,5 to over 20 full time equivalent staff

- PATLIB centres differ in terms of their business model: ranging from 100% governmental funding to 100% self-supporting

Reflect the regional contrasts in Europe

- PATLIB centres in Europe:
  - Serve local users, audience may vary depending on their host organisation: small and medium sized enterprises, the academic sector, R&D centres;
  - Offer a customized service portfolio:
    - from traditional, “library type” services:
      - Reading room, including assistance for self searches,
      - Document delivery,
      - Basic search services: bibliographic data, legal status data;
      - Helpdesk function for IP related questions
    - to advanced services matching the evolution of the users needs.

- Reorienting PATLIB centres to respond to challenges and user demands

The challenges for PATLIB Centres

- PATLIB centres should be “visible”:
  - To be used by their “clients”
  - To get full support from their host organisations

- PATLIB centres need to maintain and enhance their capacities in terms of;
  - Infrastructure and tools
  - Technical and IP knowhow, but also language skills
  - Business approach of IP

- PATLIB centres need to secure their resources and funding

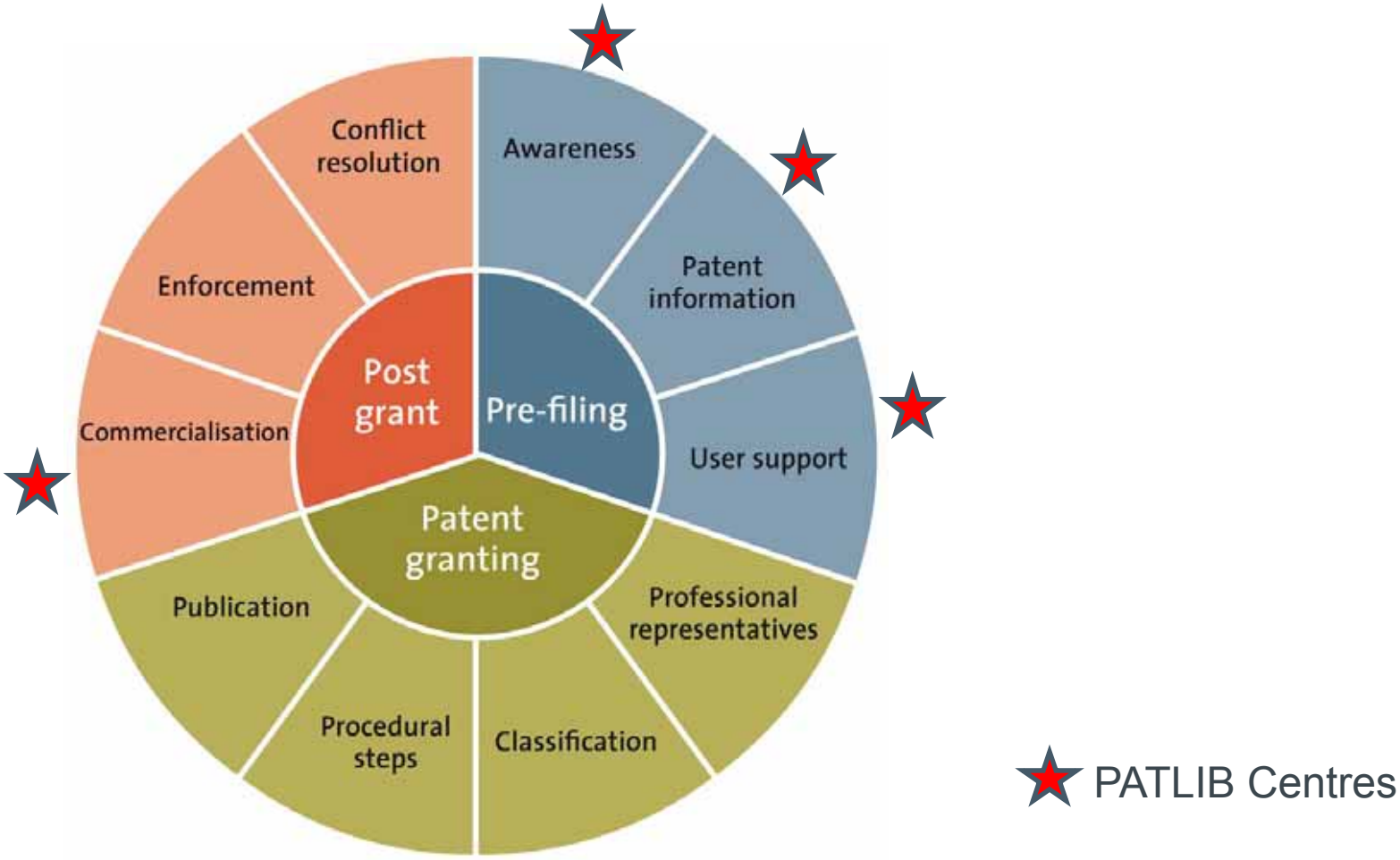
The expectations of the “clients”

IP related services shall be:

- Reliable and complete
- Integrated: patents and other IP rights, but also business information
- Tailored, to match the client’s specific need
- Understandable, also for non-IP specialists (SMEs for example)
- Timely
- Efficient, which does not mean free of charge

Key functional areas for PATLIB Centres

Typical functional areas of competences during the patent life cycle:



Business services: advanced searching

- Sophisticated search services with interpretation of results;
- Monitoring services search according to a profile in regular intervals

Examples of search services:

- on technical fields: state of the art, novelty, infringement
- on applicants / inventors: competitor analysis
- on patent families
- on legal status
- on trademarks / designs

Business services: knowledge transfer

- Patent cliniques:
  - advice on specific , individual IP related, mainly legal issues, usually in collaboration with a professional representative

- User training:
  - individual or group training; seminars, workshops, lectures at universities

Business services: supporting decisions

- IP audits:
  - analysis and assessment of IP assets to enable educated IP related decisions;

- IP strategy development:
  - establishing a strategic plan for developing and managing IP over a longer period of time

Business services: IP valuation

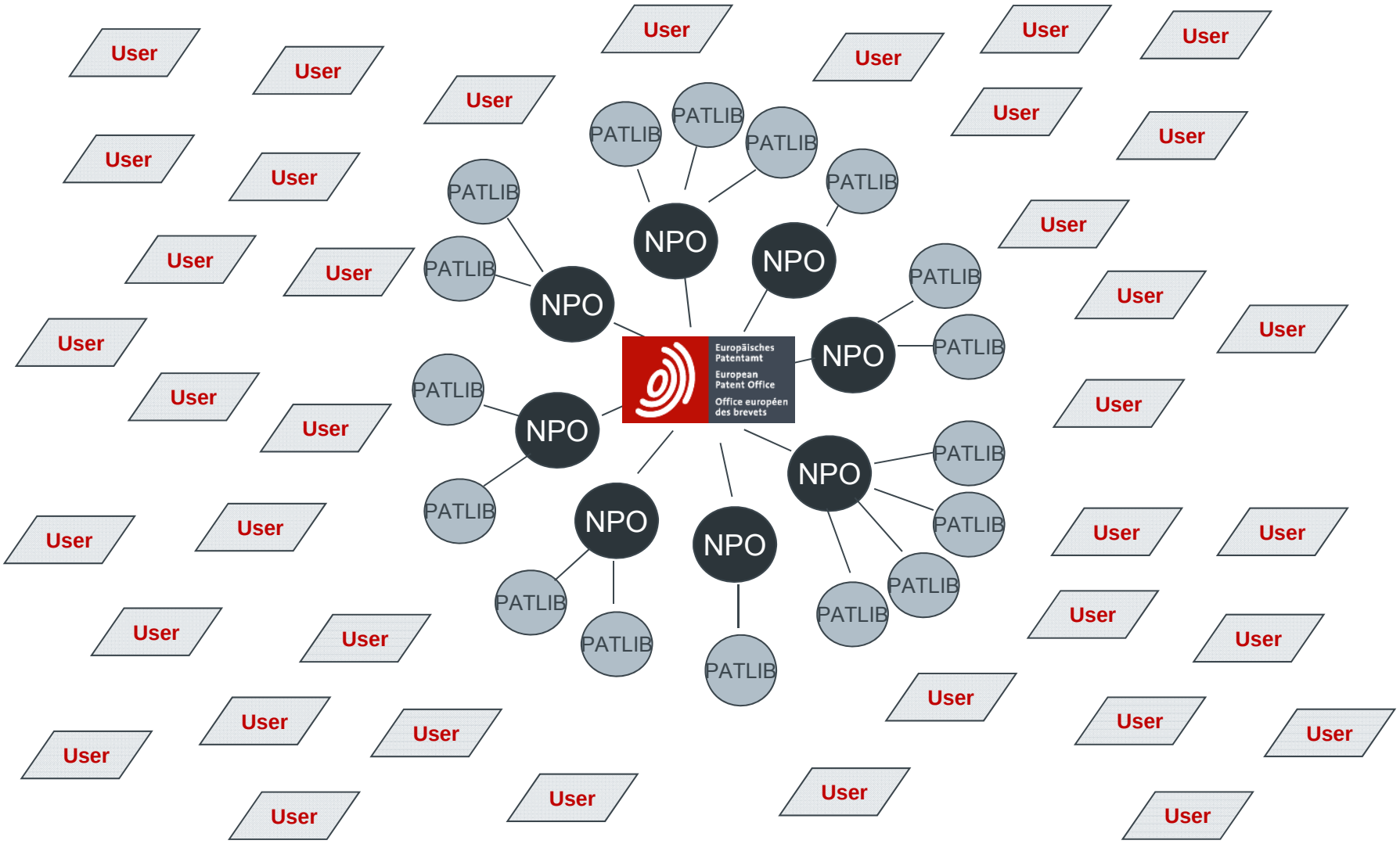
- Evaluation of economic value of IP rights:
  - assessment of the economic value of patents, technical development projects or patent portfolios to establish a financial forecast (with the help of respective software)

- Commercialisation support:
  - assistance to market inventions, by publishing commercialisation offers, facilitating collaboration with partners, establishing licence agreements, etc.

The ideal PATLIB centre

Interaction EPO – NPO - PATLIBs

Regional, national, local roles



The assets of the PATLIB centres

- Close to the users and aware of their specific needs
- Speaking the national / local language
- Attached to various hosting entities and therefore user oriented:
  - universities, chambers of commerce, technology and innovation centres)
- In some cases closely connected to other innovation support network members like EENs

  → synergies
- Flexibility to develop and offer innovation support services beyond the portfolio of National patent Offices (NPOs)

The role of national IP offices (NPOs)

- In most cases regional PATLIB centres are organisationally independent from the national IP (patent) Office
- Nevertheless, NPO’s coordinate PATLIB activities at national level
- In several countries PATLIBs act as receiving bureaus for IP applications
- Definition of criteria to be a PATLIB centre, contracts or agreements on roles, responsibilities and support: see example of Germany
- Provision of documentation, databases and tools by the NPO to the PATLIB centres
- Training support

The role of the EPO

- Framework: co-operation roadmap with the Member States.

- “Incubator” for best practices exchange: transform national successes into European best practices.
  - Example: Pilot project to reorient patent information centres (2010-2013)

- Generic measures:
  - exchange of EPO tools and promotional materials (incl. translation support), participation in relevant EPO training seminars; annual PATLIB conference; PATLIB directory http://www.epo.org/searching/patlib/directory.html

Pilot project: reorientation of PATLIB centres

- Goal: to enable PATLIB centres to offer patent related innovation support services mainly in the pre-filing and commercialisation phase of inventions

- Participants: 17 centres in 12 Member States

- Collaboration with OHIM: extension to trademarks and design related services

A phased approach (2010 – 2013)

- Start-up phase: November 2010 - April 2011

  Focus on extended search services

- Implementation phase: May 2011 - April 2012

  Focus on supplementary services

  (commercialisation support, patent strategy development, assessing the economic value of IP)

- Consolidation phase: May 2012 - November 2013

  Focus on business development and sustainability of the patent information centres

Activities

- Development of capacities: acquisition of tools and training programme (blended learning), coaching by staff from experienced PATLIBs
- Support to promotional activities: Brochures, flyers, info events
- Provision of extended search services and services emphasising the business use of patents, including user training.
- Networking: annual PATLIB conference, networking with other innovation support institutions, local & regional institutions

Outlook and future planning

- Implementation of the most successful elements in a wider group of centres
  - Training (mainly distance learning)
  - Coaching by ex-pilots and other advanced PATLIBs
  - Support for a start-up phase for extended search services and respective promotional activities
- Repository of documents and tools enabling PATLIBs to assist their clients
- Option: extension to trademarks and design related services in collaboration with OHIM

- Thank you for your attention

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