

Glossary:European Patent Convention (EPC)

Statistics Explained

The **European Patent Convention** , abbreviated as **EPC** , signed in Munich in October 1973 (hence also called **Munich Convention**), establishes a uniform patenting system for all countries signatory to the Convention. The European patenting procedure consists of two parts; firstly, the search followed by publication of the application, and secondly, the examination which is only conducted after a formal request by the applicant. The applicant can designate as many contracting states as they want at the moment of filing the application or at the moment the Euro-PCT enters the regional (European) phase. A granted European [patent](#) is protected under national law in each of the countries designated in the application.

Twenty-one countries attended the Munich Diplomatic Conference in 1973 on which the Convention is based. The Convention is now (as of March 2010) in force in 36 countries. In addition to the Contracting States, States may also conclude a cooperation agreement with the [European Patent Office \(EPO\)](#) , known as an extension agreement. The state then becomes "extension state", which means European patents granted by the EPO may be extended to those countries by the payment of additional fees and completion of certain formalities.

Further information

- [European Patent Convention \(EPC\)](#)

Related concepts

- [European Patent Office](#)
- [Patent](#)

Statistical data

- [Patent statistics](#)