

PATENT OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

on

Patent Information Activities

1998

I. Evolution of patent activities:

1. Changes experienced in terms of application filings and grants with respect to the previous year;

889 patent applications for inventions and utility models have been filed in Bulgarian Patent Office last year. The number of applications received in 1998 was 173 less in comparison with the same number in 1997 and that represents reduction of 16,3 %. The decreased activity is mainly due to the fall of the number of the Bulgarian applications. 354 Bulgarian patent applications have been filed during the year and that represents a reduction of 163 in comparison with the previous year. 269 of those applications were for patents for inventions and 85 - for utility model applications. The drop in these main subjects of protection is respectively 33 % and 27 %. In the Patent Office branch which is situated in Varna 37 applications have been filed that is 10 % of the general number of Bulgarian patent applications.

Last year the number of the foreign patent applications was 535, as 427 or 78 % of them - according to PCT. Applicants from 38 countries have filed applications in Bulgaria. The main part of the foreign patent applications was that of the US applications - 132 (almost 25 % of the whole number), German applications - 122 (almost 23 %), GB applications - 49 (almost 9 %).

Patent applications activity in 1998 in comparison with 1997

	Bulgarian pat.applications		Foreign pat.applications	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
Inventions	400	269	545	535
Utility models	117	85		

A general review of the inventive activity in the different fields shows that no essential change has occurred in comparison with the previous years. The main interest has been directed to the following areas: organic chemistry, building, biochemistry and microbiology, basic electric elements, pesticides and herbicides, organic chemical compounds, human and veterinary medicine, foodstuffs, physical and chemical processes, machinery junctions and details, measurement devices etc.

In 1998 19 Bulgarian patent applications according to PCT has been filed into the Patent Office. According to the new Law of protection of plant varieties and animal breeds in 1998 43 patent applications for new plant varieties have been filed in the office 2 of them - of the foreign applicants.

2. Trends of areas experiencing rapid changes with respect to the previous year

In 1998 the Bulgarian Patent Office continued maintaining and updating of its web site. Preparing and loading of the electronic copy of the official monthly issue Patent Abstracts of Bulgaria was one of the main tasks in the field of patent information activities. In the web site were loaded from No. 5/1997 to No.5/1998 of the Patent Abstracts of Bulgaria. The list of the Bulgarian industrial property representatives was published as well.

II. Matters concerning the generation, reproduction, distribution and use of primary and secondary sources of patent information

1. Publishing, printing, copying(main types of publications of the office in the field of patent information, etc.)

In 1998 BPO continued preparing and publishing of its official publications on paper. 12 issues of the Official Bulletin in Bulgarian and 12 issues of the Patent Abstracts of Bulgaria (in the part for inventions and utility models) in English have been prepared for publishing by means of word processing.

Cumulative, numerical and systematic indexes for 1997 were prepared through extraction of data from the Bulgarian patent documents database.

703 specifications with 12013 pages have been entered and processed, 621 specifications with 7286 pages have been prepared by means of the Page Maker System and totally 761 first pages of documents have been got ready. The ready made specifications have been printed for granting patents and 350 specifications have been worked out for full circulation.

In 1998 BPO continued extracting of data from the national database and printing of specifications on paper for sending to the producing Hungarian firm Arcanum and inclusion in the ESPACE-PRECES CD-ROM product. 613 specifications (included in the Official Bulletin from No.4/1997 to No.4/1998) and 7 diskettes containing bibliographical data and abstracts (in Bulgarian) were sent during the year)

2. Main types of announcements of the Office in the field of patent information

The following main types of announcements were published in 1997 in the Official Bulletin:

- * abstracts of patent applications - 888;
- * claims of granted patents 435;
- * announcements for inventors' certificates transformed to patents 42;
- * abstracts of utility model applications 101;
- * claims of granted utility model patents 82;
- * announcements for plant varieties and animal breeds applications 153;
- * announcements for inventors' certificates transformed to plant varieties certificates

64;

* changes of the legal status of the patents

On February 5, 1998 the Parliament of the Republic of Bulgaria ratified the UPOV Convention and Bulgaria became the 36 member state of the Organisation.

3. Mass storage media used (paper, microforms, optical storage, etc.).

In 1998 Bulgarian patent documentation was continuously stored in paper form, microform and on CD-ROMs.

4. Word processing and Office automation

In 1998 the texts of 703 specifications with totally 12013 pages and 24 regular numbers of the Bulletin (12 - in Bulgarian language and 12 - in English) were composed by means of word processing and circulated for public use.

The Patent Information and Documentation Department continued downloading of paper copies of first pages of PCT applications from the ESPACE WORLD CD-ROM product for facilitating the examination activities.

5. (New) techniques used for the generation of patent information (printing, recording, microfilming, photocomposing, etc.).

III. Matters concerning abstracting, classifying, reclassifying and indexing of technical information contained in patent documents:

1. Classification and reclassification activities; ...

The patent applications of the Bulgarian patent documents are classified according to the 6th edition of the IPC.

2. Hybrid system indexing

Hybrid system indexing is used in classifying of patent applications.

3. Bibliographic data and full-text processing for search purposes

During the year 761 first pages of patent applications and utility model applications were prepared and ordered systematically for examiners' use in the Bulgarian patents file.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep:

1. File building and updating

For special files for examiners only 164 712 patents were received and handled in the paper file for search purposes. 626 specifications were lodged into the numerically and systematically ordered files of the Bulgarian patent documents. In the Russian patent documents file were lodged 26 799 specifications, in the German patent documents file - 37 332 and in the British patent documents file - 11 492 specifications were lodged in the special files.

During the year 87 663 PCT applications first pages (1995 and up to now) were included into the paper file for examiners.

V. Activities in the field of computerised and other mechanised search systems:

1. In-house systems

In the CD-ROM collections of the office 1296 searches were carried out. Using the received data aimed to the examiners needs , the database records of 472 foreign applications were updated.

2. External databases

In external on-line databases 76 searches were made. The examiners in the office use mainly EPIDOS - Vienna database, QUESTEL and STN databases.

This year restricted access to the INTERNET for the patent examination searches have been initiated and organised. Extension of the number of the user workstations with dial-up access to Internet was made. The examiners have tried out working with some of the free patent information databases for search purposes as an addition to the paper files examination and have found out their suitability for this aim.

3. Administrative management systems (e.g. register, legal status, statistics, administrative support, etc.)

This year 2368 electronic dossiers of "CANOFIL - 250" have been prepared.

In 1998 the process of introducing, maintaining and improving of the administration automation system for industrial property protection applications Common Software (CS) has continued. The following main steps have been made:

- examining, supply, installation and tests of new versions the CS (transition to 10.20 version of HP-UX operating system of the CS server, transition to 7.23 version of the database management system Informix, transition to 1.5 version of the Hyper Script Tools, transition to 32 bit work places (Windows-95 operating system);
- extension of the Common Software to "Patent and Information Services" Department;
- working out of Bulgarian language guide for the most utilisable functions in the field of patents;
- conclusion of a contract for improvement of the CS, including new server and eight workstations supply;

- installation of the last 1.3 version of the CS in the field of patents;
- conclusion of contracts for current service of the CS and for finding solution of the problem with the Bulgarian Alphabet.

4. Equipment used (hardware, including the types of terminal and network used, and software), carriers used

Purchase of two Pentium PC workstations has been made this year.

5. Existing on-line thesauri; their structure, presentation and usefulness for computerised searches.

VI. Administration of the industrial property office library and services available to the public (relating to facilities, e.g., for lodging applications, for assisting clients on searching procedures, for obtaining official publications and registry extracts):

1. Collecting, acquisition, preparation

The annual increment to the paper collections in the Central Patent Library for 1998 amounts to approximately 300 000 patent documents of 10 countries and 1 international organisation (EPO). During the year 1998 were received about 4500 patent documents on microforms from 3 countries.

3. Collection management , preservation

The Central Patent Library to the Patent Office presently disposes of about 18500000 patent documents on paper and on microforms (about 4600000) of 22 countries and 2 international organisations.

The existing CD-ROM files of 24 countries and 1 international organisations (WIPO - PCT documents) continued to be completed and maintained.

4. Information services available to the public (including ...)

In 1997 Information Services Department of the office carried out searches of different kind, namely:

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|---|------|
| * for patent infringement and state-of-the-art searches,
as well as numerical and
legal status searches | 162 |
| * on-line searches in external databases
for the examiners | 76 |
| * CD-ROM searches for the examiners | 1296 |

In addition the Patent Office branch in Varna made 26 preliminary searches for the public.

In 1998 the employees of the Patent and Information Services Department, Patent Information and Documentation Department and Patent examination departments have been working as well on searches according to two subscription services contracts.

The patent library was visited during the year by 3934 persons who obtained 7035 copies of specifications. 262 CD-ROM searches for the public were carried out.

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information

1. International or regional cooperation in the exchange of machine-readable information, e.g. bibliographic data, abstract and/or full text information

Bibliographic data and English language abstracts of patent applications for inventions and utility models published in 12 numbers of the Official Bulletin has been sent to EPIDOS - Vienna and to the European Patent Office Branch in the Hague.

In 1998 the BPO continued sending to the producing firm ARCANUM, Budapest, Hungary specifications to be included in the ESPACE-PRECES CD-ROM product. 613 specifications (included in the Bulletin from No. 4/1997 to No. 4/1998) and 7 diskettes containing bibliographical data and abstracts (in Bulgarian) were sent during the year.

2. Medium used for exchange of priority documents

According to the Bulgarian Patent Law submitting of priority document on paper in three months period after the application date is obligatory to claim the priority (if any in less than twelve months period before the application date). Bulgarian Patent Office grants such priority documents for Bulgarian patent applications filed abroad and requires providing of the same on paper for foreign applications filed in Bulgaria.

During the year 19 priority documents of Bulgarian patent applications were granted and sent abroad.

3. Medium allowed for filing applications

Up to the present the paper is the only medium for filing applications according to the Bulgarian patent legislation and the requirements of the Patent Office. The applicant or his (her) representative (if the applicant is a foreign juridical or natural person) should file the application in the required form on paper. Application forms are made available to patent representatives and applicants on diskettes.

4. Implementation of the Statement of Principles Concerning the Changeover to Electronic Data Carriers for the Exchange of Patent Documents

According to the main trend for transition to electronic carriers of patent information the Bulgarian Patent Office collects and maintains CD-ROM files for examiners use (in the Patent Information Department) and for the public (in the Central Patent Library). The collections for the examiners at present are as follows:

- ESPACE-EPA - since 1978 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-EPB - since 1995 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-WORLD - since 1978 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-UK-A - since 1995 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-PRECES - since its beginning and continues;
- ESPACE-ACCESS PRECES - 1997 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-FIRST - since 1988 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-BULLETIN - since 1978 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-ACCESS - since 1978 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-ACCESS EP-B - since 1978 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-LEGAL - 1992 up to now and continues;
- BREF - since 1989 (FR-A, WO-A, EP-A) and continues;
- PAJ - from 1976 to 1993 (according to the IPC) and since 1994 up to now and continues (according to the number of patent);
- USAPAT - since 1994 up to now and continues;
- GLOBALPat - from 1971 to 1996 (according to the IPC) and since 1997 up to now and continues (according to the IPC and the document publication date);
- USPS - since 1975 up to now and continues;
- CASSIS-BIB - since 1969 and continues;
- CASSIS-CLASS ;
- CASSIS-ASSIGN - since august 1980 and continues;
- CASSIS-ASSIST;
- DIAPAT-RU - since 1994 up to now and continues.

VIII. Other relevant matters concerning education and training in, and promotion of, the use of patent information, including technical assistance to developing countries

In 1998 the international activity have been carried out in the following main directions: participation in the meetings of the governing bodies, committees and working groups of the WIPO, cooperation with the EPO and bilateral cooperation.

1. Training courses for national and foreign participants, use of audio-visual means

In the frame of PHAR-RIPP in different forms of qualification and training in 25 employees of the Office have taken part in 1998.

2. Assistance for developing countries (sending...)

Two-week training course for 2 persons (one from Jamaica and one from Palestine) was carried out.

3. Promotional Activities (seminars, exhibitions, visits, advertising, etc.)

Representatives of the Bulgarian Patent Office took part in different working meetings and official visits, the most important of which are the following:

- * RIPP coordination meetings in the Hague and in Tallinn, Estonia;
- * Participation of the President of the Bulgarian Patent Office in business delegation accompanying the President of the Republic of Bulgaria Mr Petar Stoyanov in the USA;
- * Visit to the China Patent Office of five persons delegation in the frame of the bilateral cooperation;
- * Participation of the President of the Office in the official delegation with the President of the Republic of Bulgaria at the head to the Chinese Peoples Republic;
- * Participation in the Conference of the Ministers of the World Trade Organisation and participation in the official celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Establishing of International Trade System;
- * Participation in the Workshop on Case Law in the area of Intellectual Property organised by the Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office of the European Commission.

4. Studies to identify trends in new technology (technical assistance)

During the year several seminars on problems concerning the Intellectual Property protection have been organised and carried out in cooperation with the WIPO, the EPO and other authorities and institutions interested and working at this area, namely:

- * Seminar "Geographical Indications;
- * National Seminar on Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in connection with the TRIPS agreement;
- * Seminar "European Patent and Claim Drafting

5. Other activities

The Bulgarian Patent Office representatives took part in working meetings in the frame of WIPO and the EPO having great importance for the policy of the Office, namely:

- * Extraordinary Session of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO;
- * Joint Technical Meeting concerning the accession of Bulgaria to the European Patent Convention;
- * 7th Meeting of the Committee on Patent Law;
- * Meeting of the Administrative Council of the EPO;
- * 33rd series of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO;
- * Committee on Patent Law;
- * Meeting of the Administrative Council of the EPO;
- * First Session of the Working Groups of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies.