



Europäisches
Patentamt
European
Patent Office
Office européen
des brevets

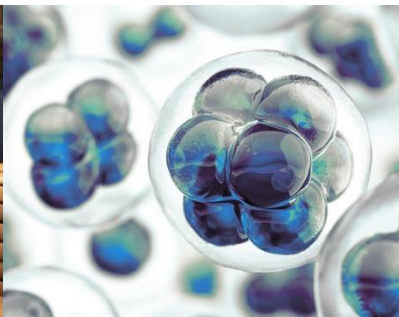
7a. Workload and timeliness at the EPO

US Bar-EPO Liaison Council

Washington, DC, 24 September 2019



Jochen Moser



Head of Department 1322 Patent Procedures Management



24 September 2019

The EPO Annual Report

Trends in patenting

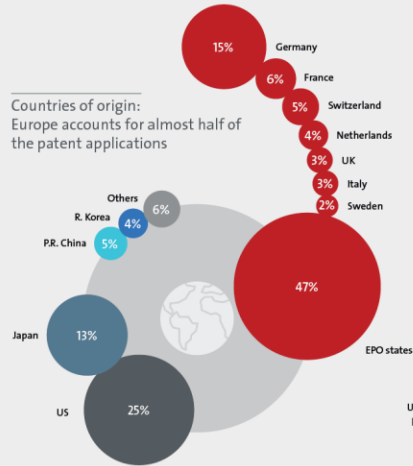
Europe is an attractive technology market for European and international companies

2018

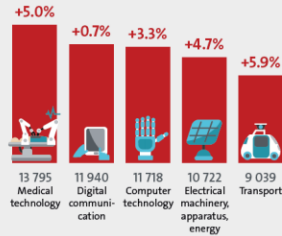
Patent applications at the European Patent Office continue to grow in 2018:



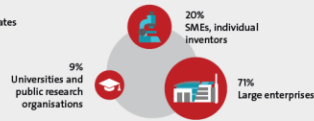
Countries of origin:
Europe accounts for almost half of the patent applications



Top technology fields:



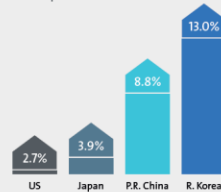
1 in 5 applications is filed by an SME:



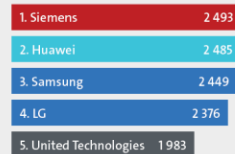
Companies from European countries fuel growth:



Other global growth champions:



Top patent applicants:

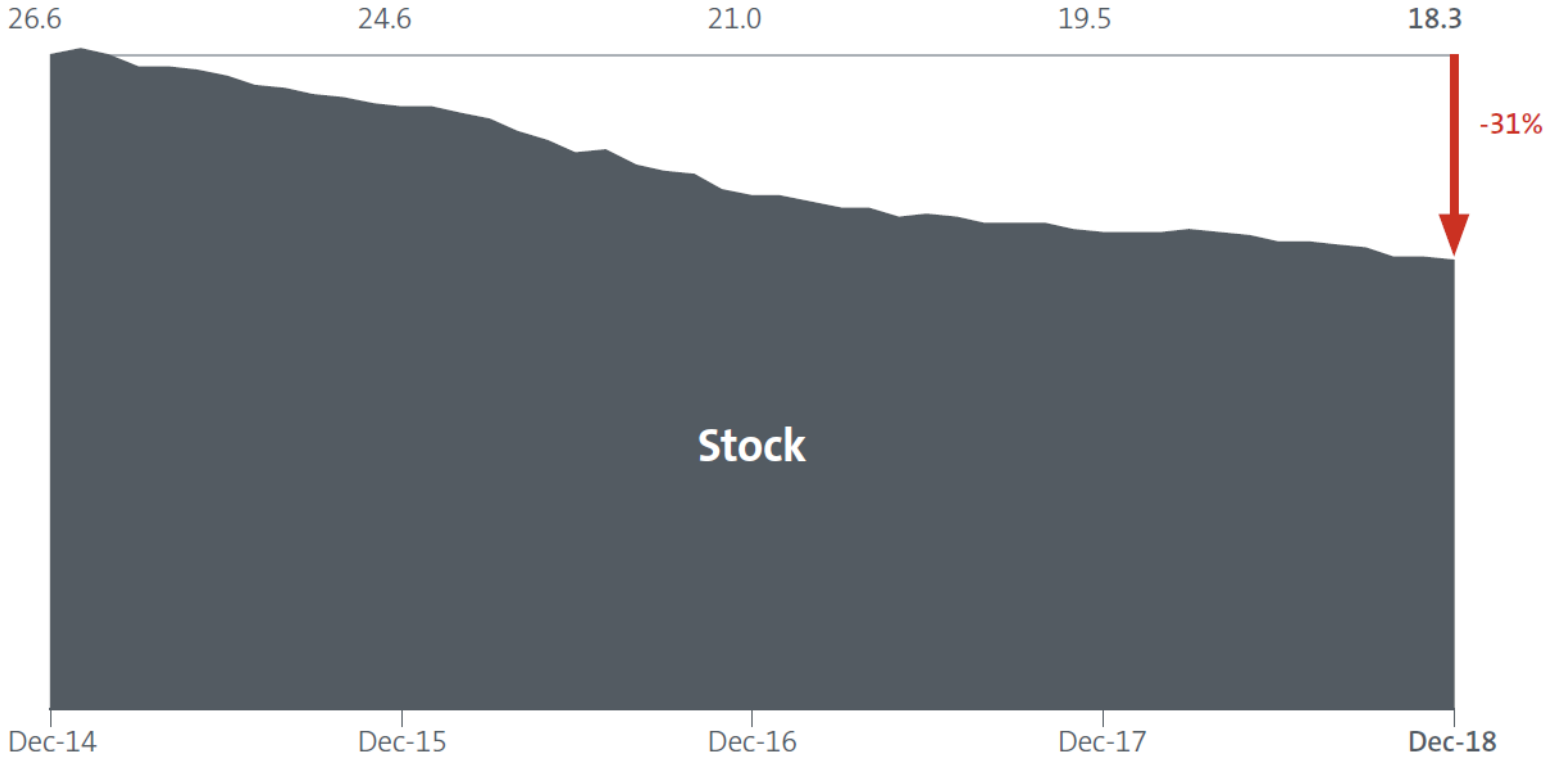


All figures are based on European patent applications.
Source: EPO, Statistis, 21.12.2019.
epo.org/annual-report2018



epo.org/annual-report2018

Significantly reduced backlogs



Speeding up our work processes

Search reports

Delivering search reports within **6 months** of receipt

Examination time

Reducing examination times to just **12 months** on average by 2020

Opposition time

Completing oppositions in **15 months** on average, while ensuring the parties are heard

All searches issued within 6 months

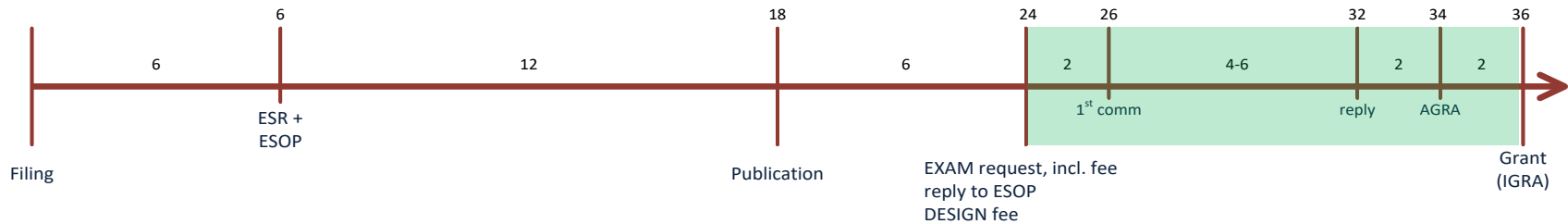
- **Searches consistently delivered in time**
 - “Request for accelerated search” no longer needed!
- **Applies to all search types**
 - PCT
 - European first and second filings
 - Supplementary European search
 - Searches on behalf of national offices
- **All search reports accompanied by written opinion**
 - Partial search report includes provisional opinion in non-unity cases

Current median:
 **4.4 months**


12 months **average** examination

“Paris criteria” translate into **examination on average** in 12 months

- **from:** valid examination request
- **to:** proposal of grant published in file inspection



Goal for 2020:
12 months median

Current median:
 **21.2** months

15 months for **standard** opposition

- **15-month timeline:**

- applies to **standard** cases: **one** opponent and **no** legal complications (e.g. witness hearings)
- extension of time limits only **exceptionally**

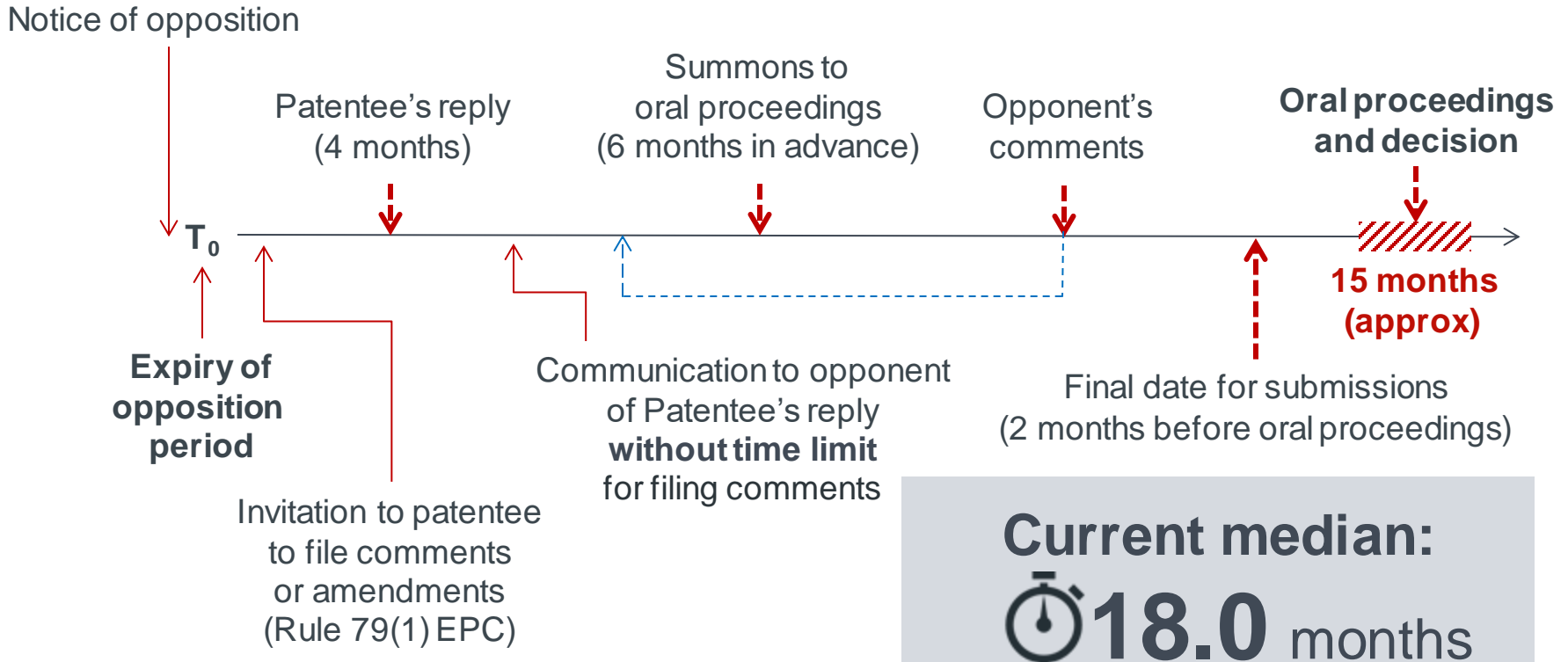
- **Parallel processing:**

- observations and/or amendments filed by the patentee are communicated to the **opponent** for information, **and:**
- file forwarded to the **opposition division** for preparing the next action

- **Swift decision process:**

- **more** summoning to **oral proceedings** at the instance of the EPO
- summons are dispatched at least **six** months in advance
- final date for submissions: **two** months before oral proceedings

15 months for **standard** opposition



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