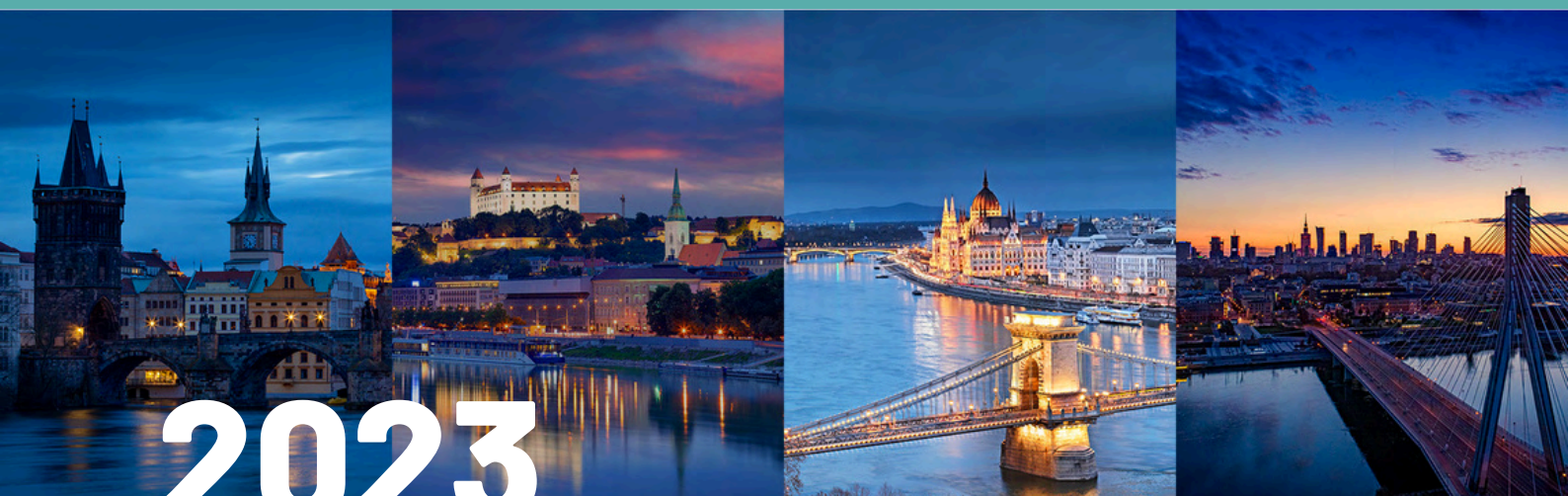


# ANNUAL REPORT



of the  
Visegrad Patent Institute

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# **ANNUAL** REPORT

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Visegrad Patent Institute  
2023

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## DEAR READER,

Welcome to the 2023 Annual Report of the Visegrad Patent Institute.

This year brought several challenges in the life of the Visegrad Patent Institute. The most important of them was that the annual work of our International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in Central Europe was characterised by the decreasing number of international applications in 2023. We already witnessed negative tendencies in the patenting decisions of our users in the second half of 2022, and this trend continued throughout the year 2023. Consequently, the pace of international applications slowed down even further.

Nevertheless, this challenge was perceived by us as an exceptional opportunity that had the potential to provide the Visegrad Patent Institute with new impetus. With the help of our outstanding regional cooperation and our efficient lean internal infrastructure, we profited from the momentum, and we were able to expand the service portfolio of the Visegrad Patent Institute.

After thorough preparations and the

decision of the Administrative Board, the commercial search services of the Visegrad Patent Institute became operational on 1 October 2023. The commercial character of the two Global Patent Search Services – the Novelty Search and the Novelty Search with Preliminary Patentability Report Services – makes it possible for the Visegrad Patent Institute to serve any innovative player worldwide, regardless of nationality. I believe that the launching of the commercial patent search services is just the first step of our international organisation on the global market of commercial IP activities.

This year also brought significant progress in building the regional cooperation network of the Visegrad Patent Institute. The conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding with the State Intellectual Property Office of Slovenia opened new horizons and possibilities to better serve the common good and the innovation potential of our region.

Similarly to our efforts in the previous years, the Visegrad Patent Institute kept on working on and building an increasingly user-friendly operation to serve the economy of the Central Eastern European region in 2023 as well. We truly believe that our most

important asset is the trust of the outstanding players of our region's innovation ecosystems.

Fortified by the strong partnership with the four National IP Offices of the Contracting States, the Visegrad Patent Institute answered the challenges of 2023 with success. I would like to thank all our National IP Offices, as Branch Offices of the Visegrad Patent Institute, for our excellent and strengthened cooperation, which provides a solid foundation and gives hope and optimism for 2024.

The Visegrad Patent Institute also profited from the cooperation with our honourable international partners, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the European Patent Office, and the European Union Intellectual Property Office. Together, we continue to serve the innovative players of our region, Europe and the world.

I wish you a pleasant reading with confidence and faith in the future of ever closer cooperation in IP matters within our region.

Johanna Stadler  
Director of the VPI

## INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the Visegrad Patent Institute (VPI), in its capacity as an International Searching Authority (ISA) and International Preliminary Examining Authority (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). The VPI is also in the position to carry out supplementary international searches, however, no such request arrived in the year under review.

Following the decision of the Administrative Board, the VPI added two new commercial patent search services to its PCT service portfolio in 2023. The pilot project on the Global Patent Search Services (GPSS), launched on 1 October 2023, provides reliable information about the novelty and patentability of an invention to all innovative players worldwide, regardless of nationality.

The two new services, introduced as part of a pilot project, are the Novelty Search Service (NSS) and the Novelty

Search with Preliminary Patentability Report (NSPPR).

During the first phase, the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office decided to take part in the GPSS and performs the substantive work, i.e. prepares the reports in respect of the commercial services. In order to inform all interested parties, the website of the VPI was complemented with new dedicated service pages for the two newly launched GPSS services in September. In line with this change, a restructuring and update of the general services page also took place. The promotion of the new services started in 2023 to inform potential users about the benefits of the GPSS.

Discussions on starting the provision of international-type search (ITS) by the VPI were also concluded in 2023, and the most important preparations were completed for the planned service launch on 1 January 2024. The above-mentioned general service page of the website was updated with the information on ITS, and the dedicated service page was also launched in September with a note that the service itself would go live only on 1 January 2024.

The number of patent examiners employed by the National IP Offices

of the Contracting States was in total 157 persons in 2023 (Patent Office of the Republic of Poland (PPO) 70, Hungarian Intellectual Property Office (HIPO) 38, Industrial Property Office of the Czech Republic (IPO CZ) 25, Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic (IPO SR) 24). This number represents a slight increase of 1.3% compared to the 155 examiners in 2022. The VPI Secretariat continued to operate with 2 employees.

2023 was characterised by declining trends in filing activity, which was also reflected in the financial result of the VPI in 2023.

## 1. FACTS AND FIGURES IN RESPECT OF THE VPI'S PCT WORK

The VPI carries out substantive PCT work as ISA and IPEA. The VPI's substantive work is performed by its Branch Offices (BOs), which are the National IP Offices of the Contracting States (IPO CZ, HIPO, PPO, IPO SR), under the coordination of the Secretariat managed by the Director of the VPI.

### 1.1. THE VPI IN THE SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN PCT AUTHORITIES

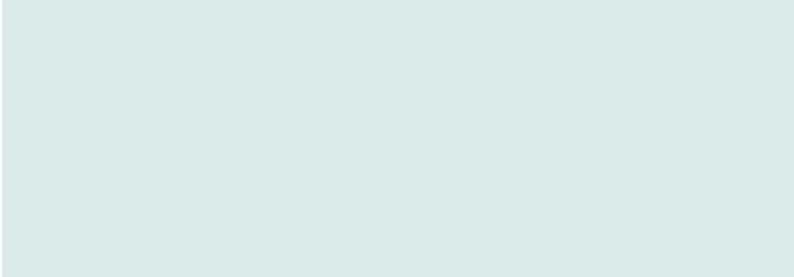
The VPI's Contracting States are all members of the European Patent Convention, so the choice between the European Patent Office (EPO) and the VPI is open to their applicants. Similar to previous years, a larger proportion of the applicants from the V4 countries choose the EPO as PCT authority. Compared to the previous year, this trend was somewhat stronger in 2023.

Country	Selected ISA		
	EPO	VPI	VPI in %
CZ	166	9	5%
HU	124	22	15%
PL	318	49	13%
SK	54	3	5%
RS	28	6	18%
Total	690	89	11%

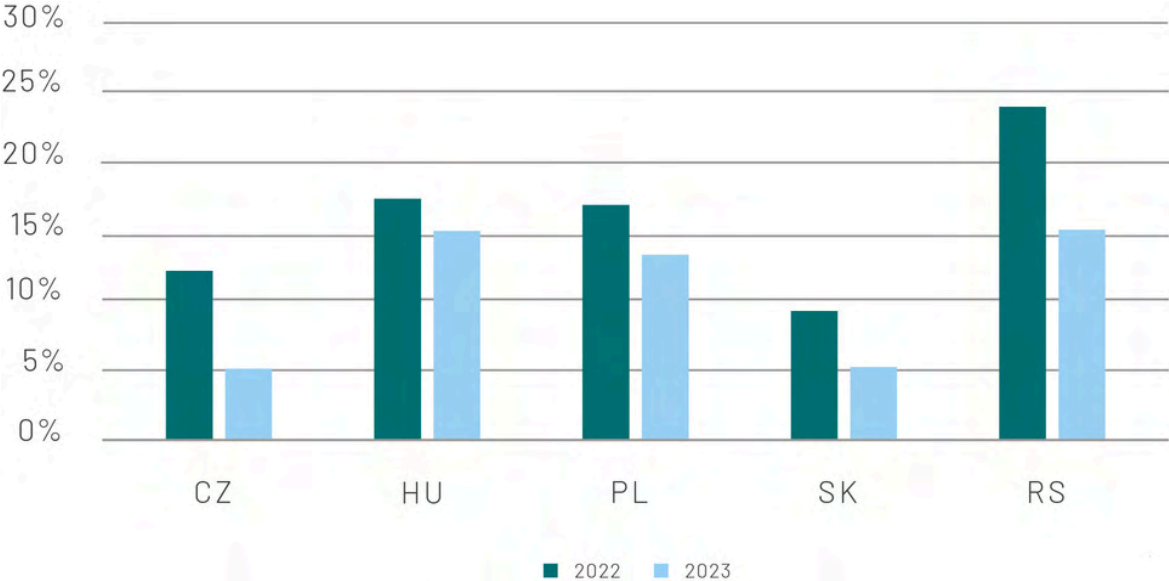
Source: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) IP Statistics Data Centre



There was a positive trend of applicants moving towards the VPI from 2021 to 2022 in respect of Czech, Hungarian and Polish applicants, which was reversed in each country in 2023.



*Ratio of total number of applications choosing the VPI in 2022-2023*



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

There are several factors within the patent system and, in addition, in the economic and political climate in Europe that have negative effects on the number of incoming applications of the VPI.

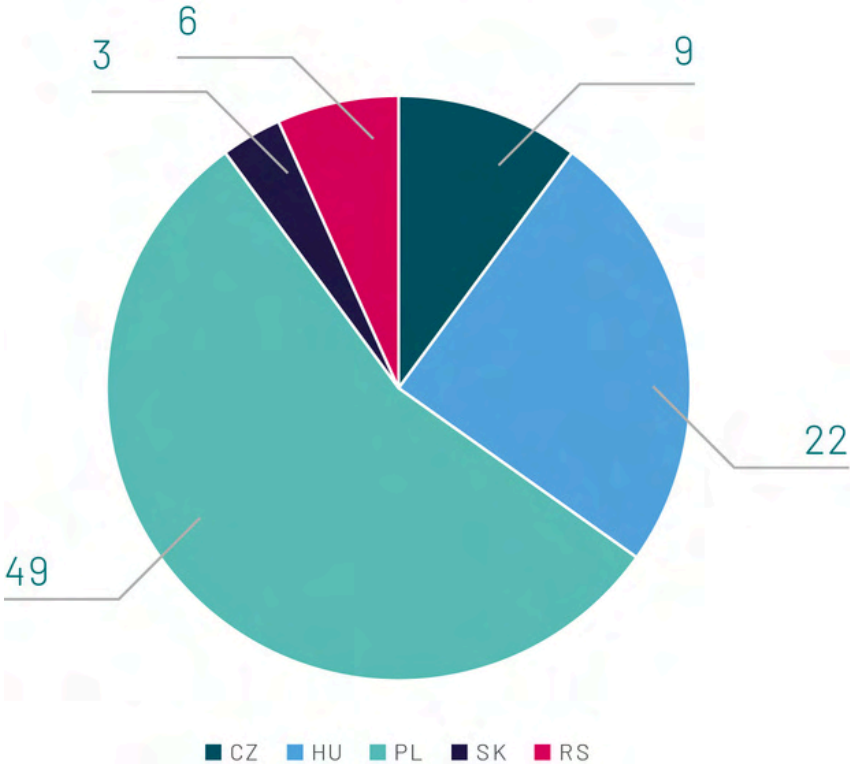
The Administrative Board, jointly with the Director, constantly monitors and reflects on these developments.

## 1.2. STATISTICS OF THE VPI'S ISA WORK

### 1.2.1. INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS (IAS) RECEIVED BY THE VPI

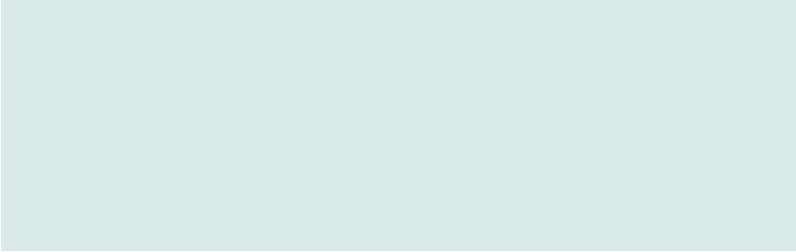
In 2023, the number of international applications showed a decline. Although this trend changed to some degree in Q4, the total number of IAs received by the VPI in 2023 was 89, which is a significant decrease compared to the 127 applications in 2022.

Number of international applications by country of origin in 2023

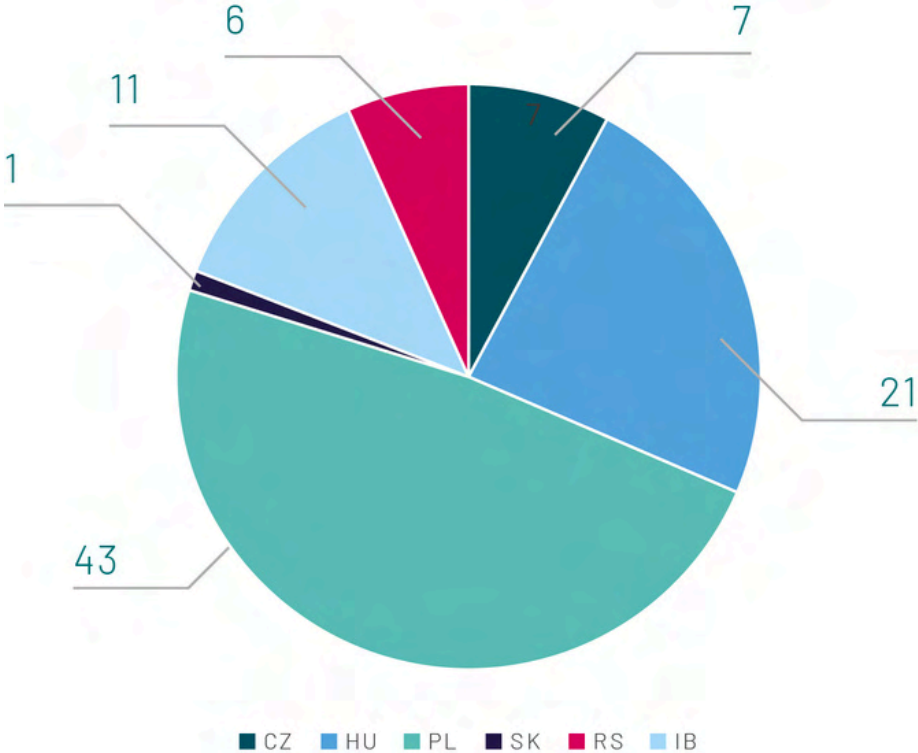


Source: VPI statistics

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



Number of international applications by ROs in 2023

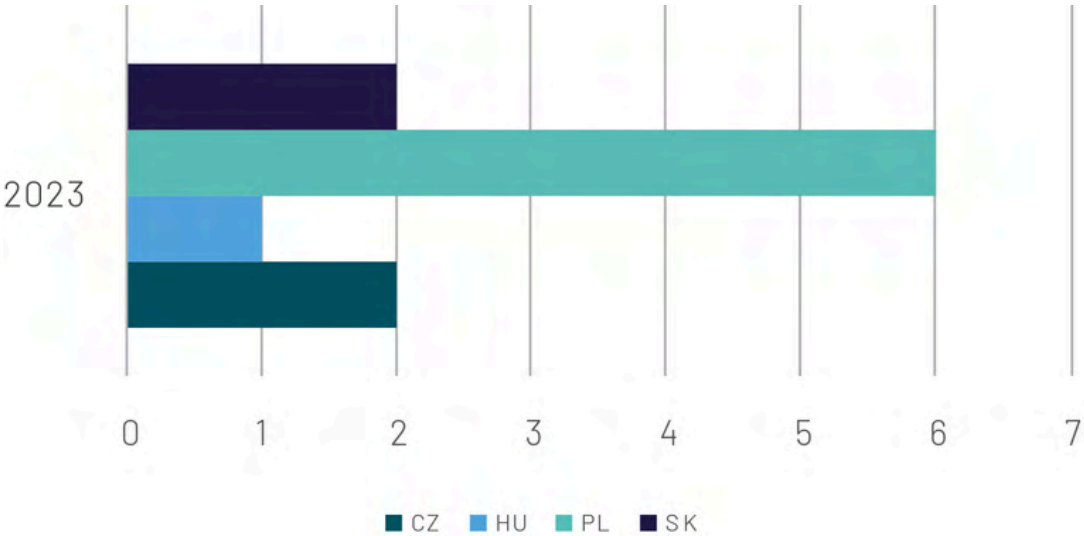


Source: VPI statistics

The volume of work coming from Poland, the largest VPI Contracting State, still represented the bulk of the workload for the VPI. However, even the number of Polish applications declined in 2023, while the number of Czech IAs dropped the most significantly.

1.2.2. NUMBER OF IAS FILED DIRECTLY AT WIPO IB AS RO

Number of IAs filed at the WIPO IB as RO by country of origin in 2023



Source: VPI statistics

Filing through the IB is not typical for the applicants of the VPI. The average ratio of applications filed at the WIPO IB remained around the same percentage, 12% of the total number of applications received by the VPI in 2023.

The option to file at the WIPO IB was most popular among Polish applicants. The number of Slovak and Hungarian applicants remained low and the number of Czech applicants at the WIPO declined significantly.

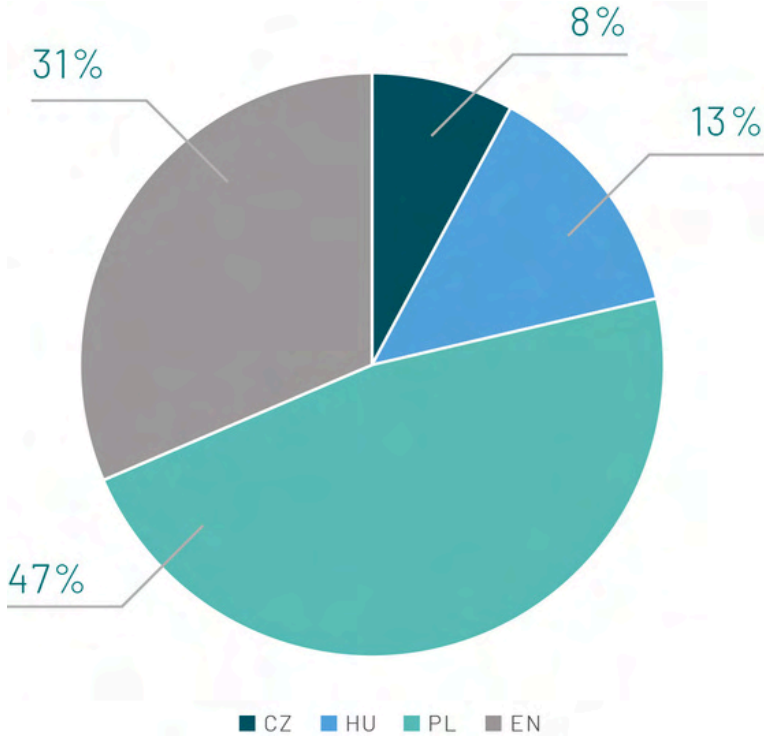
Serbian applicants of the VPI used only their National IP Office as RO.

### 1.2.3. LANGUAGES

Important advantage of the VPI is the possibility of wider use of national languages compared to the EPO. This benefit was also highlighted by the respondents of the user satisfaction survey that the VPI conducted in 2023. For more information, please refer to point 2.2.

The following languages were used when filing IAs in 2023:

*Breakdown of IAs by languages in 2023*



Source: VPI statistics

Percentage of English language IAs in relation to the total number of the IAs arriving from the respective countries was the following in 2023:

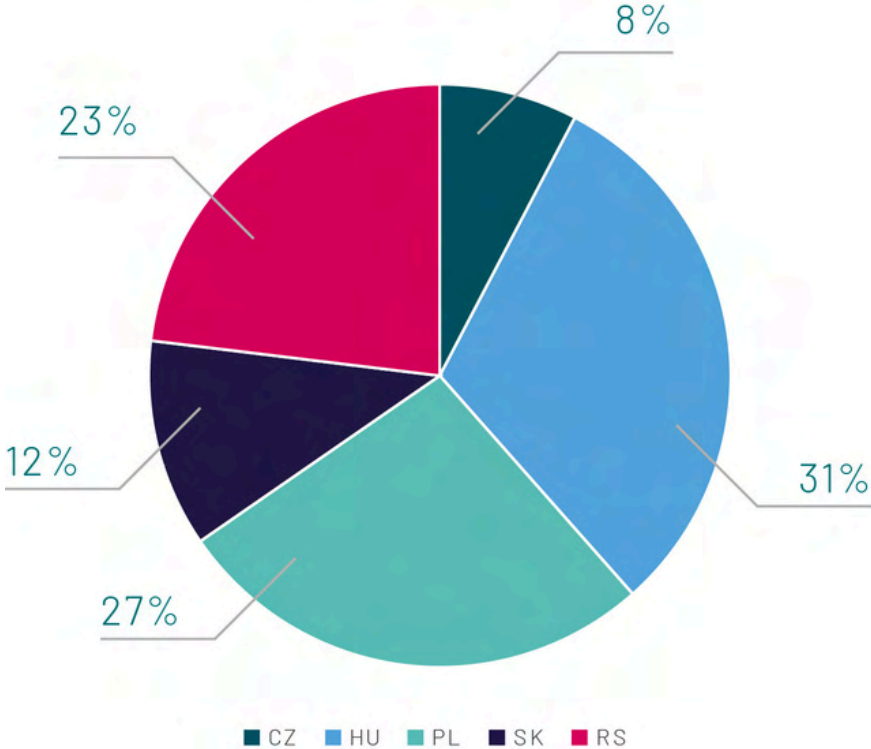
Country of origin	Ratio
CZ	22 %
HU	36 %
PL	14 %
SK	100 %
RS	100 %

Source: VPI statistics

Similar to last year, all IAs originating from Serbia arrived in English. All applications from Slovakia were also filed in English in 2023. Contrary to last year, Hungarian applicants showed a significant decrease of using English as compared to previous year. Applicants from Poland took the most advantage of using their national language when filing IAs, which has been a steady trend for several years.

Looking closer at the total number of the English language applications, countries of origin are represented in the following chart:

*Percentage of English language applications by country of origin in 2023*



Source: VPI statistics

#### 1.2.4. NATURE OF APPLICANTS

The composition of the nature of applicants significantly changed compared to the previous year. The ratio of companies grew from 43% to 52.8%. This change is mainly due to the decreasing number of applications filed by universities and higher education institutions.

##### *Nature of Applicants by Country of Origin in 2023*

Type of applicant	CZ	HU	PL	SK	RS	Total	%
Companies	4	12	31	0		47	52.8%
Individual inventors	4	6	13	2	4	29	32.6%
Universities and higher education institutions	1	2	2	0		5	5.6%
Research institutes	0	2	3	1	2	8	9%
Total	9	22	49	3	6	89	100%

Source: VPI statistics

The ratio of applications filed by universities and higher education institutions dropped to 5.6% from the significant 21% last year which represents an 82% decline in the actual number of applications. This is mainly due to the almost complete disappearance of Czech universities and the significant drop in the number of universities from Poland.

The ratio of research institutes grew significantly in percentage, however, given the very low base number, this growth is still not significant in the actual number of applications.

The ratio of individual inventors remained almost the same.

### 1.2.5. INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORTS (ISRS)

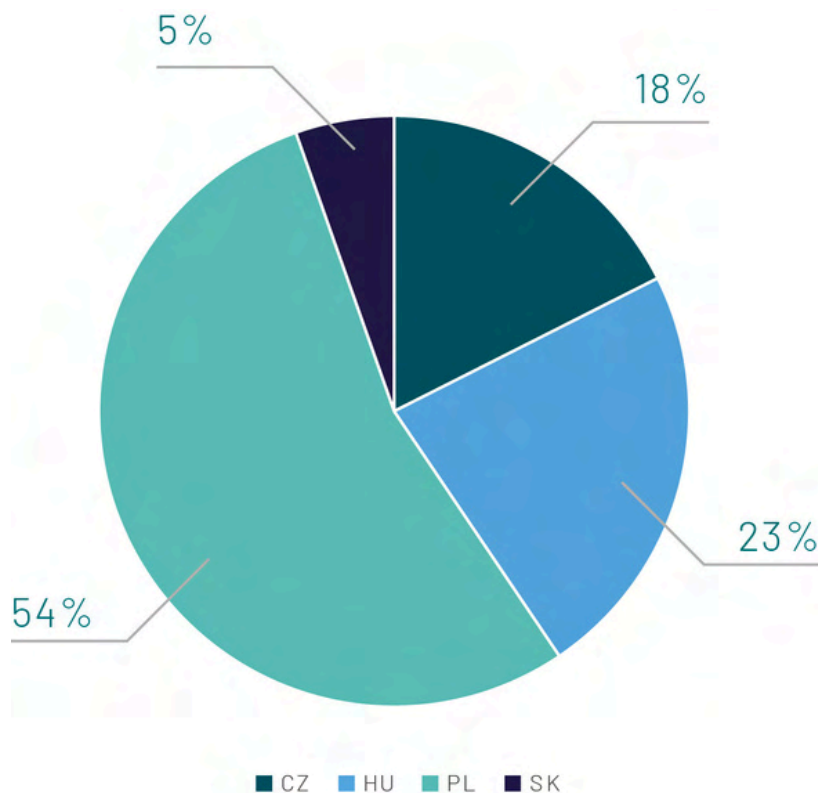
The main task of the BOs of the VPI is to issue ISRs. Last year's data were as follows.

*Number of ISRs issued by BOs in 2023*

Banch Office	Number of ISRs
CZ	13
HU	17
PL	40
SK	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

Source: VPI statistics

*Breakdown of ISRs by BOs in 2023*



Source: VPI statistics



The lower number of international applications was also reflected in the lower number of ISRs completed. The ratio of ISRs prepared by the PL BO grew in 2023, while the ratio of ISRs prepared by the HU and CZ BOs decreased. The ratio of ISRs done by the SK BO remained approximately the same.

#### *1.2.6. REFUND FOR APPLICANTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH FEE*

The BOs concluded ISRs with issuing PCT/ISA/213 that allows for a search fee refund in 52 cases during the year out of the 73 prepared ISRs. This represents 71% of ISRs that correlates to the ratio of previous years.

The rule on a time limit of 6 months to request the search fee refund after issuing the ISR was introduced as of 1 January 2022. In order to be fully applicant-friendly, the Secretariat issues a reminder on form PCT/ISA/224 two months prior to this deadline inviting the applicant to request the refund.

In 2023, 31 such reminders were issued in total. 17 reminders in case of international applications filed in 2023, and another 14 for applications filed in 2022, but completed in 2023. This new step significantly contributes

to a better-informed behaviour of the applicants in respect of the international search fee refund.

#### *1.2.7. STATISTICS OF SUPPLEMENTARY INTERNATIONAL SEARCHES*

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

### *1.3. STATISTICS OF THE VPI'S IPEA WORK*

#### *1.3.1. NUMBER OF DEMANDS FOR INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION*

The VPI received 3 demands for International Preliminary Examination in 2023. Two demands were of Polish, and one of Hungarian origin. Although this number is better than in 2022, the number of demands was still low.

#### *1.3.2. INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORTS (IPERS)*

The PL BO completed 1 IPER in 2023, and this was also the total number of IPERs completed in 2023.

### *1.4. TIMELINESS*

The VPI examiners did an excellent job again with meeting the deadlines set by the PCT in 2023.

### 1.4.1. TIMELINESS IN TRANSMITTING ISRS

The ratio of ISRs finished 4 weeks prior to the deadline further increased from 31% to 46% as compared to the previous year.

Where the time limit for the establishment of the ISR is to be calculated from the date when the search copy is received by the ISA, the VPI voluntary decided to issue the ISRs one week earlier than the expiry of 3 months set by the PCT.

All international searches were finished by the voluntary set one-week shorter user-friendly deadline of the VPI in 2023.

As of 1 January 2023, the VPI also applies a shortened lead time for applications where the priority date shall be taken into account when calculating the time limit of establishing the ISR. The internal time limit of the VPI to complete the international search on such applications was reduced to 8 months from 9 months set by the PCT.

#### ISA Timeliness in transmitting Search Reports in 2023

Weeks before / after due date	Q1/2023	Q2/2023	Q3/2023	Q4/2023	%
> 4 weeks	7	14	4	7	46%
3 weeks	6	2	1	2	16%
2 weeks	5	6	7	1	27%
1 week	3	0	1	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]	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: WIPO ePCT

### 1.4.2. TIMELINESS IN TRANSMITTING IPERS

In the year under review, there was only one IPER. This IPER was completed 1 week after the PCT deadline in 2023/Q4.

## 2. OPERATION OF THE VPI

### 2.1. USER-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

In order to be fully applicant-friendly, the Secretariat issues a reminder on form PCT/ISA/224 2 months prior to the deadline of requesting the international search fee refund where applicable, inviting the applicant to request the refund. In 2023, 17 such reminders were issued for applications filed in 2023 and another 14 for applications filed in 2022 but completed in 2023.

The VPI further shortened its lead time for international applications where the priority date shall be taken into account when calculating the time limit of establishing the ISR. As of 1 January 2023, instead of the time limit of 9 months set in the PCT, the VPI applies, in the service of its users, a reduced time limit of 8 months to complete ISRs.

### 2.2. USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Although standard customer feedback survey invitation is sent out by the BOs at the completion of the international search, customers rarely take the opportunity to provide feedback or evaluate the services received from the VPI.

In order to better understand the decisions of its customers, the VPI took another approach to soliciting user feedback in 2023.

In June 2023, a survey invitation was sent out directly to patent attorneys who have used the services of the VPI multiple times. This direct contact survey resulted in a 32% response rate and provided valuable feedback for the VPI on its services.

The main benefits for the applicants to use the VPI services were speed, cost, customer friendliness and the possibility to use their native language.

### 2.3. MARKETING & AWARENESS RAISING

The marketing activities of the VPI were conducted in line with the 2023 Marketing Plan that built on the VPI tools and channels created during the previous two years.

The launch of the Global Patent Search Services (GPSS) was a new development during the year for the promotion of which the VPI set up a separate Marketing Plan.

In order to make more room for the financing of the promotional and marketing activities, the Director of the VPI initiated a project with the Hungarian Government (via the National Research, Development and Innovation Office, NKFIH). The approved 2023-2024 VPI patent awareness project provides funding for the VPI from Q3 2023, until the end of Q2 2024. This amount is sufficient to provide for the marketing activities of the VPI that are, such as to be performed in respect of GPSS, and to reinforce the brand awareness work for the VPI and its services. For more details, see point 2.4.

### *2.3.1. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OF THE VPI*

The VPI has reached relevant target groups of researchers, patent attorneys, technology transfer professionals and other professionals working in R&D related fields on Linked-in in 2023.

The VPI gained a new website in 2022 which is an up-to-date, modern and user-friendly platform to present the

VPI's services to the potential users. The website was updated on an ongoing basis by the Secretariat with relevant news and information during the year. During the update of the site in September, the website gained new dedicated service pages for the two newly launched GPSS services and the ITS.

The Linked-in profile and the website of the VPI are being discovered and used by a steadily growing professional community.

A Youtube channel was already set up for the VPI in 2021 for the video recordings from the VPI 5th Anniversary conference. In 2023, this video list was extended with another 5 videos created from the recordings of the V4 TTO event held in November 2022.

The VPI also used the communication network of the BOs. With their help, information about the VPI regularly reached the target audience via the BOs Linked-in pages as well.

### 2.3.2. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VPI

The VPI issued its first annual report in 2022, complete with statistical information for the previous 5 years. This practice was continued in 2023. The annual report was published for the previous year with statistical data for the period 2018-2022.

Similar to the previous year, the annual report was published in a downloadable format on the website via the Knowledge Hub page and a limited number of hard copies were also printed with the help of the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office.

### 2.4. VPI PATENT AWARENESS PROJECT 2023-2024

In order to enhance the marketing and awareness raising activities, the Director of the VPI initiated a new project with the NKFIH in 2023 with a duration of 12 months. The project application was approved in August and 100% of the non-refundable project funding was paid in September.

The project will conclude in 2024 with tasks including, but not limited to awareness raising about the new PCT and GPSS services of the VPI, publications, case studies and the

annual report for 2023.

### 2.5. QUALITY

After a successful internal audit in April, the external audit of the VPI's Quality Management System was also successfully completed by SGS Hungária Kft. (SGS) in June 2023. This year, the VPI's Quality Management System went through the re-certification process, which is due in every three years.

There were no nonconformities detected. SGS's Auditor supported the overall analysis of the cross-check results planned by the VPI.

### 2.6. MEETINGS OF THE VPI

The Administrative Board (AB), the main governing and norm-setting body of the VPI held two in-person meetings in 2023. The 18th meeting was held in Prague on 13 June, while the 19th meeting was held in Munich on 13 December. The Chairpersonship of the AB was fulfilled by Poland and the meetings were chaired by Deputy President of the PPO, Ms Patrycja Czubkowska.

The Working Groups (WG) of the VPI held two on-line meetings. The 22nd IT/Quality Management and 18th Technical Experts' joint WG meeting

was hosted by HIPO on 18 May 2023. The 23rd IT/Quality Management and 19th Technical Experts' joint WG meeting was hosted by IPO SR on 15 November 2023.

### 3. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE VPI

#### 3.1. THE 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 remotely at all meetings. The Director participated in the 16th PCT Working Group meeting in February, the 6th meeting of the PCT Minimum Documentation Task Force in May 2023, the 64th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, the 30th Meeting of International Authorities (MIA) under the Patent Cooperation Treaty - PCT MIA Quality Subgroup meetings held between the end of October and the beginning of November, and WIPO workshop on IP Finance Dialogue: Expanding Horizons on IP Finance and Valuation.

#### 3.2. THE EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE (EPO)

The VPI took part in the EPO's Harmonisation Files project in 2023 with 20 files received from the EPO. The IPC classes of the two batches of files were B65D and C07D.

The VPI also actively took part in the 21st 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 2022. Presentation in the dedicated discussion on one selected file was made by the colleagues of the Industrial Property Office of the Czech Republic, as the Czech BO of the VPI.

According to the decision of the Administrative Council (AC) of the EPO, the VPI has observer status in the AC meetings. The Director participated in all AC meetings online in 2023.

The EPO celebrated its 50th Anniversary on 5 October 2023. The Director of the VPI participated in the event in person.

#### 3.3. BILATERAL RELATIONS

The VPI concluded a Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU) with the Slovenian Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) in Ljubljana, on 30 November 2023.

The document signed by Ms Karin Žvokelj, Director of SIPO and Ms Johanna Stadler, Director of the VPI, creates a framework of cooperation between the two organisations in order to support the national and international patenting activities of the Slovenian applicants with the help of the GPSS services of the VPI. The MoU between the SIPO and the VPI also opened the cooperation of the two organizations in the field of raising awareness on patenting under the PCT.

### 3.4. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, CONFERENCES, MEETINGS

Two of the BOs of the VPI had significant anniversary events in 2023 where the VPI was honoured to participate. The IPO SR celebrated its 30th anniversary on 31 May. The Director of the VPI represented the VPI in person at the event. The PPO celebrated its 105th anniversary on 21-22 September. The celebratory conference was held in Warsaw where the Director of the VPI took part in a panel discussion and presented the services of the VPI as well.

## 4. DEVELOPMENTS WITH FUTURE POTENTIAL

### 4.1. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE SME FUND TO GPSS

The SME Fund 2024 edition grant scheme provides support for European SMEs to finance “prior art search reports preceding the filing of patent applications”.

Upon the decision of the Management Board of the European Union Intellectual Property Office at the end of 2023, GPSS performed by the VPI qualify for this support as from 1 January 2024. GPSS fees can be reimbursed up to 75% under the Patents Voucher (Voucher 3) of the SME Fund initiative.

This possibility will support the interested European SMEs to gain valuable prior art information from a trusted source for a significantly discounted fee with the help of the GPSS of the VPI.

### 4.2. RESULTS OF THE REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES IN THE V4 COUNTRIES TO FINANCE IP RELATED ACTIVITIES

The report on the “Financial incentives as a tool for improving the

V4 innovation ecosystem and enhancing IP protection” was finalised by a consortium of V4 universities led by the Jagiellonian University (Krakow) in 2023.

The report on national and regional financial incentives supporting IP protection in the V4 countries was financed by the International Visegrad Fund and also highlighted the activities of the VPI.

The report establishes that the operation of the VPI supports the development of innovation and competitiveness in the region and supports making coordinated regional efforts to create financial support schemes for eligible SMEs, universities and research institutes.

The VPI will certainly continue to actively reflect on these ideas and suggestions during 2024, in the service of the players of the innovative ecosystem in the V4 region.



# APPENDIX - FACTS AND FIGURES (2019-2023)

The aim of the Visegrad Patent Institute (VPI) Annual 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.

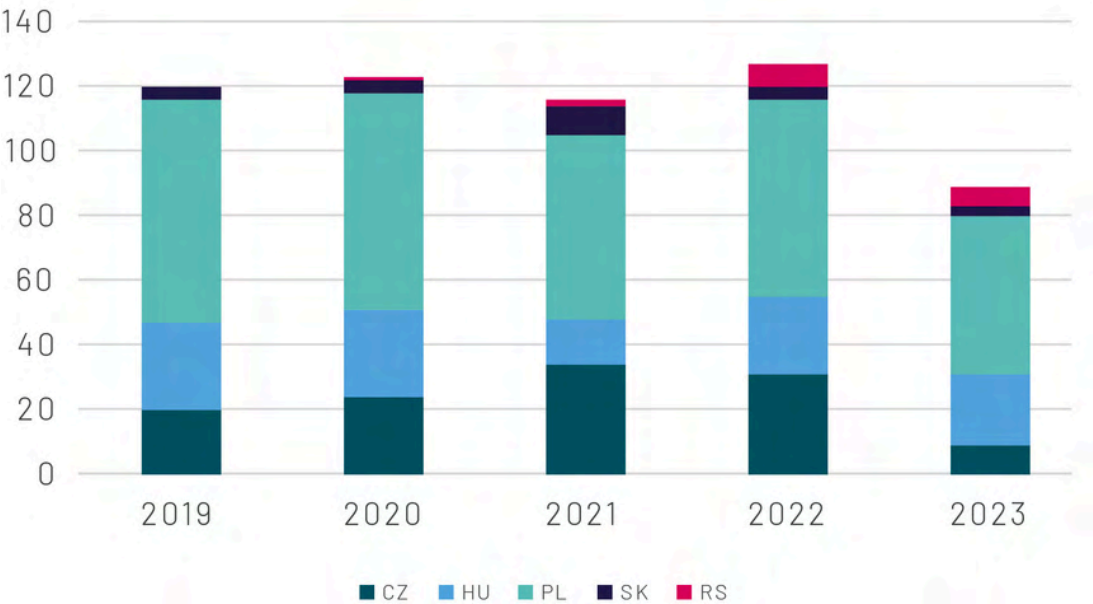
This appendix encompasses the past 5 years from 2019 to 2023. Statistics of earlier years are published in the 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports of the VPI, which can be downloaded from the Knowledge Hub on the VPI website.<sup>1</sup>

# 1. NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS (IAS)

After a year of relatively better statistics, the number of IAs originating from the V4 countries decreased in 2023.

The VPI offers its services to the Serbian users based on the Memorandum of Understanding<sup>2</sup> (MoU) concluded with the Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Serbia in 2020. The number of incoming IAs from Serbia remained roughly the same.

*Number of IAs by country of origin (2019-2023)*



Source: WIPO ePCT

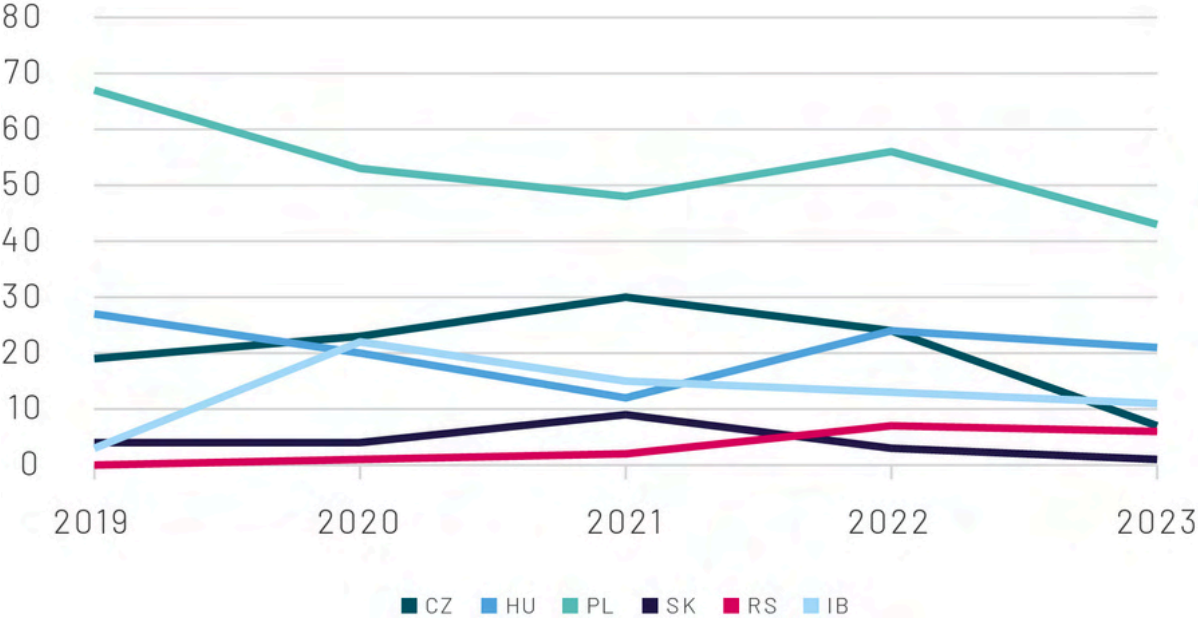
1 - <https://vpi.int/en/09-knowledge-hub/>

2 - 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.

No IAs arrived from Lithuania although an MoU was also concluded with the State Patent Bureau of the Republic of Lithuania in 2017.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of the users of the VPI file their IAs at their National IP Office as receiving office (RO) under the PCT. There was a spike in the number of IAs filed at the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO IB) in 2020, but this was an exceptional year from this point of view as well.

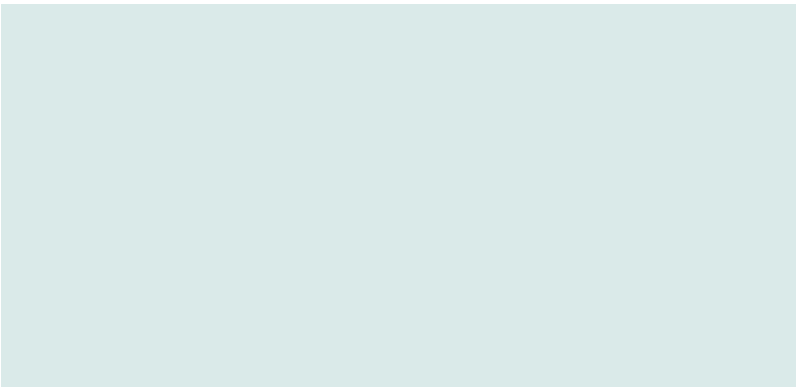
Number of IAs by ROs (2019-2023)



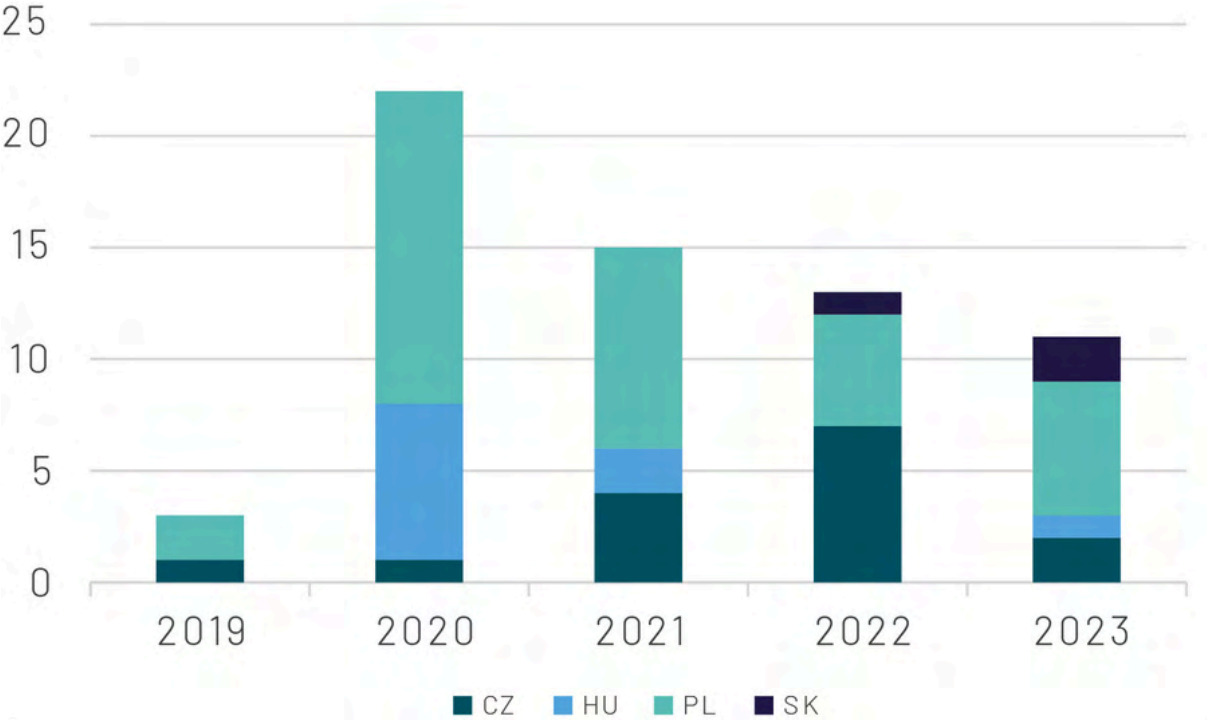
Source: VPI statistics

3 - 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.

A steadily dropping ratio of applicants file directly at the WIPO IB with mostly Polish and Czech applicants taking this route. Two-third of the Slovak applicants filed via the WIPO route in 2023, but the low number of Slovak applications make it difficult to interpret this data.



Number of IAs filed with WIPO IB as RO by country of origin (2019-2023)



Source: VPI statistics

## 2. RATIO OF WITHDRAWN IAS

After a favourable withdrawal rate in 2022, the ratio of withdrawn IAs unfortunately doubled in 2023. However, in absolute terms, this number did not exceed the previous year. The five-year average withdrawal rate is a steady 11%.

*Ratio of withdrawn IAs by country of origin (2019-2023)*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average
CZ	0%	8%	3%	6%	33%	10%
HU	11%	21%	7%	0%	18%	11%
PL	19%	28%	19%	16%	8%	18%
SK	0%	25%	0%	25%	0%	10%
RS	na	0%	0%	0%	33%	8%
Average	7%	16%	6%	9%	18%	11%

Source: VPI statistics

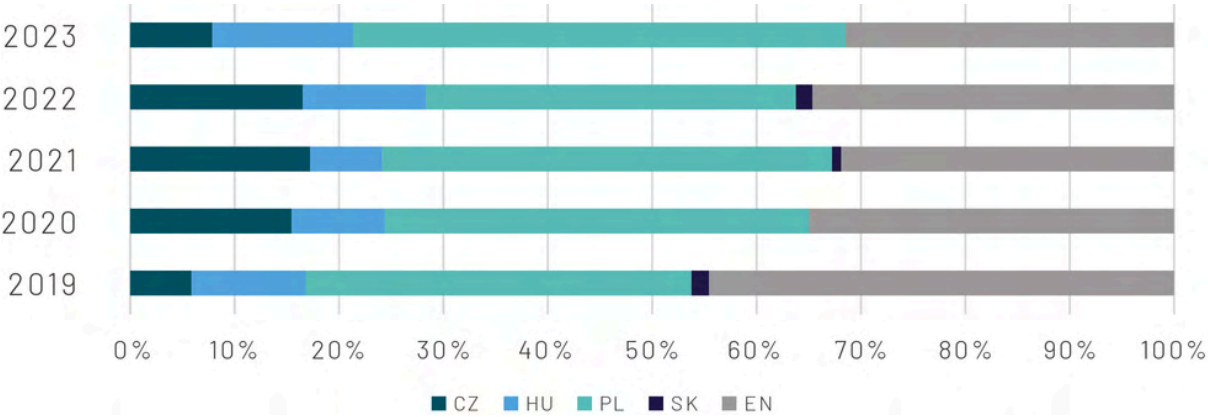
### 3. USE OF LANGUAGES IN IAS

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 IAs.

#### 3.1. RATIO OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE VPI IN IAS

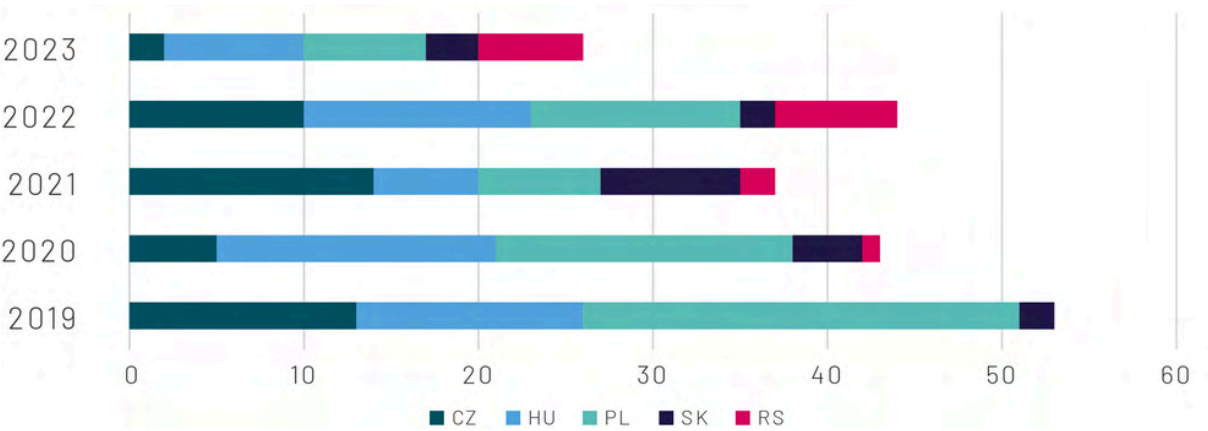
The ratio and the number of IAs filed in English slightly decreased last year. However, the ratio of applications filed in English has been around one-third of all incoming applications after a smaller spike in 2019 despite the fact that all incoming IAs from Serbia were filed in English.

Ratio of official languages of the VPI used in IAs (2019-2023)



Source: VPI statistics

Number of English-language IAs by country of origin (2019-2023)



Source: VPI statistics

### 3.2. RATIO OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IAS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

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

If we disregard the Serbian applications which were all filed in English, and the Slovak applications whose low number does not provide a proper basis of comparison, the average ratio of applications filed in English, varied between 49% and 24% during the past 5 years.

*Ratio of English language IAs by country of origin (2019-2023)*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average
CZ	65%	21%	41%	32%	22%	36%
HU	48%	57%	43%	54%	36%	48%
PL	36%	25%	12%	20%	14%	22%
SK	50%	100%	89%	50%	100%	78%
RS	na	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: VPI statistics

#### 4. WORK OF THE NATIONAL IP OFFICES OF THE CONTRACTING STATES AS BRANCH OFFICES (BOS) OF THE VPI

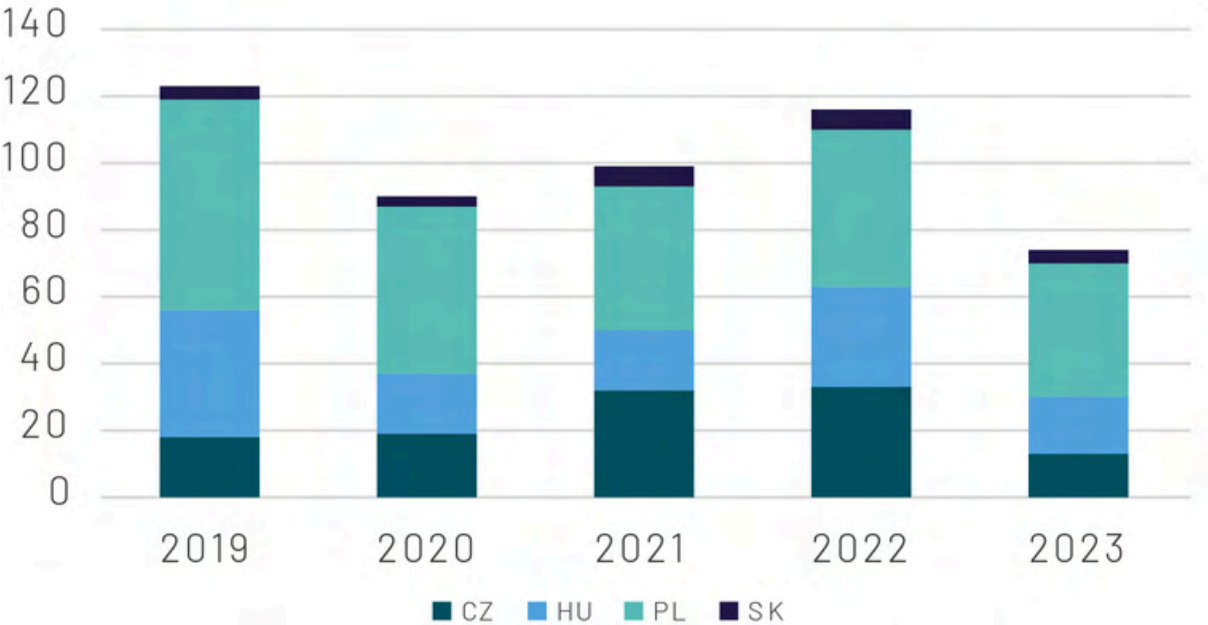
The work done by BOs, the production of international search reports (ISRs), and international preliminary examination reports (IPERs), closely follow the number of requests and demands received.

#### 4.1. WORK PERFORMED BY THE VPI AS INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

The bulk of the substantive work of the VPI is the establishment of ISRs under the PCT. BOs process the IAs arriving from their country of origin.

As the number of Polish IAs is always the highest, the Polish BO deals with the most cases and issues the most ISRs. The exception to this main rule is the case of IAs arriving from neighbouring countries based on an MoU. The international search work is then allocated in accordance with the availability of resources of the BOs in the technical field concerned.

Number of ISRs issued by BOs (2019-2023)



Source: VPI statistics

#### 4.2. WORK PERFORMED BY THE VPI AS INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

The number of demands received by the VPI is quite low, although it slightly increased in 2023. This is also reflected in the number of international preliminary examination reports (IPERs).

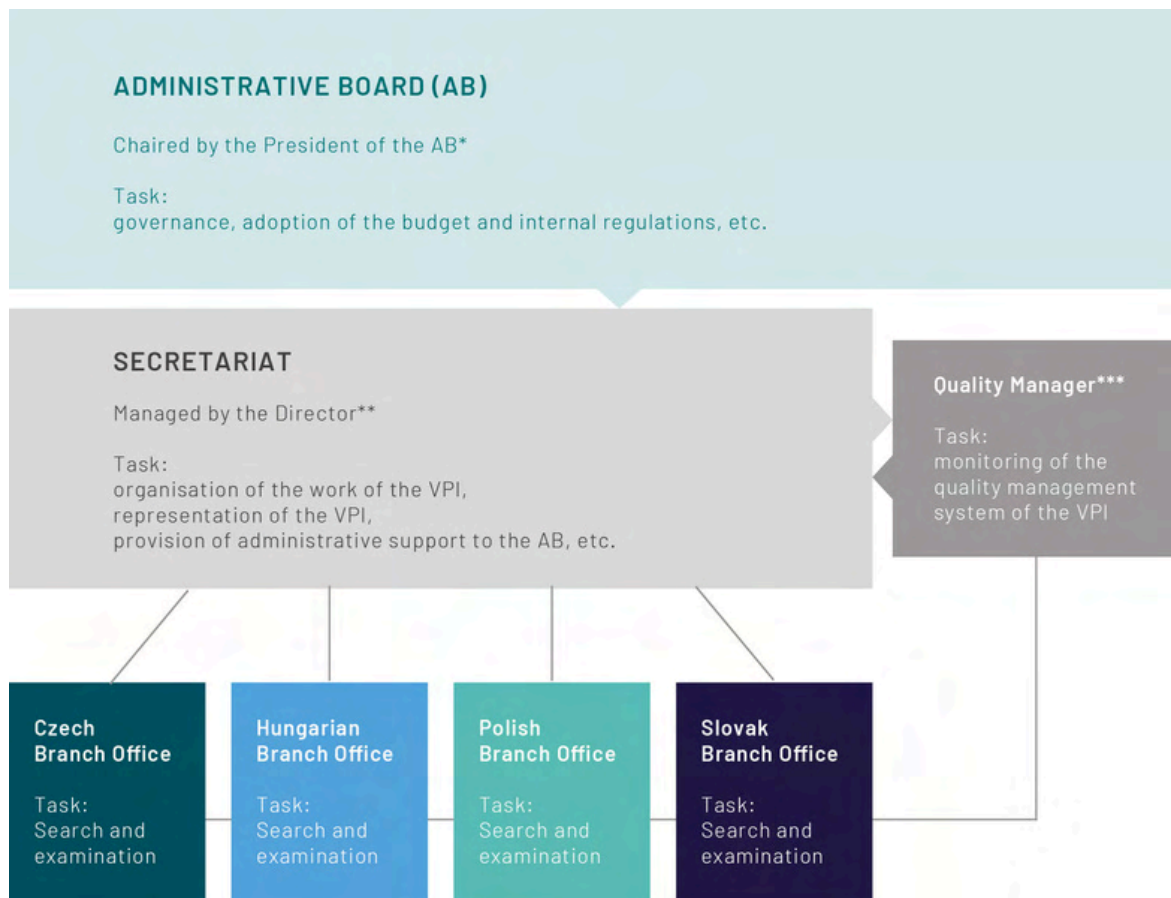
*Number of IPERs issued by BOs (2019-2023)*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
CZ	0	0	1	0	0	1
HU	4	4	4	1	0	13
PL	1	1	0	0	1	3
SK	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	5	5	1	1	17

Source: VPI statistics



## 5. ORGANISATIONAL CHART OF THE VPI



\*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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VPI, H-1081 Budapest  
II. János Pál pápa tér 7.  
Phone: +36 1 951 5770

Website: [www.vpi.int](http://www.vpi.int)

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