

SCIT.ATR.PI.2004.BG

Annual Technical Report 2004 on Patent Information Activities submitted by Bulgaria (SCIT /ATR/PI/2004/BG)

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

The term "patent" covers utility models and Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in their Annual Technical Reports on Industrial Design Information Activities.

I. Evolution of patent activities

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

423 patent applications for inventions have been filed in Bulgarian Patent Office this year. This number represents significant decrease in comparison to 2003 owing to the joining of Bulgaria to the European Patent Convention in July 2002. The total number of domestic applications was 290, 263 of them – of domestic applicants as this number represents slight decrease in comparison to the previous year.

Totally 19 European Patents came into force in Bulgaria in 2004.

Totally 95 utility model applications were filed to the office in 2004.

The number of the foreign patent applications in 2004 was 133 as 128 of them were filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

27 Bulgarian patent applications according to PCT and 1 European patent application have been processed and filed to the International Bureau of WIPO in the year 2004.

The applicants have filed 53 applications for new plant varieties in the year 2004 as 49 of them – of Bulgarian and 4 – of foreign applicants. 1 new animal breed application by Bulgarian applicant was filed as well.

A general review of the inventive activity in the different fields shows that essential change has occurred in comparison with the previous years mainly in the area of the patents for inventions.

In the year 2004 were granted 298 patents for inventions (212 of them – foreign), 63 patents for utility models (only domestic), 63 certificates for new plant varieties and animal breeds.

856 patents for inventions and utility models are not already in force since January 2004 for non-payment of annual fees. Up to December 31, 2004 the total number of active Bulgarian patents for inventions is 1999 as 539 of them of domestic and 1460 – of foreign applicants (1172 – according to PCT and 288 – national patents). The active patents for utility models up to the same date amount of 241 as 235 of them – of Bulgarian and 6 – of foreign applicants.

Since January 2004, 169 plant varieties and animal breed certificates are not in force for non-payment of annual fees. Up to December 31, 2004 the number of active certificates is 389.

Trends or areas experiencing rapid changes with respect to the previous year

None

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

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

Official publications on paper

In the year 2004 BPO continued preparing and publishing of its official publications on paper. 12 regular 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. The Official Bulletin was being distributed to 71 national and 45 foreign subscribers in 39 countries during the year.

The English language version Patent Abstracts of Bulgaria was being sent to 7 countries.

299 specifications with totally 6203 pages have been processed and issued.

In the year 2004 the total number of granted patents for inventions and utility models was 494 and the number of European patents enforced in Bulgaria was 19.

The Patent Office maintains another very important source of patent information, namely:

State Register for Patents for Inventions

State Register for European Patents in force in Bulgaria

State Register for Patents for Utility Models

State register for New Plant varieties and Animal Breeds

State Register for Topologies of Integrated Circuits.

In the year 2004 BPO continued extracting of data from the national database and printing of specifications on paper to be sent to the producing Hungarian firm Arcanum and included into the ESPACE-PRECES CD-ROM product. 299 specifications on paper with totally 6203 pages (included in the Official Bulletin from No. 1/2004 to No. 12/2004) and files containing bibliographic data and abstracts (in Bulgarian) were sent during the year.

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

The following main types of announcements were published in the year 2004 in the Official Bulletin:

- * bibliographic data and abstracts of patent applications - 662;
- * announcements for granted patents - 299;
- * bibliographic data and abstracts of utility model applications - 99;
- * announcements for granted utility model patents - 63;
- * announcements for new plant varieties and animal breeds applications - 41;
- * announcements for certificates granted for new plant varieties - 54;
- * announcements for certificates granted for new animal breeds - 1;
- * announcements for inventors' certificates transformed to plant varieties certificates - 4;
- * announcements for European patents in force in Bulgaria - 19;
- * announcements for European patent applications in force in Bulgaria - 4;
- * announcements for marks registered - 3414;
- * announcements for industrial designs registered - 359;
- * changes in the patent applications and granted patents - 202;
- * changes in registered marks - 3631;
- * changes in registered industrial designs - 72;
- * announcements for licensing agreements for patents - 10;
- * announcements for licensing agreements for registered marks - 346;
- * announcements for licensing agreements for industrial designs - 11.

In each number of the Official Bulletin of the BPO were published as well:

- numerical and systematic indexes of applications and grants for inventions and utility models;
- numerical index of applications and published certificates (if any) for new plant varieties and animal breeds.

The Annual Report of the Bulgarian Patent Office for 2004 has been published in Bulgarian and in English language this year. It is also accessible via Internet.

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

In the year 2004 Bulgarian patent documentation was continuously stored on paper, microforms, on CD/DVD-ROMs.

Word processing and office automation

In the year 2004 texts of 299 specifications with totally 6203 pages and 24 regular numbers of the Bulletin (12 - in Bulgarian and 12 - in English language) were composed by means of word processing and circulated for public use.

In 2004 the Bulgarian Patent Office web site has been regularly updated, completed and maintained. Access is provided throughout two different interfaces - Bulgarian and English. The web-site contains information about: main tasks, functions and structure of the office; official publications; legal texts; Central Patent Library activity and information sources; services of the Office for the public; service prices and fees; forms applications for different titles of protection; texts of classifications in the IP field; list of patent representatives; news, contacts, FAQs etc. As a result of the permanent efforts to broaden the information services of the patent office and to make them accessible in an easier way, in 2004 the on-line version of an information system for searching all national trade marks registrations - BPO-Online, was launched. It provides links to National Offices sites and International organizations.

This year initial steps towards development and concluding of an agreement with the European Patent Office for implementation of the automation tool-box system EPTOS were made. This system will facilitate the entire working process in the office. The development and implementation of the system is expected to be started in 2005.

This year keying-in into the Common Software of English language abstracts and titles of published patent and utility model applications and granted patents has started. Abstracts and titles for all documents announced in the Official Bulletin from number 1/2004 to number 12/2004 were entered into the system. All Bulgarian language abstracts back to the year 2000 were entered into the system.

Information for all records made in the State Register concerning licensing agreements has been entered in Common Software as well. All changes in the legal status of applications and granted patents for inventions and utility models published in the Official Bulletin has been reflected properly in the automation system.

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

In July 2004 new Eposcan - OCR technique was installed and started to be used for scanning and OCR-ing of texts of specifications of patent and utility model applications to be stored in electronic form for later processing, publishing, information exchange etc.

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

Classification and reclassification activities; Classification system used, e.g., International Patent Classification (IPC), other classification (please indicate whether or not patent documents are classified by your Office and, if so, which classification is used)

The new patent applications of the Bulgarian patent documents are classified according to the 7th edition of the IPC. The Bulgarian Patent Office does not reclassify patent documents.

Hybrid system indexing

Hybrid system indexing is used in classifying of patent applications.

Bibliographic data and full-text processing for search purposes

During the year 724 specifications (362 of them - in systematically ordered files and 362 - in numerical files) of patents for inventions and utility model patents were prepared and ordered for examiners' use in the Bulgarian patent file. 761 first pages of published patent applications and 299 specifications of rejected applications for patents for inventions, which are published and examined since 01.06.1993 onwards, were lodged into the file. 88 accepted applications for patents for inventions deemed to be withdrawn (for non-payment of the fees) were also lodged into the file. In the systematical file on paper were also lodged 19 European patents and 4 European patent applications which entered into force in Bulgaria in 2004.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

File building

In 2004 the Central Patent Library has continued to maintain and update the specialised paper file for the examination including the patent documents of Bulgaria, Germany and Russia as well as the first pages of the patent documents of Great Britain.

Documentation from other offices maintained and/or considered part of the available search file

In 2004 the specialized search file (on paper) for the examination including the patent documents/first pages of Bulgaria, Germany, Great Britain and Russia applications has been continuously maintained and updated.

V. Activities in the field of computerized and other mechanized search systems

In-house systems (online/offline)

In the CD-ROM collections of the office 395 searches for search purposes were carried out. Common Software for patents is used in everyday work of the patent examiners.

External databases

The access to Delphion and esp@cenet databases via Internet was utilized in everyday use.

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

Common Software up-grade up to version 3.2.4 has been finalized this year. Preparation for up-grade to the next 3.2.5 version is in process. With relation to connecting of the BPO to Patnet (the European Patent Organization network of countries - members to the EPC) a Memorandum between BPO and EPO was signed concerning building connection between both offices. A Patnet set for access was delivered to the BPO. B_ISDN and 2 Mbps dedicated communication lines were built.

Reconfiguration of the internal net was made in 2004. The fire-wall was up-graded.

Two new software products have been implemented this year for ensuring inter-connection between the Common Software and the accounting and fees automation system.

Bulgarian Patent Office took part in a very important national project financed in the frame of PHARE project called Building of A National Network for Co-operation and Information Exchange for Intellectual and Industrial Property Rights Protection.

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

- hardware:
- Server: HP rp 5430
- Workstations: Intel Pentium based PCs, about 60;
- Network – LAN 100 Mbps
- software:
- Server: Unix 11.xx as OS, Informix 7.3 as DBMS;
- Workstations: Windows'98 and Windows'XP as OS, MS Office as documents management, etc.
- carriers used: CDs, DVDs;

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)

Planning, administration, automation, security, buildings

The Central Patent Library automation center disposes of 5 work-stations placed in the public library for retrieval purposes and facilitating the access to the specialized collections and data-bases on electronic carriers and in the Internet.

Collecting, acquisitions, preparation

The annual increment to the paper collections in the Central Patent Library for 2004 amounts to approximately 200 000 patent documents of 4 countries and 2 international organizations (EPO and WIPO). 1200 Official bulletins of national patent offices and international organizations were received and placed at public disposal.

In the year under review the existing electronic collection containing the patent documents of 25 countries and 2 international organizations has been completed with approximately 2300 discs.

Collection management, preservation

The Central Patent Library presently disposes of some 20 million patent documents on paper of 30 countries and 2 international organizations.

Information services available to the public (including computerized services and search files contained in libraries remote from your Office and patent information posted by your Office on the World Wide Web)

In 2004 the Central Patent Library reading room was visited by some 2400 customers who made use of 5000 folders containing patent documents on paper, 12 000 official gazettes, 2200 theoretical materials and more than 1200 CD/DVD-ROMs. Copies of some 13000 documents on different media have been made. With the assistance of the library's specialists approx. 500 searches in BPO patents and utility models bibliographic database, 2000 searches in the electronic collections and 1500 – in the internet databases - were carried out. In the year under review some 80 consultations were given to the clients of the CPL.

The annual Catalogue of the new literature including 391 entries with bibliographical data in the original language of the publication has been published and distributed to 54 outside users.

In 2004 following number of charged preliminary searches has been carried-out for public use:

- in the field of inventions – 566;
- in the field of marks – 4083;
- in the field of industrial designs – 160.

Copies of 10 000 documents stored on different data carriers have been provided to the IP information users.

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information

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 (up to number 12/2004) has been sent to EPIDOS - Vienna and to the European Patent Office Branch in the Hague. The same data have been loaded into the web page of the office.

In the year 2004 the BPO continued sending to the producing firm ARCANUM, Budapest, Hungary specifications to be incorporated in the ESPACE-PRECEs and ACCESS-PRECEs CD-ROM products. 299 specifications (included in the Bulletin from No. 1/2004 to No. 12/2004) with totally 6203 pages and files containing bibliographical data and abstracts (in Bulgarian) were being sent during the year.

In the frame of the mutual exchange of patent information 4380 specifications for 365 patents were being sent abroad during the year. The Official Bulletin of the BPO was being sent monthly to 65 subscribers in Bulgaria and 47 foreign subscribers in 41 countries. 12 issues of Patent Abstracts of Bulgaria in English were being sent to 7 Industrial Property Offices and libraries abroad.

Loading of national data in Bulgarian and in English language to the Bulgarian esp@cenet server continued. In this connection all bibliographic data of published applications and grants for inventions and utility models for the period from January 2004 to December 2004 have been extracted from the internal databases and sent to the EPO Branch in The Hague.

National data to be incorporated into the UPOV-ROM database for new plant varieties have been sent to UPOV this year.

To meet the goal set by the Administrative Council of the EPO to obtain patent documents of all member states in electronic form back to the year 1920, BPO lent its numerical back-file collection to the EPO (French company Jouve) to process the data in appropriate format for data capture and integration into the EPO databases and esp@cenet. The BPO sent copies of first pages of all national first filings to the EPO for translation of the bibliographic data including abstracts (if available) for searching purposes.

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 38 priority documents of Bulgarian patent applications were granted and sent abroad.

Medium allowed for filing applications

At 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 should file the application in the required form on paper. Application forms are made available to patent representatives and applicants on diskettes. Since this year they are accessible in the BPO web site as well (www.bpo.bg).

This year BPO has taken first steps in direction to implementation of the EPO EPTOS project. Its first phase concerns the electronic filing of patent applications. Start of this part of the project is foreseen for the fourth quarter of 2005. In 2004 initial preparations and examining the legal framework which is the bases for online filing implementation were made.

Implementation of the Statement of Principles Concerning the Changeover to Electronic Data Carriers for the Exchange of Patent Documents (please provide a status report on the extent to which your Office has changed over 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 in the framework of the mutual documentation exchange submits its patent documents on ESPACE-PRECEs and ACCESS-PRECEs CD-ROM collection. The office receives 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 to now and continues;
- ESPACE-PRECEs - since the 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 – since 1992 up to now and continues;
- ESPACE-ACCESS-EUROPE – since 1978 up to now and continues;
- BREF - since 1978 (FR-A, WO-A, EP-A) up to now and continues;
- PAJ – since 1976 to 1993 (according to the IPC) and since 1994 up to now and continues (according to the number of patent); since 1989 – to 1997 – unexamined patent applications of foreign applicants, ordered according to IPC (Sections A - H)
- USAPAT - since 1994 up to now and continues;
- USAPat Backfile – since 1790 to 1994 and continues;
- USAApp – since week 11, 2001
- GLOBALPat – since 1971 to 1996 (according to the IPC) and since 1997 up to 1999 (according to the IPC and the document publication date);
- USPS - since 1975 up to now and continues;
- CASSIS-BIB - since 1969 up to now and continues;
- CASSIS-CLASS – since 1995 up to now and continues;
- CASSIS-ASSIGN - since august 1980 and continues;
- CASSIS-ASSIST – since 1995 up to now and continues
- DIAPAT-RU - since 1994 up to now and continues
- PCT Gazette –since 1999 – up to 2001

The collections on CD-ROM for public use in the Patent Library are for 30 countries and 2 international organizations. BPO continued to provide patent information to the EPO branches in Vienna and in The Hague in the framework of the mutual data exchange. Loading of data to the Bulgarian esp@cenet server has been regularly made in 2004.

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

Promotional activities (seminars, exhibitions, visits, advertising, etc.)

EPO SE 7: Workshop on Information technology: Concepts and Infrastructures for Patent Offices incl. PATLIB, Portugal, 17-21.05.2004
EPO SE8: Administrative issues and related information systems in the patent granting procedure, the Hague, 11.10.-20.10.2004
EPO SE 14: Search and examination of European patent applications, Berlin, 03.05. – 12.05.04
EPO Seminar: EP patent grant procedure and patent information products, Munich, 08-09.11.2004
EPO Seminar: IP-training in Europe – Co-operation with Member States , Munich, 30.11.-01.12.2004
PATLIB 2004 – Vilamoura, Portugal, 19-21.05.2004
EPIDOS Annual Conference – Prague, 24-27.10.2004
Epoline Annual Conference – Salzburg, 23-24.11.2004
BPO participated in National Youth Exhibition “Expo Intellect 04” organized by “Bulgarian intellect movement” in Sofia, Technical University, 30.11.-05.12.2004
BPO participated in WIPO-EPO Seminar “European Patent System”, Bulgarian Parliament, November, 2004
Regional meeting “Innovations and competitiveness”, Varna, May, 2004
Seminar: Training on ESPACE-MIMOSA
International Symposium – Industrial Property Rights and Economic Development, 2-3 July 2004, Ankara
BPO Round table: Enhance the creativity, 26.04.2004
Regional Balkan seminar on assessment and valuation of IP rights and research results, Varna, 19-21 May 2004

IX. Other relevant matters

1.	Classification is allotting one or more classification symbols (e.g., IPC symbols) to a patent application, either before or during search and examination, which symbols are then published with the patent application.
2.	Preclassification is allotting an initial broad classification symbol (e.g., IPC class or subclass, or administrative unit) to a patent application, using human or automated means for internal administrative purposes (e.g., routing an application to the appropriate examiner). Usually preclassification is applied by the administration of an office.
3.	Reclassification is the reconsideration and usually the replacement of one or more previously allotted classification symbols to a patent document, following a revision and the entry into force of a new version of the Classification system (e.g., the IPC). The new symbols are available on patent databases.