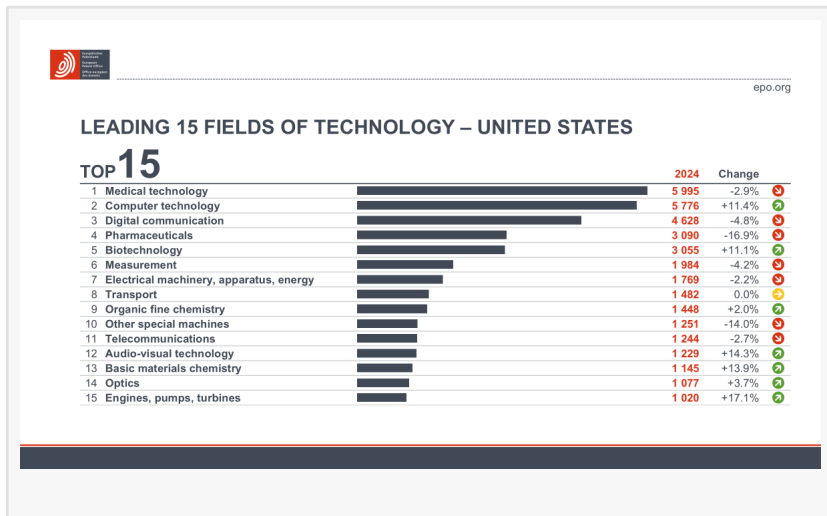


U.S. Ranks First in European Patent Applications, Followed by Germany, Japan, China, and Republic of Korea

MUNICH, GERMANY, March 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ --

- European Patent Office (EPO) received nearly 200,000 patent applications last year, with U.S. companies and inventors contributing nearly a quarter of those
- Key sectors for the U.S.: Medical technology, computer technology, digital communication and pharmaceuticals
- Leading U.S. companies include Qualcomm, RTX, Alphabet, Microsoft, InterDigital
- Top states are California, Massachusetts, New York, Texas, Washington



Companies and inventors from around the world filed 199, 264 patent applications at the European Patent Office (EPO) last year, according to the Patent Index 2024 published today. The U.S. maintained its position as the top country of origin for European patent applications, followed by Germany, Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea. U.S innovators filed 47,787 applications, accounting for 24% of the total at the EPO in 2024.

Overall, the high level of patenting activity at the EPO was on a par with the previous year (2023: 199 452, -0.1%), following three years of significant growth. Patent applications from Europe, including all 39 EPO [member states](#), rose by 0.3%, while those from outside Europe fell slightly (-0.4%). Notably, R. Korea saw the strongest growth (+4.2%), China's growth slowed to +0.5%, while companies and inventors from the U.S. (-0.8%) and Japan (-2.4%) filed fewer applications.

“Despite global uncertainties, U.S. companies and inventors continue to invest in research and development,” said EPO President António Campinos. “The rapid rise of digital technologies and AI is spurring innovation across all sectors. In 2024, the U.S. was one of the main drivers in advancing computer technology to the top technology field at the EPO. This underscores Europe’s significance as a key technology market for U.S. companies, offering a high-quality

patent system that supports the development of strong IP portfolios.”

U.S. Top Fields of Technology: Surge in Computers, led by AI

The leading fields of technology for U.S. applicants at the EPO reflect significant strengths in various high-growth industries. The top five in 2024 were:

1. Medical technology: top field with 5,995 applications, reflecting continued investment in healthcare innovation, although it experienced a slight decrease of 2.9% compared to 2023.
2. Computer technology: with 5,776 applications, this field saw a significant increase of +11.4% from the U.S. Growth from the U.S. was even higher (+20%) in 3. AI-related fields such as machine learning and pattern recognition.
3. Digital communication: which includes inventions related to mobile networks, accounted for 4,628 applications, but experienced a decrease of 4.8%.
4. Pharmaceuticals: with 3,090 applications, saw a notable decrease of 16.9%.
5. Biotechnology: A field which has important applications in medicine, industry and agriculture, saw 3,055 applications, had an increase of 11.1%.

Other notable fields include measurement (which includes sensors), electrical machinery, apparatus, energy (encompassing clean energy and battery-related technologies), transport (including automotive, aerospace and rail industries), and organic fine chemistry, which includes hair and body care products, highlighting sustained interest in personal care innovation.

U.S. Tech Companies Lead Innovation Push

Out of all global applicants, six of the top 20 businesses with most applications at the EPO are U.S.-based. They include: semiconductor manufacturer Qualcomm (with 3,015 patent applications, ranking 4th globally), aerospace and defence company RTX (2,061 applications), Alphabet (1,171), Microsoft (1,131), InterDigital (863), and Apple (806). U.S. companies also lead in several top technology fields at the EPO: Qualcomm filed the most European patent applications in digital communication, RTX led in transport, and Alphabet, Qualcomm and Microsoft were ranked 1st, 4th and 5th in AI-related sub-fields of computer technology.

Samsung back at No. 1 in EPO Applicant Ranking

Samsung was the leading filer of patent applications at the EPO overall in 2024 (having last topped the ranking in 2020), Huawei dropped to second, followed by LG, Qualcomm and RTX. The top 10 includes four companies from Europe, two from R. Korea, two from the US, and one from each of China and Japan.

Top U.S. States Driving Innovation

California led the country's states in patent applications with 15,730, making up more than a third of all applications from the U.S. at the EPO, and the origin of more European patent

applications than countries such as Republic of Korea and France. The state's thriving technology sector fuels this innovation. Other leading states included Massachusetts (3,643 patent applications) New York (2,422 applications), Texas (2,302), and Washington (1,897).

More than a Third of Patent Applications from the U.S. Include a Woman Inventor
In 2024, 37% of all patent applications to the EPO coming from the U.S. named at least one woman as an inventor. This was above the European average of 25%.

Unitary Patent Gains Traction among U.S. Companies

[The Unitary Patent system](#), launched in 2023, continues to gain momentum, offering innovators simpler and more accessible patent protection across 18 EU Member States with a single request to the EPO. Unitary protection was requested for 25.6% of all European patents granted by the EPO in 2024 totalling over 28 000 requests. Patentees from the U.S. had an uptake rate of 16.0% of their European patents transformed into Unitary Patents, which was a significant increase compared to 2023 (10.9%). The top requestors for Unitary Patents in 2024 were Johnson & Johnson, Siemens, Samsung, Qualcomm, and Volvo Group.

Further information

- [View the Patent Index 2024 in full](#)
- Explore and customise statistics in our Statistics & Trends Centre (https://new.epo.org/en/statistics-centre?mtm_campaign=press-multi&mtm_key=patentindex&mtm_medium=agency)
- Access Unitary Patent statistics via our dedicated dashboard (<https://www.epo.org/en/about-us/statistics/statistics-centre#/unitary-patent>)
- Download datasets (MS Excel) in the Download data section of our statistics page (https://www.epo.org/en/about-us/statistics?mtm_campaign=press-multi&mtm_key=patentindex&mtm_medium=agency)
- Check patent trends on the go with the EPO Data Hub mobile app (https://www.epo.org/en/about-us/statistics/epo-data-hub?mtm_campaign=press-multi&mtm_key=patentindex&mtm_medium=agency)
- Read studies on innovation trends at the Observatory on Patents and Technology (https://www.epo.org/en/about-us/observatory-patents-and-technology?mtm_campaign=press-multi&mtm_key=patentindex&mtm_medium=agency)
- EPO's support for SMEs, universities, non-profit organisations and other smaller applicants (<https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/news/new-simplified-fee-system-supports-small-applicants-30-discounts>)

About the EPO

With 6 300 staff members, the European Patent Office (EPO) (<http://www.epo.org/>) is one of the largest public service institutions in Europe. Headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin, Brussels, The Hague and Vienna, the EPO was founded with the aim of strengthening co-operation on patents in Europe. Through the EPO's centralised patent granting procedure, inventors are able to obtain high-quality patent protection in up to 45 countries, covering a

market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.

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