

C. PCT 1524

January 8, 2018

Madam,
Sir,

Report on Characteristics of International Search Reports

1. This Circular is addressed to your Office in its capacity as an International Searching Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). In that capacity, and as a member of the quality subgroup of the Meeting of International Authorities under the PCT, your Office is invited to comment on the annexed draft report on characteristics of international search reports with a view to sharing experiences of how to make good use of the information available and identifying useful further information which national Offices and the International Bureau should work towards providing.

Background

2. For the past five years, the International Bureau has prepared reports presenting various characteristics of international search reports for discussion by the International Searching Authorities (see Circulars C. PCT 1360, 1398, 1434, 1463 and 1490).

Updated Report

3. The Annex to this Circular presents a report on characteristics of international search reports, updating the data presented in Circular C. PCT 1490 up to the end of the fourth

quarter of 2016. The underlying data and a further explanation of the description of the data and definitions used are made available on the WIPO website¹.

4. A variety of changes have been proposed over recent years to add to or improve the characteristics. Most of these require additional data from national Offices, most notably in respect of documents cited in the national phase, and will be considered further when reliable feeds of such information become available. In the meantime, the format and content of the reports are unchanged from those presented in Circular C. PCT 1490, save to update the results to provide information concerning international searches transmitted to the International Bureau in 2016 (or in 2015 for the technical breakdowns). A number of possible improvements to presentation will be prepared for the consideration of the quality subgroup.

5. As noted for the previous report, the data for the final year is not complete because some search reports had not been processed by the European Patent Office in time to be reflected in the Autumn 2017 version of PATSTAT, which is the basis of the citation data in the reports. The data in particular for the final two quarters should be treated as highly provisional; comparison of the reports with those produced in 2016 suggests that those characteristics concerned with E and P category citations are particularly likely to deviate from a fully representative sample of international search reports.

6. Technical breakdowns have again been made for four of the characteristics, with a table being included in the package available from the website. As a result of the above concerns, the breakdowns have been made on the characteristics for international search reports from 2015, rather than 2016.

Issues for the Quality Subgroup

7. This subject will be discussed at the physical meeting of the quality subgroup, to be held in Madrid, February 19 and 20, 2018. Comments on the characteristics, how the characteristics can be used effectively and what improvements to the presentation or content of characteristics and other metrics would be useful, are invited on the quality subgroup's electronic forum in advance of the meeting to assist delegations to prepare for an effective discussion of such issues during the physical meeting.

Yours sincerely,



John Sandage
Deputy Director General

Enclosure: Annex: Report on Characteristics of International Search Reports

¹ The full details are available with the electronic version of this circular from <http://www.wipo.int/pct/en/circulars/index.html>.