

**Trilateral
Statistical Report
2000**

PREFACE

This joint annual Trilateral Statistical Report contains a compilation of statistics from the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). It is also partially based on statistics from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva.

Besides promoting a better understanding of the importance of patent rights in the world, its purpose is to facilitate an understanding of the operations of each office and to increase general awareness about the patent grant procedures of the three offices. The report is a supplement to the separate annual reports of each of the three offices, and is one of the fruits of trilateral cooperation.

To gain some insight on the patent statistics and trends contained in this report, a general overview of the world economy is presented. However, interpreting worldwide patenting activity behaviour in terms of economic developments is difficult because the exact relationships with the economic factors that influence the number of patent applications are not known. Political and technological considerations should also be taken into account.

Global economic output in 2000 grew by an estimated 4.8 percent as reported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The world economy was much stronger in 2000 as compared to 1999 when it grew by 3.5 percent. A large part of the growth in 2000 occurred in the early part of the year. The world economy has actually been slowing since that time and a slowdown is expected to continue into the first half of 2001. However, the outlook for 2001 remains positive, and the IMF is projecting a 3.2 percent growth rate as of May 2001.

The global economic slowdown in the second half of 2000 has been led by a significant slowdown in the United States, a slowing recovery in Japan and moderating growth in Europe and a number of emerging market countries. Although GDP in the United States is estimated to have increased by 5.0 percent in 2000, which is historically high, there was a significant slowdown in the latter part of the year. A one percent annualized U.S. GDP growth rate was reported for the fourth quarter of 2000. Part of the slowdown was attributed to tight monetary policy, rising energy prices and a significant weakening in the technology sector, which has led to a sharp fall in equity prices. In Japan, economic activity appears to have stagnated in 2000, although GDP is estimated to have increased by 1.7 percent. Japan had a strong first quarter but growth weakened during the following quarters because of slowing business investment, weak consumer confidence, sluggish external demand and a deflationary environment. Growth in the European Union has also slowed, but the slowdown is expected to have been relatively less severe. A firming Euro and past structural reforms have helped the European Union weather part of the recent global economic slowdown. During 2000 the European Union economy grew by an estimated rate of 3.4 percent.

Other key factors that should be mentioned include Research and Development and the importance of intellectual property in general. Worldwide expenditures on R&D have been trending upwards along with the global economy. Increased spending on innovation has continued to help fuel worldwide patenting. Intellectual property has continued to become more significant in a global economy with intensifying competition. Patents are increasingly being emphasized for a variety of business strategies such as developing favourable partnerships and licensing agreements, capturing market share or perhaps to attract new capital. With a greater emphasis on patenting, there is an expectation that demand will follow.

Multinational diversification of enterprises and globalization of markets and production remained as key business trends in 2000. Countries continued to join the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and harmonize their patent laws towards common international standards. This has stimulated the flow of patent applications across borders. All these factors together have contributed to strong worldwide patenting growth in 2000.

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