

ANNUAL REPORT



2022

of the
Visegrad Patent Institute

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of the
Visegrad Patent Institute
2022

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DEAR READER,

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Report of the Visegrad Patent Institute, the summary of the annual work of our innovative international organisation that proudly serves its users as International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in Central Europe with the help of an outstanding regional cooperation and an efficient lean infrastructure.

2022 was a year with a strong dichotomy. It began with a new impetus after the pandemic. Personal contacts were rebuilt, investments and efforts that the Governments of the Visegrad Countries had been making along with the whole innovative ecosystem to recover the economy finally begun to bring tangible results. This positive climate brought a significant increase in the number of international applications at the beginning of the year.

However, 2022 was eventually not the year of recovery. The war in the neighbouring Ukraine turned this promising start around. The pervasive uncertainty and the adverse economic trends were soon reflected in the patenting decisions of our users and

noticeably slowed the pace of international applications down by the second half of the year.

Nonetheless, the positive momentum of the first months was strong enough to keep the number of incoming international applications at the Visegrad Patent Institute on an upward trend compared to the previous years in 2022.

This year also brought significant events in the life of the Visegrad Patent Institute as an international organisation. The international treaty on the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Hungary and the Visegrad Patent Institute was unanimously ratified by the Hungarian Parliament and entered into force on 8 August 2022. The international relations of the Visegrad Patent Institute were strengthened and institutionalised by gaining observer status at the Administrative Council of the European Patent Organisation in June 2022. Last but not least, the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Visegrad Fund opened another channel to better serve the common good and the innovation potential of our region.

The horizon may have looked darker at the end of the year, but the Visegrad Patent Institute stays committed to the faith in our common future with an ever-closer cooperation within our region. Our aim is to project positive messages to our users and potential users to strengthen their optimism and faith in the future and in the patent system. We believe that this positive spirit is one of the driving forces of inventors and economic players in making the decision to protect their inventions.

In this spirit, the Visegrad Patent Institute keeps working on new services and on building an increasingly user-friendly operation to serve the economy of the Central Eastern European region based on the trust of the outstanding players of our innovation ecosystems.

Partnership, mutual trust and respect are the cornerstones of the operation of the Visegrad Patent Institute. All our achievements are born from the successful cooperation with the four national IP offices of the Contracting States and our honourable international partners.

I would like to seize this opportunity and thank our Contracting States'

national IP offices for their constant and reliable support. From the top management to all colleagues working directly with the Visegrad Patent Institute, our partners provided us with the very best of their professional knowledge may it be support in leadership, substantive search and examination work, translation of legal and other texts in all official languages of the Visegrad Patent Institute, or provision of IT expertise at the creation of the new website of the Visegrad Patent Institute. Together we carried out some excellent work and great achievements in 2022.

The Visegrad Patent Institute reached positive closures to important projects that we had been working on for several years. Our efforts and accomplishments are presented in this Annual Report.

I wish you a pleasant reading and persevering faith in the future.

Johanna Stadler
Director of the VPI

1. INTRODUCTION

The Visegrad Patent Institute (VPI), in its capacity as an International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA and IPEA) under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), carried out international search and international preliminary examination in accordance with the PCT, its Regulations and Administrative Instructions, and the provisions of the agreement with the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO IB) in 2022. The VPI is also entitled to carry out supplementary international searches. However, no such request arrived in the year under review. The VPI did not provide any additional search services in 2022.

Preparations to start the provision of international-type search (ITS) by the VPI continued in 2022. Related tasks were performed in line with the roadmap for the introduction of the ITS drafted by the Director of the VPI and adopted by the Administrative Board at its 17th meeting in December 2021.

The number of patent examiners employed by the national IP Offices of the Contracting States was in total 155 (PPO¹ 70, HIPO² 37, IPO CZ³ 28, IPO SR⁴ 20) in 2022. This number represents a slight decrease as compared to last year. The VPI Secretariat functioned with 2 employees.

The financial result of the VPI was positive in 2022.

¹ Patent Office of the Republic of Poland ² Hungarian Intellectual Property Office

³ Industrial Property Office of the Czech Republic ⁴ Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic

2. FACTS AND FIGURES IN RESPECT OF THE VPI'S ISA AND IPEA WORK IN 2022

2.1. THE VPI IN THE SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN PCT AUTHORITIES

All Contracting States of the VPI are members of the European Patent Convention, so the choice between the European Patent Office (EPO) and the VPI is open to their applicants.

In this context, there was no change. The majority of applicants chose the EPO as PCT authority in 2022.

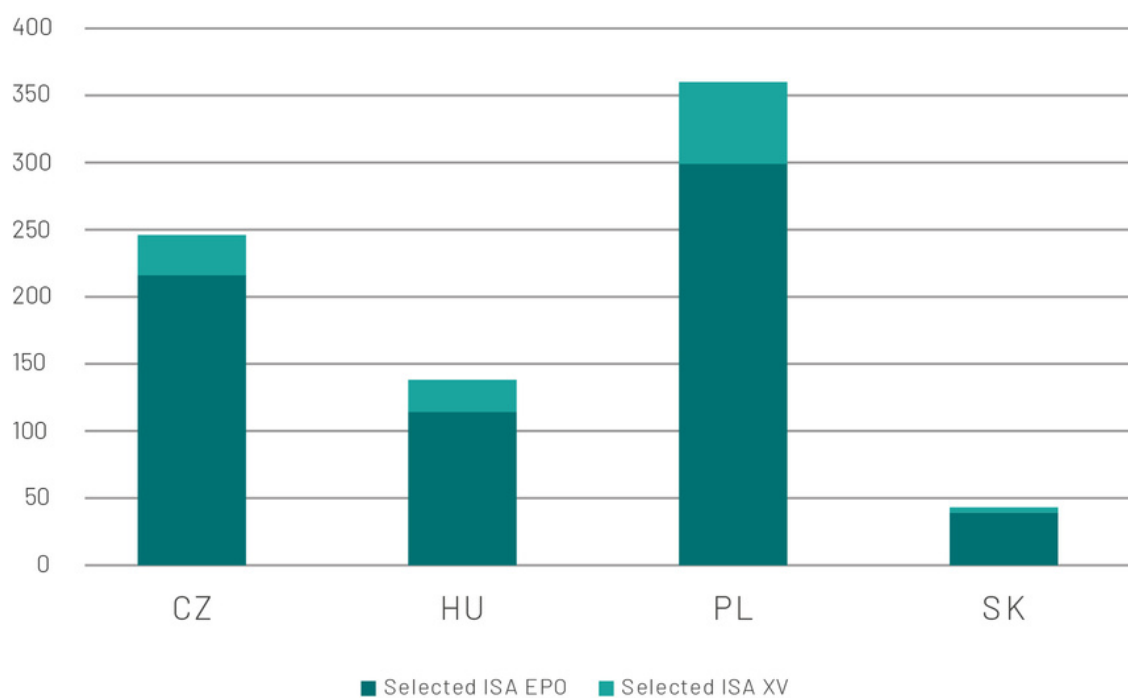
Naturally, the VPI reflects on this issue as well by analysing its own procedures. We believe that the right balance between the quality of patents and the interests of applicants in getting patent protection serves the best interest of all players of the patent system on the long run. The VPI is determined to maintain the right balance by providing user-friendly procedures and maintaining sensible patent quality standards in its substantive work.

The breakdown by Contracting States of applicants' choice between VPI and EPO in 2022 is as follows:

| Country | Selected ISA 2022 | |
|---------|-------------------|----|
| | EPO | XV |
| CZ | 216 | 30 |
| HU | 114 | 24 |
| PL | 299 | 61 |
| SK | 39 | 4 |

Source: World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) IP Statistics Data Centre

Ratio of total number of applications choosing the VPI 2022



Source: Based on the data of WIPO IP Statistics Data Centre.

2.2. STATISTICS OF THE VPI'S ISA WORK

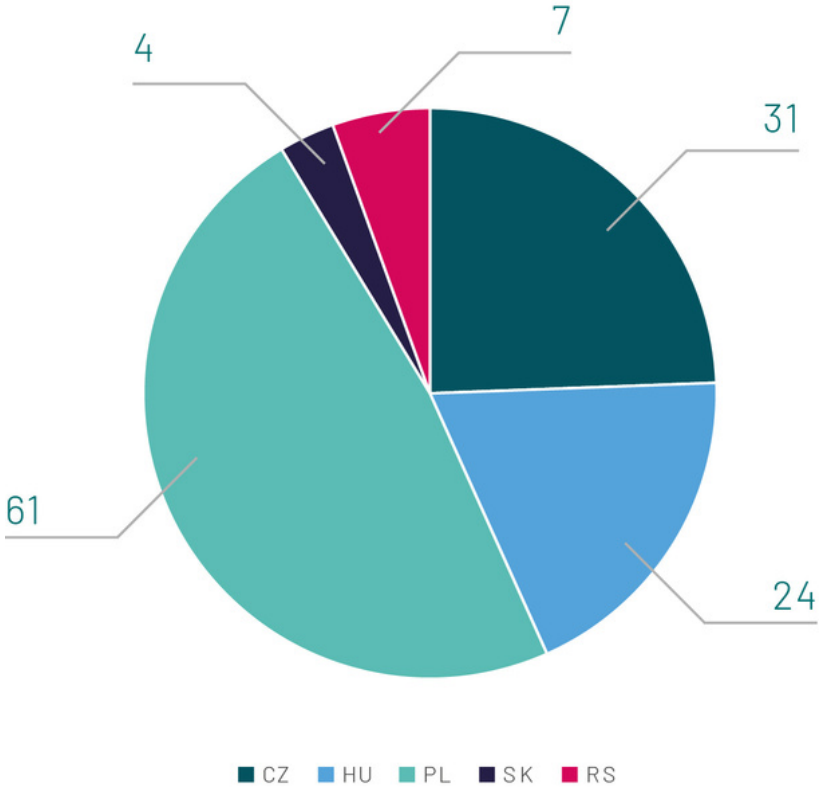
2.2.1. INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS (IAS) RECEIVED BY THE VPI

The number of IAs significantly increased in 2022, especially in the first half of the year compared to the previous year. The total number of IAs received by the VPI was 127 in 2022.

IAs originated from the following countries:

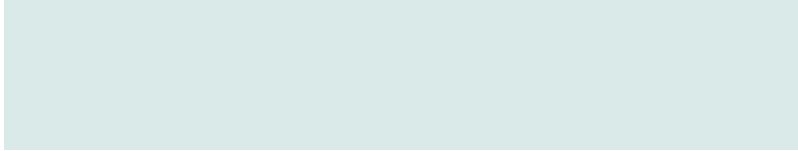
The volume of work coming from Poland, our largest VPI Contracting State, represents the bulk of the workload for the VPI. The number of Polish IAs slightly grew in 2022. There was a large increase of Hungarian and Serbian IAs compared to the previous year. However, numbers are still low, and the high percentage of growth can be attributed to the low basis in 2021. The number of Czech IAs slightly decreased and an unfortunate drop took place in respect of Slovak international applications in 2022.

Number of IAs by country of origin in 2022

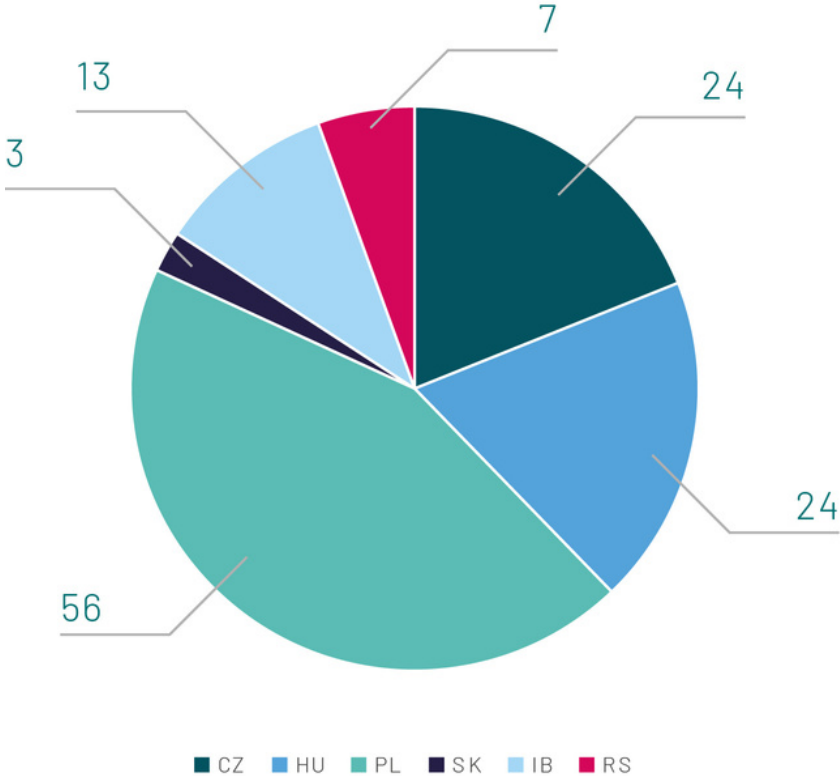


Source: VPI statistics

IAs were received by the following Receiving Offices (ROs):



Number of IAs by ROs in 2022



Source: VPI statistics

In line with the country of origin of incoming IAs, the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland acts as RO for the IAs choosing VPI as ISA in the majority of cases.

In 2022, 7 Czech, 5 Polish and 1 Slovak, in total 13 applicants, opted

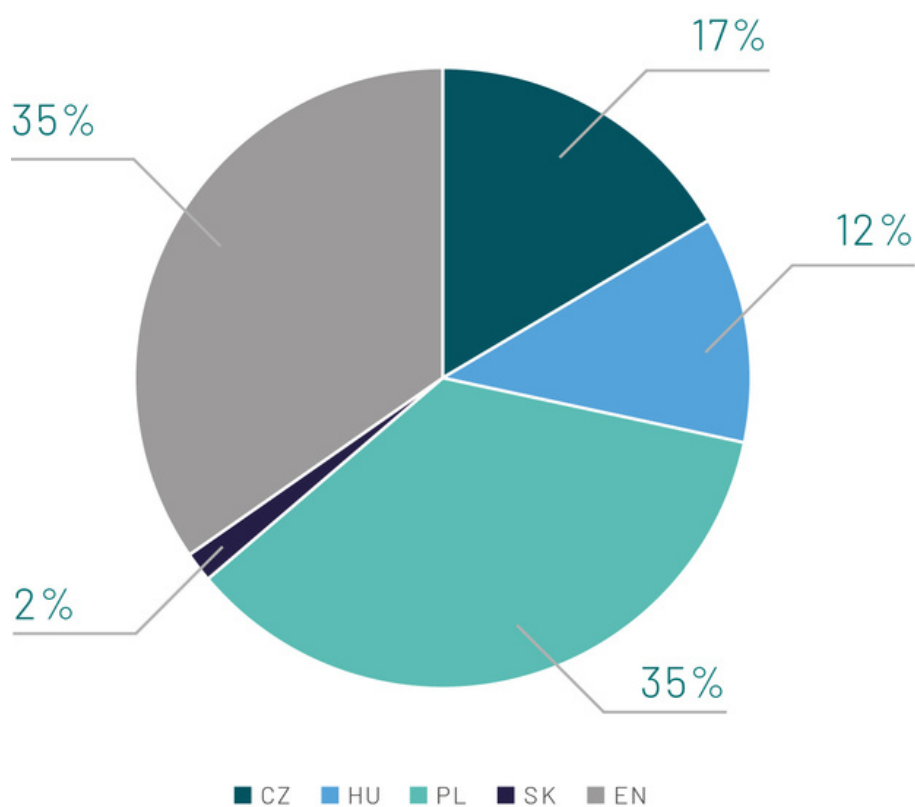
for filing their international applications directly at the WIPO IB. No Hungarian applicants made use of this possibility. Serbian applicants of the VPI used only their national office as RO.

2.2.2. LANGUAGES

An important advantage of the VPI, as compared to the EPO, is the possibility for the applicants to use the national languages of the Contracting States of the VPI.

The following languages were used when filing IAs in 2022:

Breakdown of IAs by languages in 2022



Source: VPI statistics

The percentage of English language IAs in relation to the total number of the IAs arriving from the respective countries is as follows:

Percentage of English language IAs

| Country of origin | Ratio in 2022 |
|-------------------|---------------|
| CZ | 32 % |
| HU | 54 % |
| PL | 20 % |
| SK | 50 % |
| RS | 100 % |

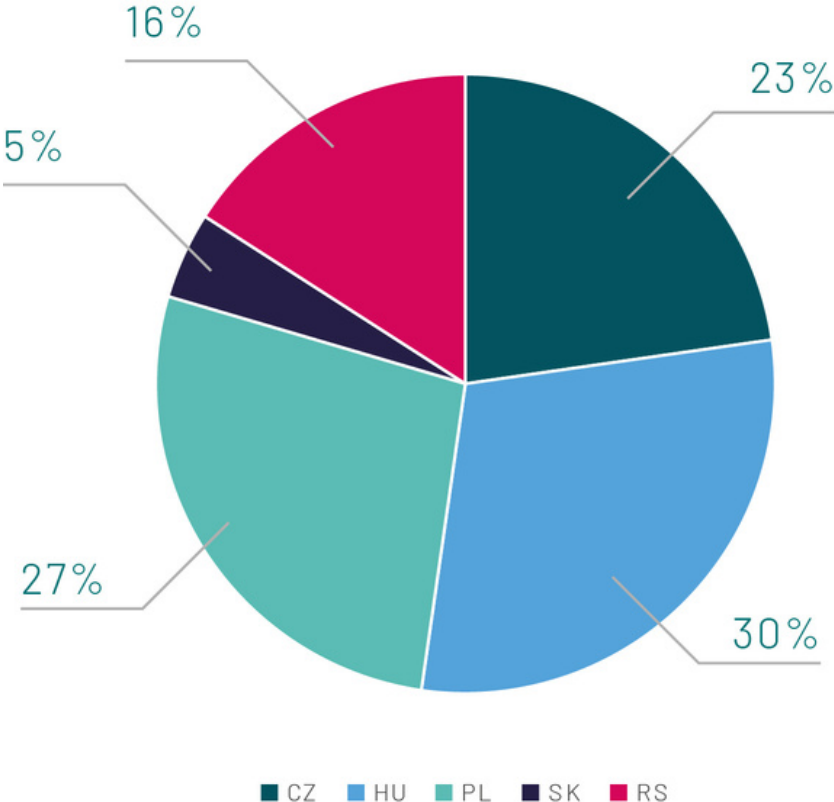
Source: VPI statistics

Similar to last year, all IAs originating from Serbia arrived in English. Although the ratio of English language applications from Slovakia dropped, still half of them were filed in English. Hungarian IAs show an increase in respect of using English as compared to previous year.

The majority of Polish applicants still use their mother tongue like in the preceding years.

Looking closer at the total number of the English language applications, countries of origin were as follows:

Percentage of English language IAs by country of origin in 2022



Source: VPI statistics

2.2.3. NATURE OF APPLICANTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The composition of the nature of applicants is technically the same as last year and shows that close to two-thirds of the applications came from companies and individual inventors,

while research institutes are underrepresented. The ratio of universities and higher education institutions is somewhat better than last year but still relatively low.

Nature of applicants by country of origin

| Type of applicant | CZ | HU | PL | SK | RS | Total | % |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|------|
| Company | 8 | 8 | 38 | | 1 | 55 | 43% |
| Individual inventor | 6 | 13 | 11 | 4 | 6 | 40 | 32% |
| University and higher education | 18 | 1 | 8 | | | 27 | 21% |
| Research institute | | 2 | 3 | | | 5 | 4% |
| Total | 32 | 24 | 60 | 4 | 7 | 127 | 100% |

Source: VPI statistics

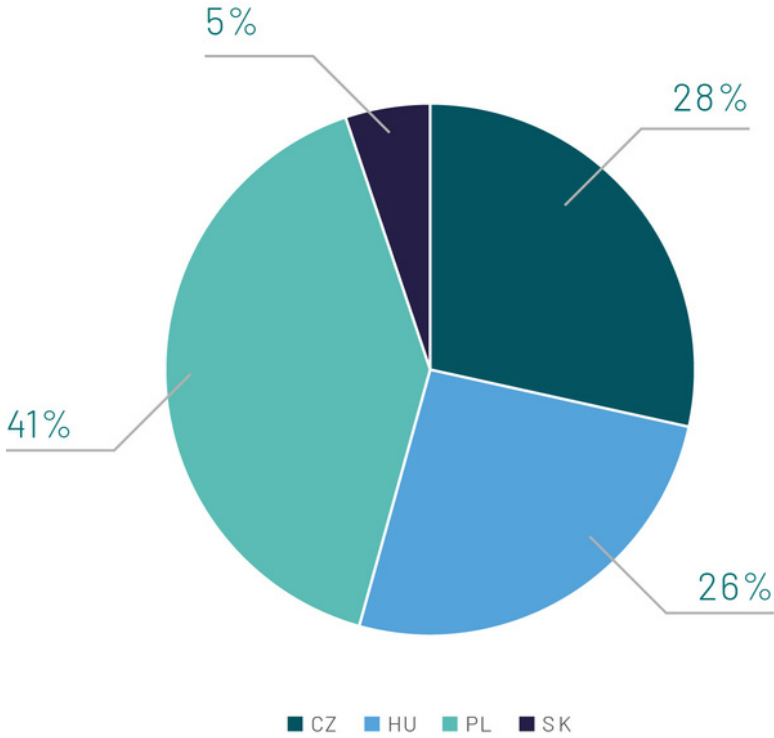
2.2.4. INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORTS

Number of international search reports (ISRs) issued by Branch Offices was as follows in 2022:

| Banch office | Number of ISRs in 2022 |
|--------------|------------------------|
| CZ | 33 |
| HU | 30 |
| PL | 47 |
| SK | 6 |
| TOTAL | 116 |

The growing number of IAs was also reflected in the growing number of ISRs. The breakdown is, however, very similar to 2021. The number of IAs originating from Hungary grew significantly compared to the previous year, which is also reflected in the statistics of the ISRs. The majority of Serbian applications were also handled by the HU Branch Office.

Breakdown of ISRs by Branch Offices in 2022



Source: VPI statistics

2.2.5. 40% REFUND OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH FEE TO APPLICANTS

In 2022, 86 cases were eligible for international search fee refund. With refund requests submitted either for IAs closed in 2022 or the year before, a total number of 71 international search fee refunds were paid to applicants in 2022 which represents an increase compared to the previous years.

The higher number of refund requests is most probably due to the new refund payment procedure of the Secretariat. The time limit of 6 months to request the search fee refund after issuing the international search report was introduced as of 1 January 2022. In order to be fully applicant-friendly, the Secretariat issues a reminder on form PCT/ISA/224 2 months prior to the deadline inviting the applicant to request the refund. This new step significantly contributes to a better-informed behaviour of the applicants in respect of the international search fee refund.

2.3. STATISTICS OF SUPPLEMENTARY INTERNATIONAL SEARCHES

No requests for supplementary international searches arrived in the year under review.

2.4. STATISTICS OF THE VPI'S IPEA WORK

2.4.1. NUMBER OF DEMANDS FOR INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The VPI did not receive demands for International Preliminary Examination in 2022. This is a significant decline, even if the number of demands was already low in the previous years with 3 demands received in 2021.

2.4.2. NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORTS (IPERS) COMPLETED BY BRANCH OFFICES

The Hungarian Intellectual Property Office as Branch Office of the VPI completed 1 IPER in 2022, and this was also the total number of IPERS completed in 2022.

2.5. TIMELINESS

According to the feedback received from our applicants, the timeliness of the work of the VPI is greatly appreciated by our users. The VPI examiners did a great job with meeting the deadlines set by the PCT in 2022. The ratio of search reports finished 4 weeks prior to the deadline increased from 19% to 31% as compared to the previous year, and only one application was finished after the PCT deadline.

In respect of the timeliness in transmitting international search reports measured from date of receipt of the search copy, the VPI was the second fastest PCT authority in Europe after the Nordic Patent Institute in 2022. The VPI ranked 1st worldwide in respect of timeliness in transmitting international search reports measured from the priority date. (Source: PCT Yearly Review 2023; published by WIPO.)

2.5.1. ISA TIMELINESS IN TRANSMITTING SEARCH REPORTS

| Weeks before / after due date | Q1/2022 | Q2/2022 | Q3/2022 | Q4/2022 | % |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| > 4 weeks | 5 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 31% |
| 3 weeks | 5 | 17 | 7 | 3 | 28% |
| 2 weeks | 5 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 29% |
| 1 week | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 11% |
| 0 week | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| +1 week [late] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| +2 weeks [late] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| +3 weeks [late] | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| > +4 weeks [late] | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1% |
| Total | 20 | 39 | 31 | 25 | 100% |

Source: WIPO ePCT

The VPI's voluntary set one-week shorter user-friendly deadline in respect of the international searches was also met in the vast majority of cases in 2022.

2.5.2. TIMELINESS IN TRANSMITTING IPERS

In the year under review, the VPI completed one IPER. This IPER was completed by observing the VPI's voluntary internal deadline, which is 1 week prior to the deadline set in the PCT.

The VPI was 1st worldwide also in respect of timeliness in transmitting international preliminary reports on patentability to the International Bureau in 2022. (Source: PCT Yearly Review 2023; published by WIPO.)

3. OPERATION OF THE VPI

3.1. USER-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

The VPI is constantly looking for new ways to better serve the users of the PCT system in Central Europe.

New rules are applicable to request the refund of international search fee in case the results of an existing earlier search could be used as from 1 January 2022. The change was needed as initially no time limit was set in the Schedule of Fees to request the search fee refund, which created certain accounting issues. In line with the recommendation of the accountant and the financial auditor of the VPI, the Schedule of Fees of the VPI was amended to introduce a 6 months deadline to request the search fee refund as from 1 January 2022.

In order to introduce this new deadline in a user-friendly manner, a reminder on Form PCT/ISA/224 is sent out by the VPI 2 months prior to the deadline.

The Secretariat sent out 19 such reminders in 2022, and, as a result, applicants requested the refund on time in 13 cases.

3.2. INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF THE VISEGRAD PATENT INSTITUTE

3.2.1. MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Since there was no formal plan in place to increase the visibility of the VPI earlier, a Marketing Plan was set up and approved by the Administrative Board in 2021. The execution of the plan started in 2022 and brought tangible results.

The Marketing Plan set the goal to create the tools and establish the channels through which the VPI can regularly communicate with current and potential users.

Social media was identified to be the main channel due to its cost-effective nature and efficient support for the first steps towards building a systematic promotion of the VPI.

Given the lean infrastructure of the VPI, the work was carried out by the Secretariat. In order to disseminate the communication and multiply the messages, a communication network with the Branch Offices' contact points was created. This network greatly contributed to regularly reaching users via LinkedIn and Facebook as well.

Through ongoing promotional efforts, the VPI reached researchers, patent attorneys, technology transfer professionals and other professionals working in R&D related fields on LinkedIn, via the renewed website, DM messages and Facebook ads. Furthermore, with the help of a newly established network, information about the VPI reached members of ASTP (Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals), PACTT (Polish Network of Academic Technology Transfer Centres) and Transfera CZ (the unified functional platform protecting the interests of the Czech technology transfer community), as well as followers of the International Visegrad Fund.

3.2.2. LINKEDIN PAGE OF THE VPI

From the available social media platforms, LinkedIn was chosen as the ideal tool to reach the professional community.

For this reason, a LinkedIn page was created that started to gain a steadily growing follower base with the help of regular communication, sharing messages of partner organisations, and some advertising campaigns.

Follow us on LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/company/visegrad-patent-institute

3.2.3. RENEWAL OF THE VPI WEBSITE

The Marketing Plan of 2022 included the update of the website to create a more informative, user-friendly structure focusing on content that is primarily important for the users.

The new website was completed according to the roadmap set up by the Secretariat, and with the support of the national delegates of the Website Working Group in two sessions. The English site was completed in May, while the national mirror sites were finished in August. The completed new website went live on 18th August.

As part of the website update, the VPI gained new branding with detailed brand guidelines including a new logo.

Besides the updated professional content, a Knowledge Hub was created with information on events, publications and a list of frequently asked questions.

The work was financed from the funds obtained from the Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH).

3.2.4. CASE STUDIES

The Marketing Plan included creating case studies with best practices of international patenting in the V4 region that can provide useful information about patenting efforts of successful companies. Four case studies were written by the Secretariat and were translated by the Branch Offices. This made it possible to create and publish 4 case studies in 5 languages with a total of 20 documents.

The case studies were published online on the Knowledge Hub page of the new website. These first case studies are to be followed by new topics and new case studies in the coming years.

The December issue of the WIPO PCT Newsletter also reported on the new VPI case studies, recognising the efforts of the VPI to raise awareness through this initiative.

3.2.5. THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VPI

The Secretariat of the VPI prepared the annual report for 2021 including statistical information for the previous 5 years with the intent to establish an annual practice of publishing the most important happenings and statistics of the VPI.

The report enjoyed the newly established branding and was made available in digital format on the website and on the LinkedIn page to all interested parties.

3.2.6. MAKING THE MOST OUT OF THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The 2022 Marketing Plan set the goal to build synergy among the channels to maximise the impact of the promotional and communication efforts and create a system to multiply the messages of the VPI.

To optimise the work and achieve a synergy among the channels, the Secretariat took over the content management of the VPI website. The Secretariat also streamlined the communication efforts of the VPI between the main channels which resulted in a higher impact on

visibility. On the other hand, the Secretariat built a system to utilise the channels of the Branch Offices of the VPI in order to multiply its messages and communication efforts. The work increased the visibility of the VPI and laid the foundations of the marketing efforts in the years to come.

3.3. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Quality of the substantive work done by the VPI is of core importance in the service of the users of the VPI. All available tools are used to secure this quality.

The Quality Management System is in place at the VPI in line with ISO 9001:2015 standard.

After a successful internal audit of the VPI's Quality Management System in April, the external audit thereof was successfully completed on 24 June 2022.

There were no nonconformities detected. The certification of the VPI was renewed.

3.4. FINANCES

According to Article 14(1) and 14(2) of the Agreement on the VPI, the budget

of the VPI should be balanced and the expenses of the VPI shall be covered by its own resources.

The Administrative Board also put a cap on the running costs and requires them to be financed from the revenue of the VPI. In accordance with these principles, the VPI closed the 2022 financial year with a positive result which was due to both the higher-than-expected number of applications and a highly economic operation of the Institute.

3.5. INTERNAL MEETINGS OF THE VPI

3.5.1. THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD (AB)

The AB, the main governing and norm-setting body of the VPI held two meetings in 2022. The 16th meeting was held on-line on 2 June, and the 17th meeting in person on 13 December. The Chairpersonship of the AB was fulfilled by Hungary; both meetings were chaired by Vice-President of the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office, Mr Péter Lábodó.

The Director of the VPI prepared the first Management Report of the VPI on the year 2021 and presented it to

the AB at its 16th meeting.

The AB dealt with the following issues in 2022: the previous year's financial report, the 2023 Budget of the VPI, the 2023 Marketing Plan of the VPI, the 2023 Work Programme of the AB, and the 2023 Quality Goals. The AB also adopted a road map for the introduction of international-type search.

The AB adopted two decisions in written procedure: one to authorise the Director of the VPI to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Visegrad Fund and another one on the appointment of the new Quality Manager of the VPI.

The AB took note on the work done by the Working Group meetings based on the regular briefings presented by the Director of the VPI.

3.5.2. WORKING GROUPS

The Working Groups of the VPI held two on-line meetings. The 20th IT/Quality Management and 16th Technical Experts' joint Working Group meeting was hosted by PPO, and the 21st IT/Quality Management and 17th Technical Experts' joint Working Group meeting hosted by IPO CZ. The

meetings of the Working Groups were chaired by the Director of the VPI.

4. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE VPI

4.1. WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

The WIPO, as the administrator of the Patent Cooperation Treaty and the centre of international IP cooperation, is one of the most important partner organisations of the VPI.

Since the COVID pandemics, WIPO offers the possibility to participate all meetings remotely. The Director participated in PCT MIA and PCT MIA Quality Subgroup meetings held in June, the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO held in July and at the PCT Working Group held in October.

4.2. EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE (EPO)

Similar to previous years, the VPI took part in the EPO's Harmonisation Files project in 2022 with 20 files received from the EPO. The IPC classes of the two batches of files were B65D and C07D.

The VPI also took part in the 20th

Permanent Committee on Harmonisation of Search Activities (PCHSA) meeting. The Director of the VPI presented the VPI's overall findings regarding the harmonisation files in 2021. Presentation in the dedicated discussion on one selected file was made by the Slovak Branch Office of the VPI.

As a significant achievement, the VPI was granted observer status on the Administrative Council (AC) of the European Patent Organisation by a unanimous decision of the AC on 29 June 2022.

4.3. INTERNATIONAL VISEGRAD FUND (IVF)

After concluding the negotiations on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two international organisations, the MoU was signed in Budapest by executive director Mr Petr Mareš and director Ms Johanna Stadler on 23 February 2022. The work started by immediately laying the foundations for several future projects.

4.4. CONFERENCES

The VPI organised an on-line event dedicated to Technology Transfer

Offices (TTOs) on 22 November 2022. The event took place in Bratislava with the active support of the IVF and ASTP.

The recorded presentations of the TTO experts at the conference are available at the Youtube channel of the VPI.

5. HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY AND THE VPI

The Hungarian Parliament unanimously supported the ratification of the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Hungary and the Visegrad Patent Institute (Headquarters Agreement) on 21 June 2022. The Headquarters Agreement entered into force on 8 August 2022.

This achievement is the result of years of dedicated work with the following milestones.

2020

December 2020

Decision 118/2020 (XII. 30.) ME of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Mr Viktor Orbán, gave the authorisation to start the negotiations with the VPI in respect of the Headquarters Agreement. The decision was promulgated on 30 December 2020.

January-December 2021

Based on the authorisation issued by the Prime Minister in December 2020, and in accordance with the provisions of Act L of 2005 on Procedures in Relation to International Treaties, negotiations for the conclusion of the Headquarters Agreement were started between the Director of the VPI and the representatives of the Hungarian Government in 2021. The work included the preparation of, and the negotiations to draft the text of the Headquarters Agreement.

2021

December 2021

The preparatory work resulted in Government Decision 1948/2021 (XII. 21.) on the authorisation to finalise the text of the Headquarters Agreement. This decision also gave the authorisation to sign the draft Headquarters Agreement by the representative of the Hungarian Government.

2022

January 2022

On the basis of the decision issued by the Hungarian Government in December 2021, the signature of the Headquarters Agreement subject to ratification took place in January 2022.

June 2022

The Hungarian Parliament ratified the Headquarters Agreement with unanimous decision on Act IX of 2022 on the Promulgation of the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Hungary and the Visegrad Patent Institute.

August 2022

The Headquarters Agreement entered into force. The day of entering into force was determined and declared in 23/2022 (29.VII.) KKM Communication of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade on the entry into force of [...] Act IX of 2022 on the Promulgation of the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Hungary and the Visegrad Patent Institute.

The Headquarters Agreement permanently resolves issues related to the operation of the VPI as an international organisation with headquarters in Hungary by an international treaty as required by the Hungarian law.

6. FACTS AND FIGURES - TRENDS BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022

The aim of this report is also to provide a platform for sharing the statistical facts and figures of the operation of the VPI with our users and the interested public in a transparent manner.

The current chapter encompasses the past 5 years from 2018 to 2022. Statistics of earlier years are published in the 2021 Annual Report of the VPI, which can be downloaded from the Knowledge Hub on the VPI website.

6.1. NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

6.1.1. NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The application statistics improved compared to previous years. However, the relatively high number of incoming international applications did not reach the level of 2018.

The pandemics had no effect on the number of incoming international

applications at the VPI any more in 2022. The first months of the year brought an especially strong increase in the number of international applications. However, the war in Ukraine and the uncertainties in the economies of our region reversed this positive trend.

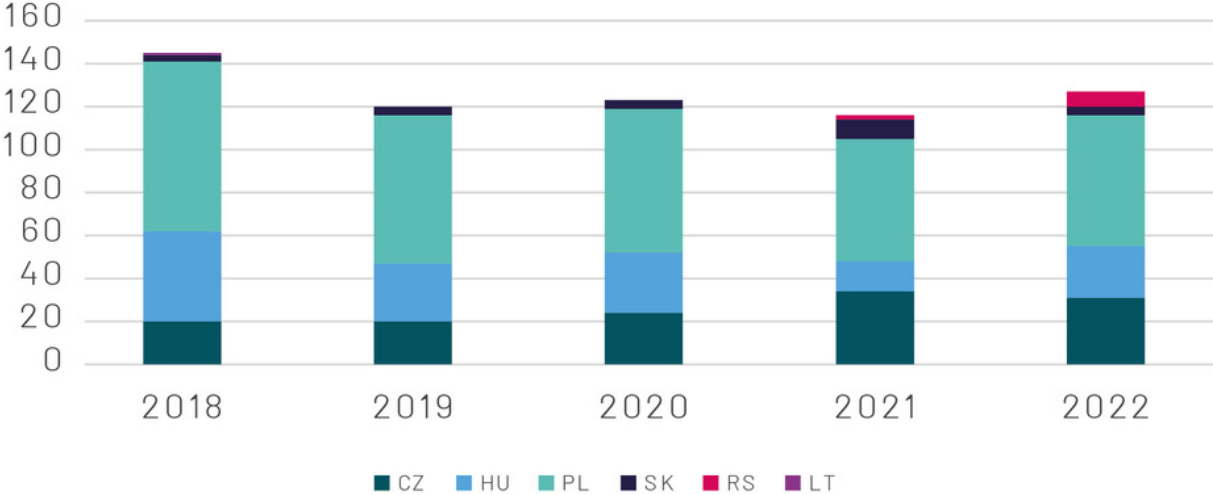
The VPI offers its services to the⁵ Serbian users based on the Memorandum of Understanding concluded with the Serbian IP Office in 2020. After receiving 1 and 2 Serbian international applications in 2020 and in 2021, respectively, a relatively large number, 7 applications arrived in 2022.

A similar Memorandum of Understanding was concluded with the Lithuanian⁶ IP Office in 2017, however, only 1 application arrived to the VPI from Lithuania in 2018.

⁵ The Memorandum of Understanding with the Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Serbia was concluded on 10 July 2020 and entered into force on 1 September 2020.

⁶ The Memorandum of Understanding with the State Patent Bureau of the Republic of Lithuania was concluded on 3 May 2017 and entered into force on 1 June 2017.

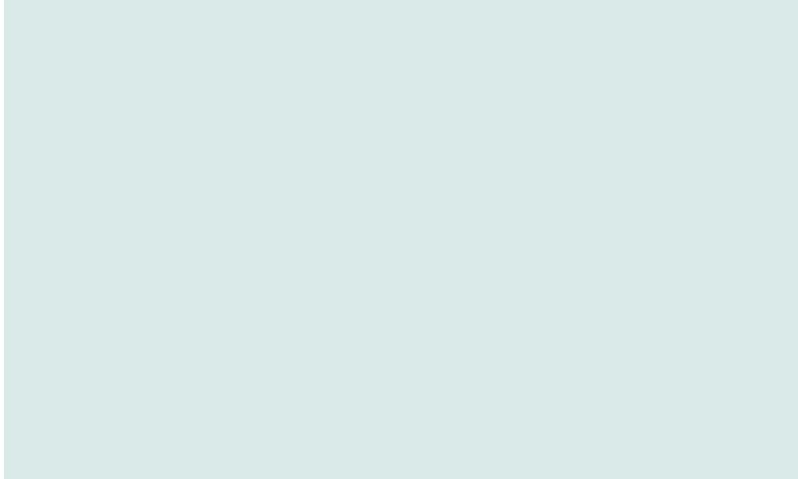
Number of international applications by country of origin (2018-2022)



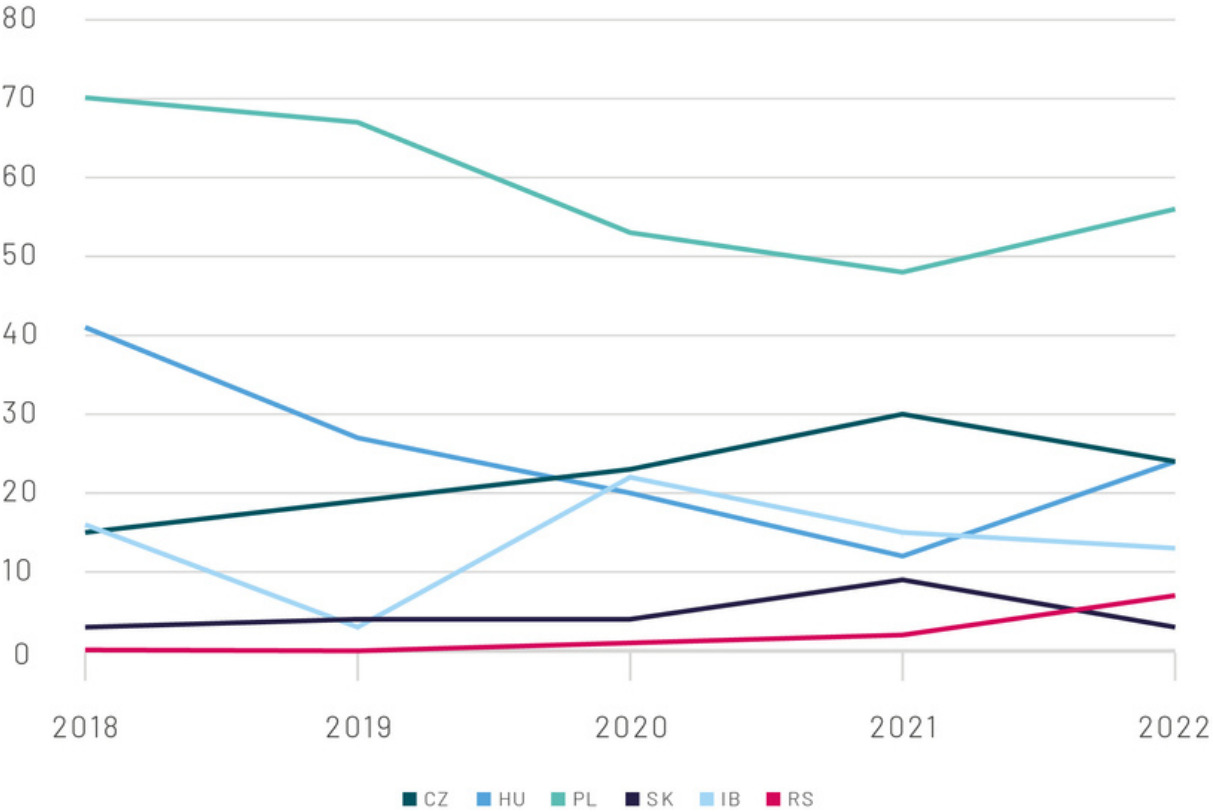
Source: VPI statistics

6.1.2. NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS BY RECEIVING OFFICES

The majority of the users of the VPI file their international applications at their national office as RO under the PCT. There was a spike in the number of applications filed at the WIPO IB in 2020, but this was an exceptional year from this point of view as well.

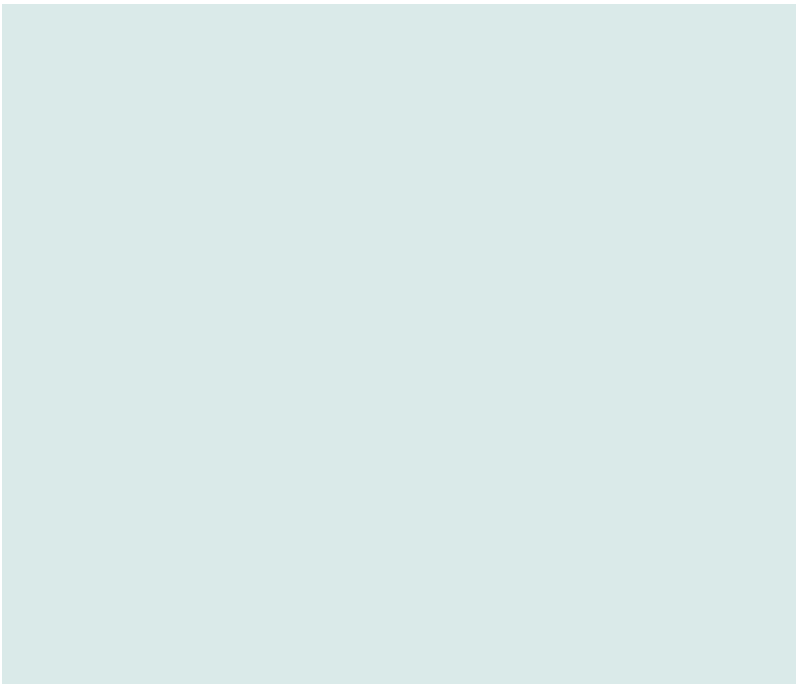


Number of international applications by ROs (2018-2022)

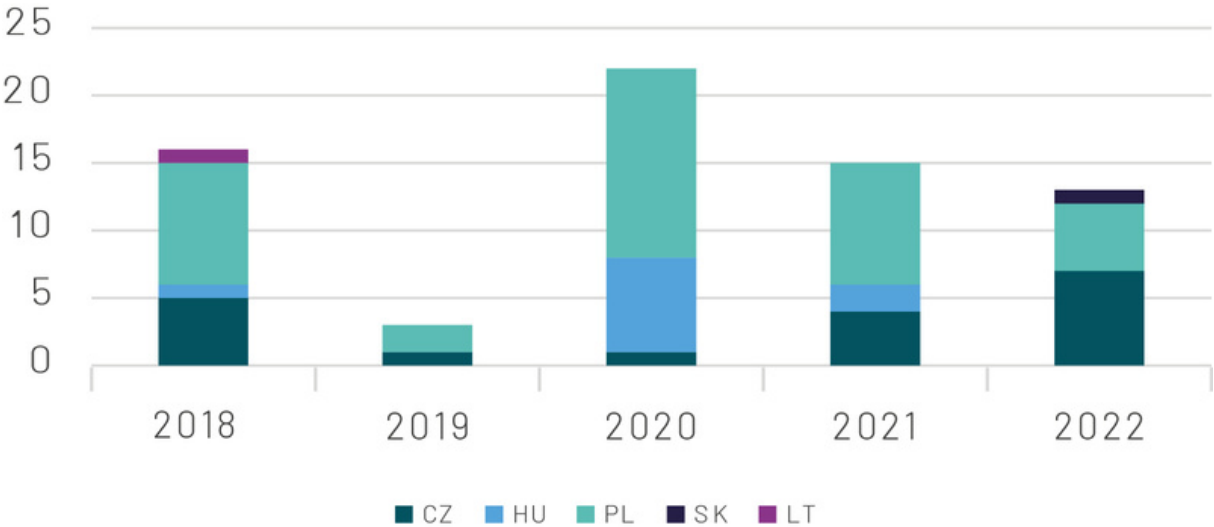


Source: VPI statistics

There are significant differences among the applicant trends by country of origin of using their national offices as RO. Slovak applicants exclusively used the WIPO IB as RO in 2022, while Hungarian applicants did not file with the WIPO IB as RO in 2019 and in 2022. Serbian applicants only use their national office as RO. Given the higher number of incoming international applications, the majority of the applicants filing at the WIPO IB as RO are Czech and Polish.



Number of international applications filed with WIPO IB as RO by country of origin (2018-2022)



Source: VPI statistics

6.2. RATIO OF WITHDRAWN INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The ratio of withdrawn international applications has a significant role in the financial stability of the VPI. The high withdrawal rate of year 2020 was fortunately not repeated. However, after a drop in the withdrawal rate in 2021, an increase was experienced in 2022 which did not exceed the 5-year average.

Ratio of withdrawn international applications by country of origin (2018-2022)

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Average |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| CZ | 0% | 0% | 8% | 3% | 6% | 4% |
| HU | 2% | 11% | 30% | 7% | 0% | 8% |
| PL | 25% | 19% | 28% | 21% | 16% | 21% |
| SK | 33% | 0% | 25% | 0% | 25% | 13% |
| Average | 15% | 7% | 21% | 7% | 12% | 12% |

Source: VPI statistics

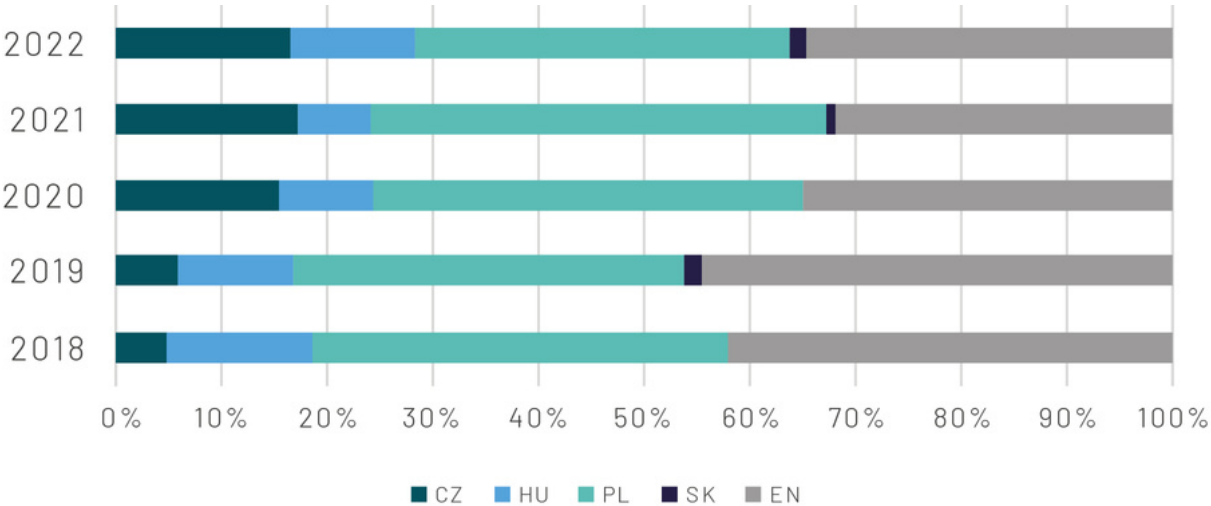
6.3. USE OF LANGUAGES

The use of the national languages of the Contracting States is an important advantage offered by the VPI that users take advantage of in their applications.

6.3.1. RATIO OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE VPI IN INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

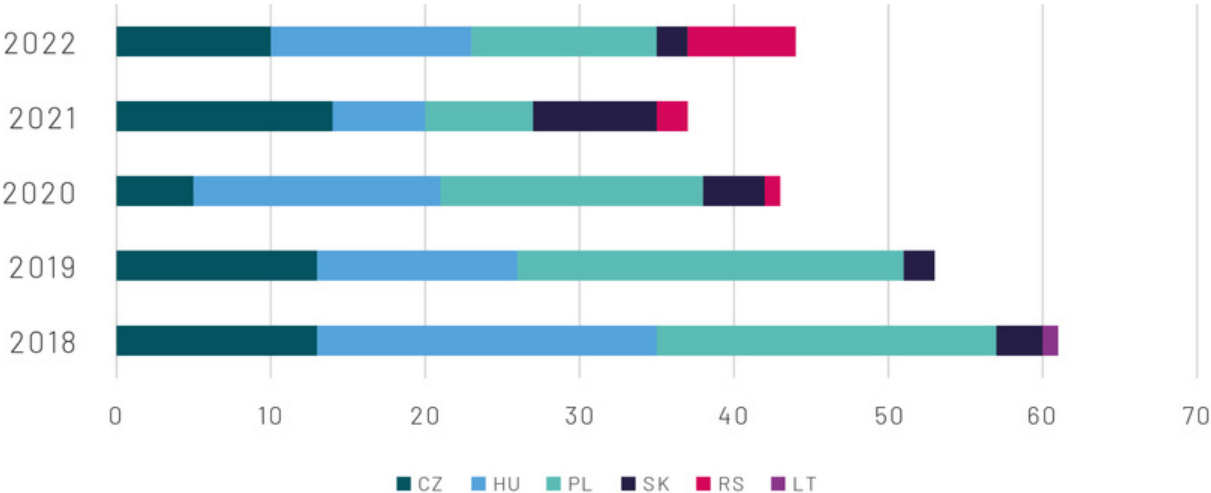
The steady downward trend in the number of international applications in English was slightly reversed in 2022. This was mainly due to an increase in the number of Serbian filings, as Serbian applicants only file in English.

Ratio of official languages of the VPI in IAs (2018-2022)



Source: VPI statistics

Number of English language international applications by country of origin (2018-2022)



Source: VPI statistics

6.3.2. RATIO OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

There are significant differences between the ratio of applicants who choose English as the language of filing by country of origin of the applicant.

If we disregard the Serbian and Lithuanian international applications which were filed exclusively in English, the average ratio of applications filed in English during the past 5 years is 49,5%. This includes the Slovak applicants who also tend to file in English and the low number of SK applications tilt the objectivity of the trend.

Ratio of English language international applications by country of origin (2018-2022)

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Average |
|----|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| CZ | 65% | 65% | 21% | 41% | 32% | 45% |
| HU | 52% | 48% | 57% | 43% | 54% | 51% |
| PL | 28% | 36% | 25% | 12% | 20% | 24% |
| SK | 100% | 50% | 100% | 89% | 50% | 78% |
| RS | | | | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| LT | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |

Source: VPI statistics

6.4. WORK OF THE NATIONAL IP OFFICES OF CONTRACTING STATES, AS THE BRANCH OFFICES OF THE VPI

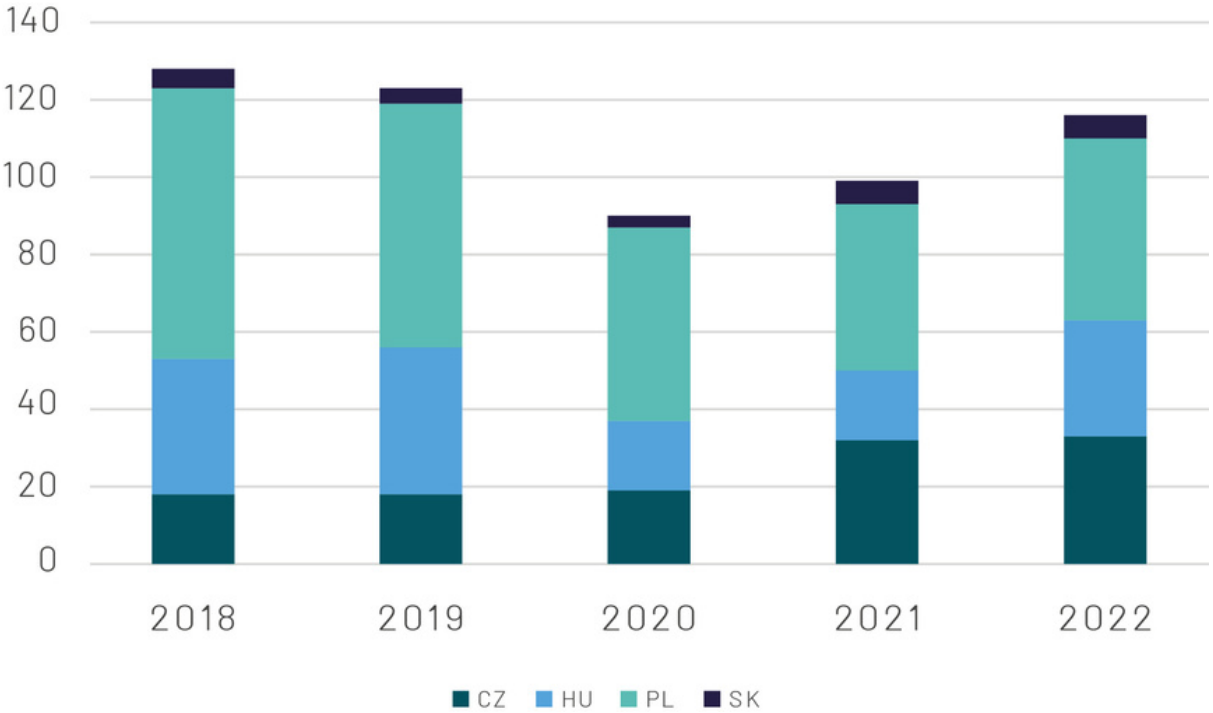
The work done by Branch Offices, the production of international search reports (ISRs), and international preliminary examination reports (IPERs), closely follow the number of requests and demands received.

6.4.1. WORK PERFORMED BY THE VPI AS INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

The bulk of the substantive work of the VPI is the performance of international search.

Branch Offices process the international applications arriving from the same country of origin. As the number of Polish international applications is the highest, the Polish Branch office deals with the most cases and issues the most ISRs. The exception to this main rule is the case of international applications arriving from neighbouring countries based on an MoU. The international search work is then allocated in accordance with the availability of resources at the technical field concerned.

Number of ISRs issued by Branch Offices (2018-2022)



Source: VPI statistics

6.4.2. WORK PERFORMED BY THE VPI AS INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

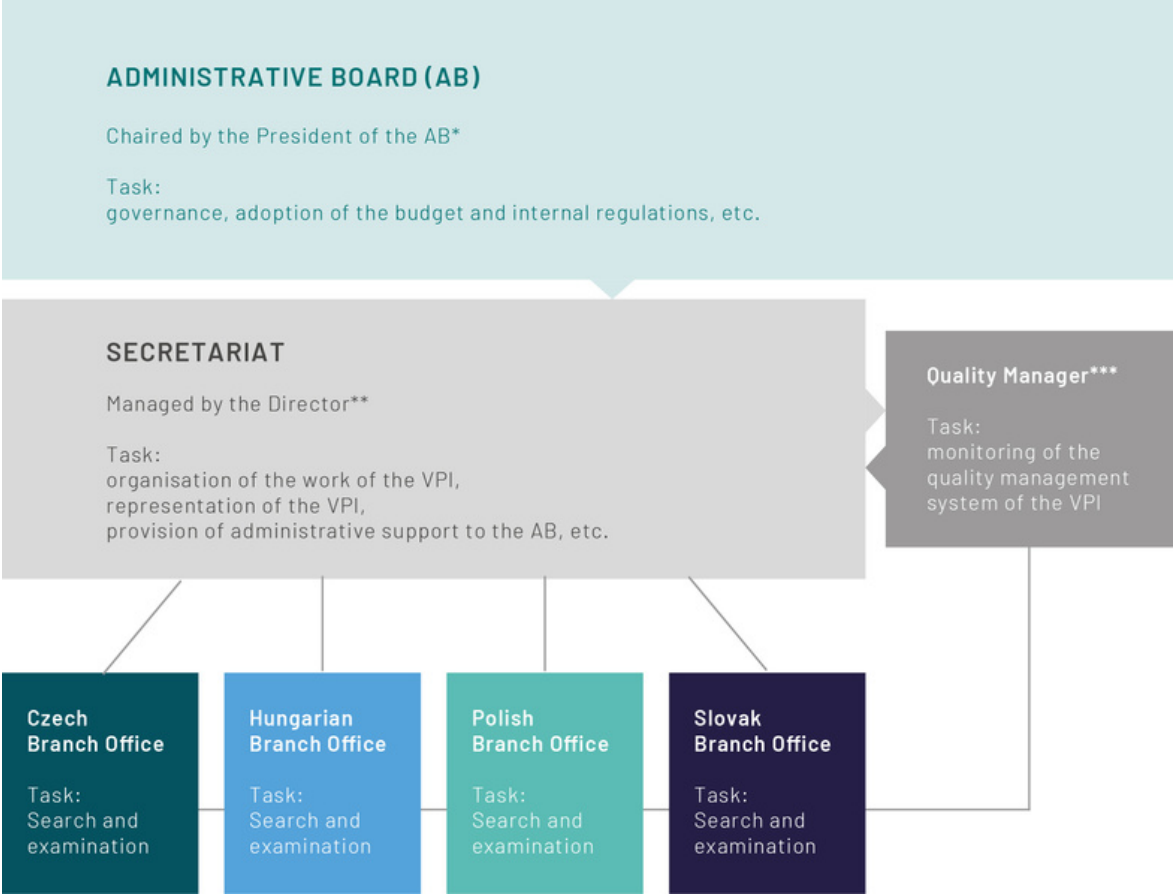
The number of international preliminary examination demands received by the VPI is quite low and decreasing. This is also reflected in the number of international preliminary examination reports (IPERs).

Number of IPERs issued by Branch Offices (2018-2022)

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| CZ | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| HU | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 18 |
| PL | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| SK | | | | | | 0 |
| Sum | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 22 |

Source: VPI statistics

7. ORGANISATIONAL CHART OF THE VISEGRAD PATENT INSTITUTE



*The President of the AB is elected from the Members of the AB on a rotational basis.
 **The Director of the VPI is appointed by the AB.
 ***The Quality Manager is appointed by the AB.

IMPRESSUM

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