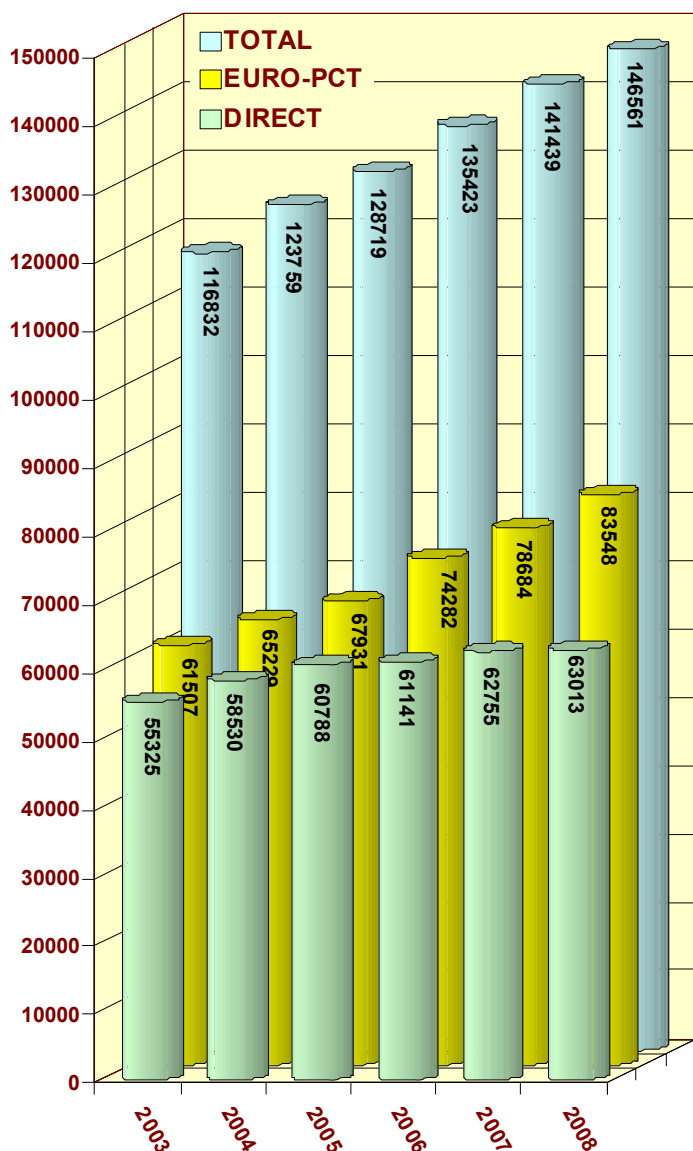


## European Patent Office Annual Report For 2008

The EPO Annual Report indicates that the trend of growth in the total number of European patent applications filed persisted into 2008 and another new high was reached. Growth continued to be driven mainly by Euro-PCT applications. However, the growth trend was less uniform than in previous years. The numbers of applications filed by applicants from some countries, and the numbers of applications filed by some companies, fell below the levels of 2007. Indications for 2009 suggest that the trend will be less favourable than in 2008.

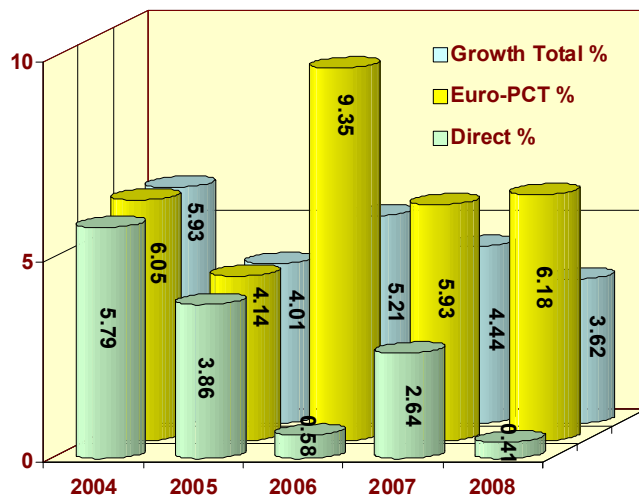
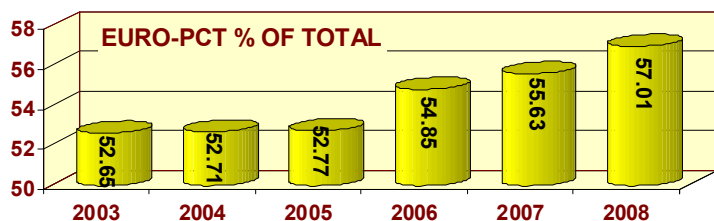


### Overall Growth in 2008

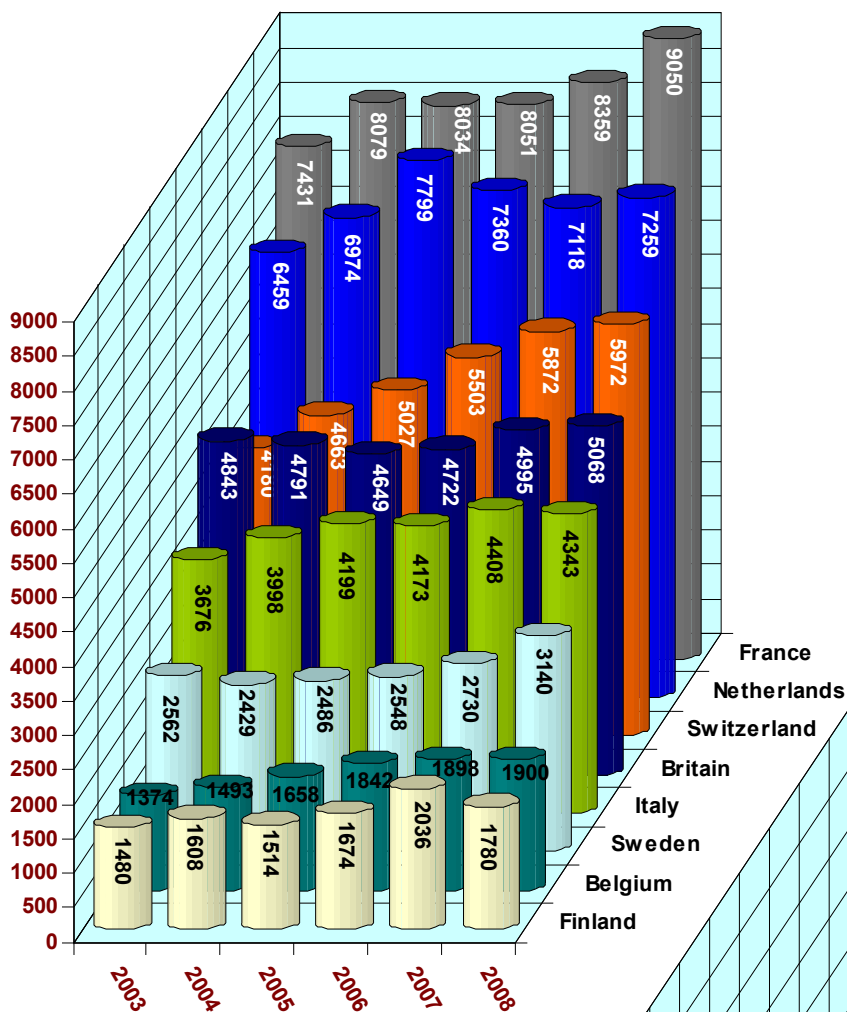
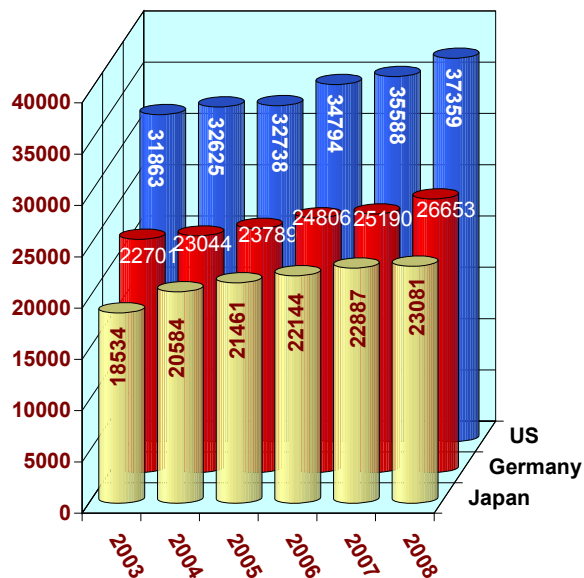
The total number of European patent applications filed in 2008 increased over the 2007 level by about 5000, representing growth of just under 4%. This is slightly less growth than in the previous year.

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 just over 6% compared to 2007. In 2008 Euro-PCT applications accounted for 57% of total European applications filed.

Direct European applications grew only very slightly in 2008 – by less than 0.5%.



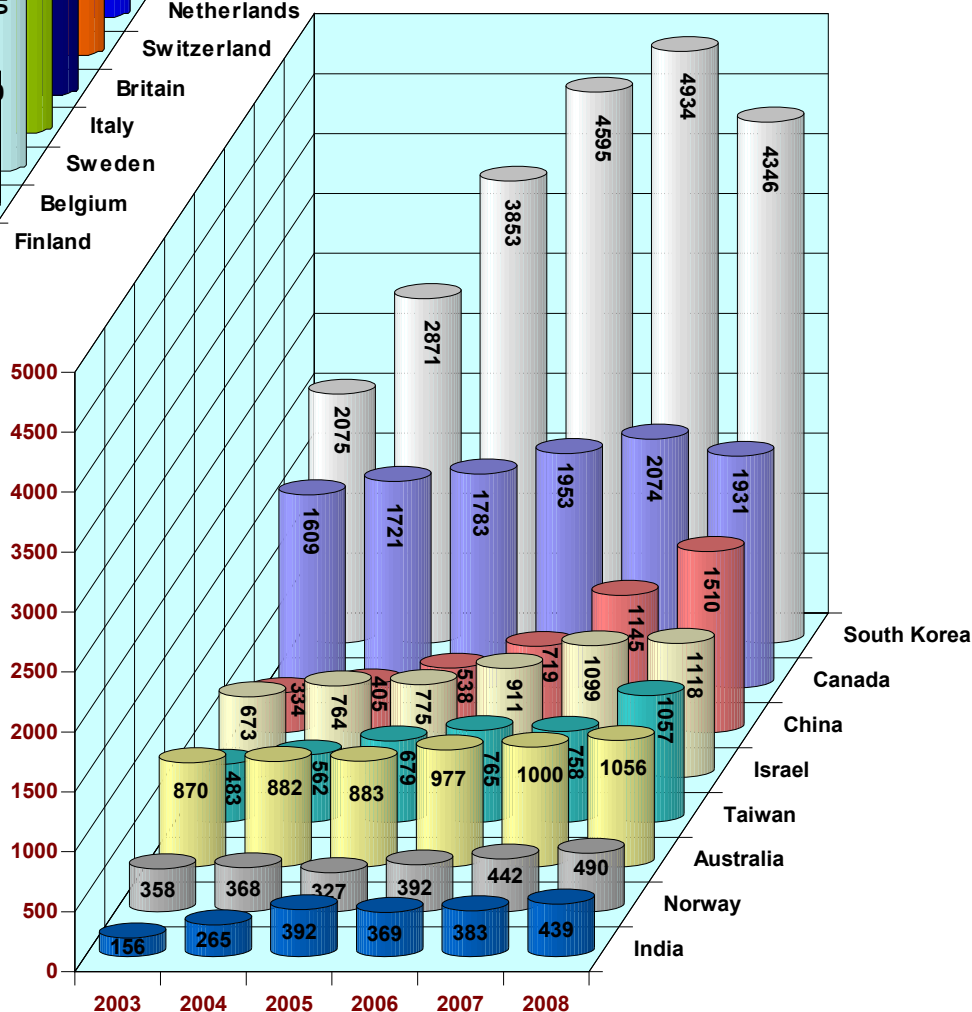
US, German and Japanese applicants still file the greatest numbers of European patent applications. In 2008, applications by US applicants increased by just under 5% and applications by German applicants increased by nearly 6%. Applications by Japanese applicants increased by less than 1%.



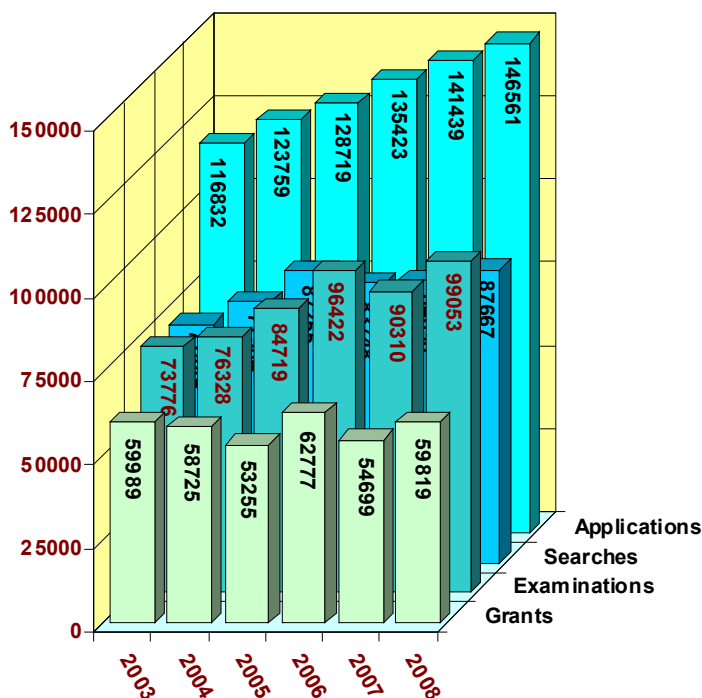
Filings by the top eight European contracting states after Germany showed overall growth of just under 3% in 2008. Sweden showed strong growth of 15%, and France 8%. In contrast, Finland showed a fall of 12% and Italy a fall of 1.5%.

Applicants from countries - other than European contracting states, the US and Japan - which file most European patent applications showed overall around 1% growth in the numbers of applications filed (compared to 10% growth in 2007).

Developments for individual countries varied considerably: China and Taiwan showed growth of over 30%, while applications from South Korea fell by over 11%.



The full EPO Annual Report for 2008 contains more detailed information. The Annual Report is available on the EPO website: <http://www.epo.org/about-us/office/annual-reports/2008.html>.



## Processing of European Patent Applications - Search - Examination - Grant

In 2008, the EPO received 205,600 requests for search, a 4% increase on 2007. The EPO completed 186,800 searches, 5% more than in 2007. 87,700 searches related to European patent applications, while 82,100 were performed by the EPO as a PCT searching authority. 17,100 further searches were completed on behalf of national offices of contracting states or others. Despite the increased in searches completed, the number of outstanding searches rose further by 10% to 195,600. The EPO completed European searches after an average of 7.2 months.

In 2008, requests for examination of European patent applications increased by 3.5 % to 126,700. Requests for International Preliminary Examination of PCT applications fell by 2% to 10,100.

99,000 European examinations and 10,400 PCT preliminary examinations were completed in 2008, a 7.5% increase over 2007. Of European examinations completed in 2008, 49.5% ended with patent grant. In 22% of cases the application was abandoned after the search was completed, and in 28% of cases the application was refused or abandoned during the substantive examination phase.

The number of patents granted in 2008 increased by 9% over 2007. For patents granted in 2008, on average the time taken to reach grant was 43 months after the application was received (down from 43.7 months in 2007). The time taken to grant varies significantly between technologies, from 36 months for Vehicles and General Technology to 60 months for Biotechnology. Average completion time for all procedures, irrespective of their outcome, was 39 months. Despite the increased number of examinations completed, the number of European examination files awaiting a final outcome rose by 5.9 % to 485,700.

## Top 25 Filing Countries – Growth in Applications in 2008

The tables below illustrate the levels of growth in applications by applicants from the top 25 countries filing European patent applications filed in 2008. They indicate rankings of the top 25 countries by absolute growth in the numbers of applications filed compared to 2007, and by percentage growth over 2007.

Rank	Country	Applications filed in 2008	Applications filed in 2007	Growth
1	USA	37359	35588	1771
2	Germany	26653	25190	1463
3	France	9050	8359	691
4	Sweden	3140	2730	410
5	China	1510	1145	365
6	Taiwan	1057	758	299
7	Japan	23081	22887	194
8	Denmark	1586	1400	186
9	Netherlands	7289	7118	171
10	Austria	1492	1382	110
11	Switzerland	5972	5871	101
12	Israel	1118	1039	79
13	United Kingdom	5068	4995	73
14	Ireland	484	423	61
15	India	439	383	56
16	Australia	1056	1000	56
17	Norway	490	442	48
18	Spain	1322	1283	39
19	Singapore	282	249	33
20	Belgium	1900	1898	2
21	Barbados	298	358	-60
22	Italy	4343	4408	-65
23	Canada	1931	2074	-143
24	Finland	1780	2036	-256
25	South Korea	4346	4934	-588

Rank	Country	Applications filed in 2008	Applications filed in 2007	Growth %
1	Taiwan	1057	758	39,45
2	China	1510	1145	31,88
3	Sweden	3140	2730	15,02
4	India	439	383	14,62
5	Ireland	484	423	14,42
6	Denmark	1586	1400	13,29
7	Singapore	282	249	13,25
8	Norway	490	442	10,86
9	France	9050	8359	8,27
10	Austria	1492	1382	7,96
11	Israel	1118	1039	7,60
12	Germany	26653	25190	5,81
13	Australia	1056	1000	5,60
14	USA	37359	35588	4,98
15	Spain	1322	1283	3,04
16	Netherlands	7289	7118	2,40
17	Switzerland	5972	5871	1,72
18	United Kingdom	5068	4995	1,46
19	Japan	23081	22887	0,85
20	Belgium	1900	1898	0,11
21	Italy	4343	4408	-1,47
22	Canada	1931	2074	-6,89
23	South Korea	4346	4934	-11,92
24	Finland	1780	2036	-12,57
25	Barbados	298	358	-16,76

36 Contracting States - Member Countries of the European Patent System -	
Code	Member state
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
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LI	Liechtenstein
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MC	Monaco
	Former Yugoslav
MK	Republic of Macedonia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
SM	San Marino*
TR	Turkey
	* From 1.7.2009
	<b>3 Extension states</b>
AL	Albania
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
RS	Serbia

Top Filing Countries - European Patent Applications 2008				
Rank 2008 (2007)	Country	Filings		
		2008	2007	
1 (1)	USA	37359	35588	
2 (2)	Germany	26653	25176	
3 (3)	Japan	23081	22887	
4 (4)	France	9050	8328	
5 (5)	Netherlands	7289	6999	
6 (6)	Switzerland	5972	5805	
7 (7)	United Kingdom	5068	4979	
8 (8)	South Korea	4346	4934	
9 (9)	Italy	4343	4392	
10 (10)	Sweden	3140	2733	
11 (11)	Canada	1931	2074	
12 (13)	Belgium	1900	1900	
13 (12)	Finland	1780	2045	
14 (14)	Denmark	1586	1408	
15 (17)	China	1510	1145	
16 (15)	Austria	1492	1379	
17 (16)	Spain	1322	1283	
18 (18)	Israel	1118	1039	
19 (20)	Taiwan	1057	758	
20 (19)	Australia	1056	1000	
21 (21)	Norway	490	442	
22 (22)	Ireland	484	415	
23 (23)	India	439	383	
24 (24)	Barbados	298	358	
25 (26)	Singapore	282	249	

Top 25 Companies by European Patent Grants in 2008				
Rank 2008 (2007)	Company	Grants 2008	Grants 2007	
1 (2)	Robert Bosch	941	665	
2 (1)	Siemens	658	835	
3 (6)	Samsung	622	464	
4 (3)	Panasonic	602	621	
5 (4)	Philips	548	619	
6 (7)	Ericsson	478	443	
7 (8)	Canon	449	420	
8 (10)	BASF	410	366	
9 (16)	Hitachi	369	268	
10 (11)	Mitsubishi	361	356	
11 (5)	Alcatel Lucent	356	594	
12 (9)	Sony	342	381	
13 (13)	Nokia	330	324	
14 (20)	Fujitsu	329	254	
15 (15)	Honda	325	299	
16 (19)	Toyota	307	262	
17 (-)	Continental	299	(-)	
18 (-)	NXP	295	(-)	
19 (-)	LG Electronics	291	(-)	
20 (22)	Fujifilm	283	252	
21 (14)	Seiko Epson	281	322	
22 (21)	Sumitomo	269	253	
23 (12)	General Electric	255	341	
24 (-)	Delphi Technologies	253	(-)	
25 (-)	Bayer	246	(-)	

- Top 25 Companies - by European Patent Applications filed in 2008							
Rank 2008 (2007)	Company	Filings 2008	Filings 2007	Rank 2008 (2007)	Company	Filings 2008	Filings 2007
1 (1)	Philips	2857	3222	14 (19)	IBM	720	632
2 (3)	Siemens	1863	1850	15 (18)	Bayer	697	641
3 (2)	Samsung	1677	2478	16 (11)	Mitsubishi	688	809
4 (4)	BASF	1664	1474	17 (9)	Nokia	686	873
5 (6)	Robert Bosch	1425	1166	18 (12)	General Electric	652	773
6 (16)	Qualcomm	1134	669	19 (-)	Ericsson	633	(-)
7 (7)	LG Electronics	1108	1080	20 (-)	DSM	628	(-)
8 (5)	Panasonic	1104	1395	21 (23)	Fujifilm	628	540
9 (15)	NXP	981	670	22 (-)	Microsoft	627	(-)
10 (17)	Toyota	869	659	23 (23)	Canon	588	540
11 (8)	Sony	802	929	24 (-)	Thomson Licensing	586	(-)
12 (14)	Honeywell	791	709	25 (-)	Huawei	572	(-)
13 (13)	Hitachi	741	755				

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