

ANNUAL REPORT



2025

of the
Visegrad Patent Institute

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

GREETINGS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE VPI	4
I. INTRODUCTION	6
II. FACTS AND FIGURES OF THE WORK OF THE VPI IN 2025	7
2.1 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS UNDER THE PCT	7
2.1.1 THE VPI IN THE SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN PCT AUTHORITIES	7
2.1.2 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE VPI	9
2.1.3 LANGUAGES	10
2.1.4 NATURE OF APPLICANTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	11
2.2 VPI'S WORK AS AN INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY	12
2.3 VPI'S WORK AS AN INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY	12
2.4 SUPPLEMENTARY INTERNATIONAL SEARCHES AND INTERNATIONAL-TYPE SEARCH	12
III. OPERATION OF THE VPI IN 2025	13
3.1 USER-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES	13
3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE	13
3.3 MEETINGS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES	13
3.3.1 MEETINGS OF THE VPI	13
3.3.2 INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE VPI	14
IV. ORGANIGRAM OF THE VISEGRAD PATENT INSTITUTE	15

DEAR READER,

It is my pleasure to greet you within the Annual Report of the VPI for 2025, a special year when we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the signature of the Agreement on the Visegrad Patent Institute.

It is my great honour to present the Annual Report of the Visegrad Patent Institute for the fifth time since the first Annual Report was published for the year 2021.

The year 2025 has been a year of both challenges and achievements for the VPI. The institute has successfully identified and taken advantage of opportunities for growth and development.

Our core business at the VPI is to act as an international searching and preliminary examination authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). Therefore, our most important objective for the year was to prepare for the application for the extension of the VPI's appointment as PCT authority.

The VPI's capacity to carry out its PCT Authority function and to serve the users of the PCT system in Central Eastern Europe is founded on a decade of close cooperative and collective endeavours among the IP Offices of the VPI's Contracting States. This close cooperation enabled us to successfully complete all preparations and documentation related to the extension of the VPI's appointment in a timely manner. Notably, the VPI adeptly fulfilled all new requirements concerning the PCT minimum documentation incumbent on PCT Authorities. With all tasks completed and documentation prepared for the extension of the appointment as PCT Authority, the VPI was awaiting the final decision of the PCT Assembly at the end of 2025. Although this

will be covered in the next Annual Report, I would also like to report on the positive decision taken by the PCT Assembly in July 2026 to extend the VPI's PCT authority appointment until the end of 2037. I would like to express my gratitude for the reliable professional work of the IP Offices of the VPI's Contracting States that enabled the successful completion of this exercise.

Another significant development took place in 2025 in relation to the Global Patent Search Services (GPSS) portfolio of the VPI that offers search services to a world-wide professional community. Based on customer feedback, the VPI developed the Validity Search Service (VSS) that offers in-depth searches of a particular patent specified by the customer that is in force (or has family members in force) in at least

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one country, with claims available in English. Similarly to the other GPSS services, the new VSS is also delivered within four weeks and gives fast, reliable answers to validity questions. The new service proved to be of special interest to a world-wide community of IP professionals and a useful new service of the GPSS portfolio.

On an international scale, the regional cooperation network of the VPI has also been strengthened in 2025 by the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Austrian Patent Office. The cooperation with the most innovative and prosperous IP

Office in our region will provide beneficial lessons about how to continue to work towards the goal of the VPI and become the “most user friendly PCT authority next door”. Preparations for signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Croatia that makes useful exchanges of best practices in

The VPI developed the Validity Search Service (VSS) that offers in-depth searches of a particular patent specified by the customer that is in force (or has family members in force) in at least one country, with claims available in English.

awareness raising and joint activities in the field possible, and an Agreement on Work Cooperation with Slovenia in order to extend the professional network of our Institute were also started in 2025.

Last but not least, the VPI managed to reinforce its system of soliciting user feedback from the applicants. The feedback system, which was renewed in 2024, has finally brought tangible results, as our users started sharing their opinion with us. A number of valuable feedback were received that have already been taken into account in developing our processes in the service of our applicants.

The VPI is dedicated to delivering quality work and continuous development, which would not have been possible without the steady, reliable professional cooperation of the national IP Offices of the VPI's Contracting States. I would like to reiterate my gratitude to both the management of the offices and

the professional staff that makes the daily management of our tasks possible.

I am confident that by working together, we can continue to honour our commitment to improving our services and operations for the benefit of our users and, ultimately, our region.

On this note, I wish you a pleasant reading.

Johanna Stadler
Director

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2025, 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 search and international-type search. However, no such request arrived in the year under review.

2025 was characterised once again by a downward trend in the number of international applications (IAs or applications) received from the Contracting States. The number of Polish applications fell most dramatically, from 53 in 2024 to 24 in 2025. Czech applications decreased moderately, from 11 in 2024 to 8 in 2025, while Slovakian applications remained stable at 3 in both years. Although the actual number of applications from Hungary (51) was lower in 2025 than the previous year (61), it did not fall back to previous levels (e.g. 21 applications in 2023 or 24 applications in 2022), despite the financial support system changing again to support PCT applicants choosing either the VPI or the EPO.

The goal of the pilot project on the Global Patent Search Services (GPSS), launched on 1 October 2023, is to provide reliable information about the novelty and patentability of an invention to all innovative players worldwide. 2025 was the second full year of providing Novelty Search Service (NSS) and the Novelty Search with

Preliminary Patentability Report (NSPPR) services. The service portfolio was extended with Validity Search Service (VSS) from 1 October 2025. The service was developed based on customer feedback that proved to be a valid market demand. VSS offers in-depth searches of a particular patent specified by the customer that is in force in at least one country and identifies patent documents and other publications that can affect the validity of the patent. Similarly to 2024, the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office provided for the establishment of the reports in respect of GPSS.

The number of patent examiners employed by the national IP Offices of the Contracting States was in total 153 persons in 2025. This number represents a decrease of close to 6% compared to the 163 examiners in 2024. The VPI Secretariat continued to operate with 2 employees.

II. FACTS AND FIGURES OF THE WORK OF THE VPI IN 2025

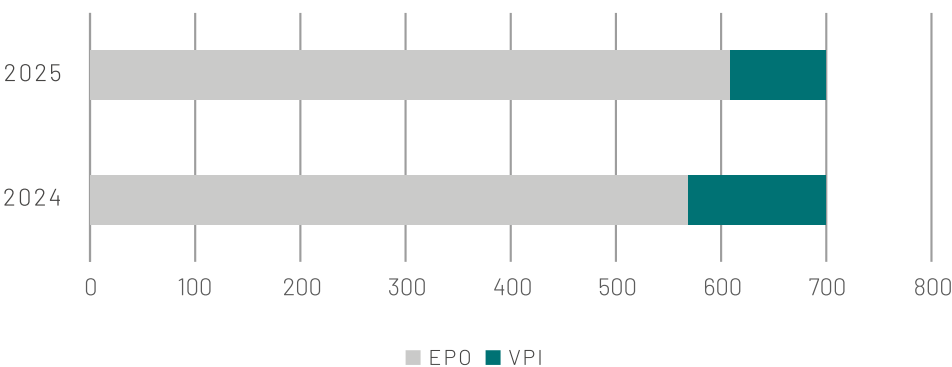
2.1 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS UNDER THE PCT

The year 2025 was characterised by negative trends in the number of applications received from the applicants of the Contracting States, out of which the Polish applications stood out with over 50% decline. Czech applications decreased moderately, while Slovak applications remained the same as in the previous year. Although the actual number of applications from Hungary was lower in 2025 than in the previous year, it did not fall back to previous levels.

2.1.1 THE VPI IN THE SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN PCT AUTHORITIES

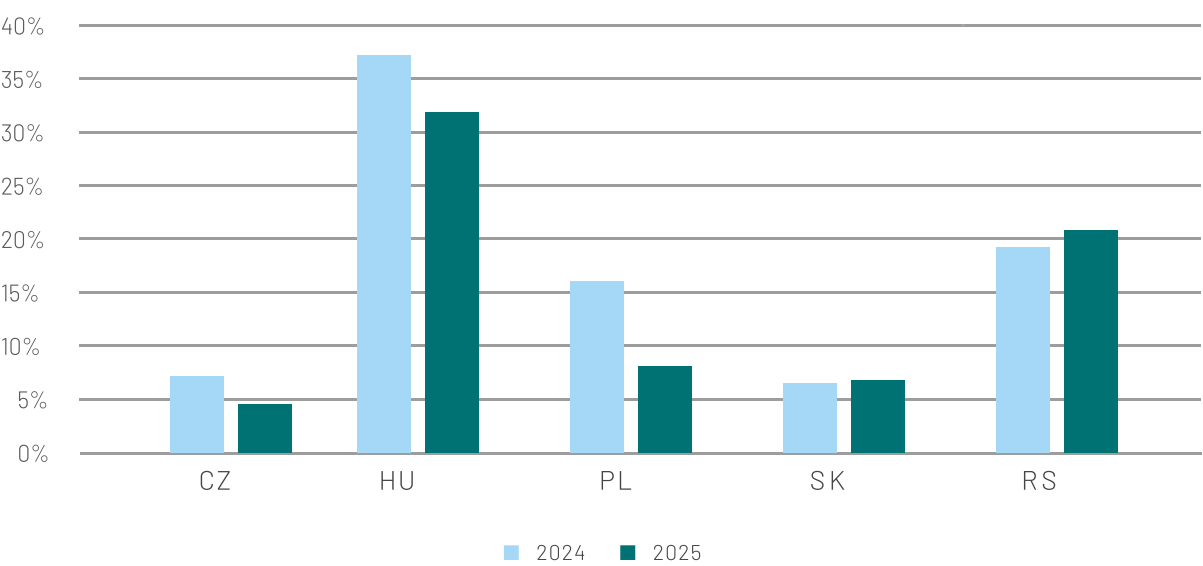
In 2025, a smaller proportion of applicants from the V4 countries plus Serbia chose the VPI as their PCT authority as compared to 2024. The number of applications to the two authorities remained the same.

EPO/VPI breakdown of international applications from the V4 countries and Serbia 2024-2025



Source: WIPO IP Statistics Data Centre

Ratio of applicants choosing the EPO or the VPI by country of origin 2024-2025



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

The chart shows a steady commitment from Hungarian, Slovak and Serbian applicants towards the VPI, while the Czech applicants remain around 5%. There is a significant decrease in the ratio of Polish applicants, however, it is also worth noting that the number of Polish applications filed to the EPO and the VPI combined is also steadily decreasing (365 in 2023, 324 in 2024 and 296 in 2025).

2.1.2 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE VPI

In 2025, the number of applications originating from Czechia, Hungary and Poland showed a decrease, while Slovak and Serbian applications remained the same as in 2024.

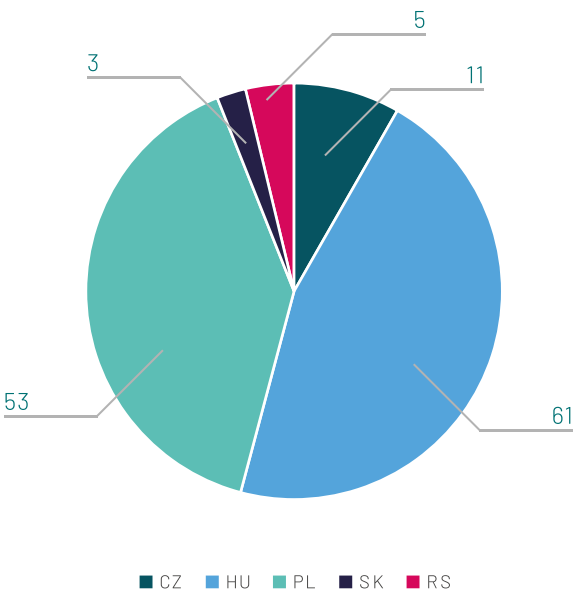
The biggest drop was experienced in the Polish applications with a close to 42% decrease, while the Czech applications dropped by 20%. In contrast, the number of applications from Hungary remained at an increased level. Although the changes in the national IP activity support system in

2024 that resulted in a significant increase of application number were temporary and were no longer in effect in 2025, the VPI received 51 applications during the year. This is more than twice as much as in the previous years.

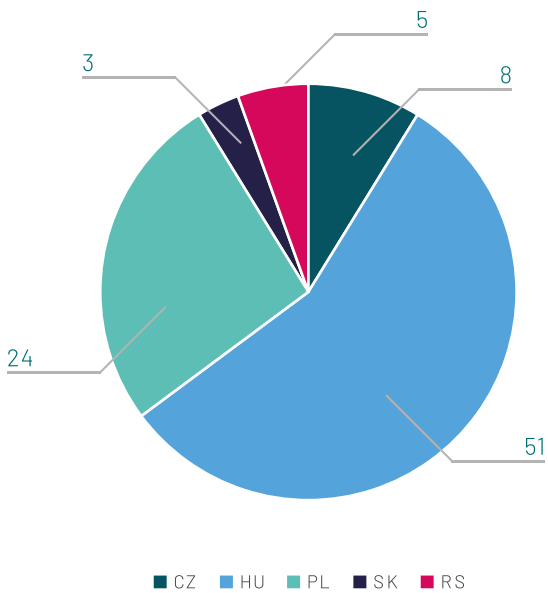
The overall number of applications was 91 in 2025, which is a decrease of over 30% compared to 2024.

International applications (IAs) originated from the following countries:

Number of IAs by country of origin 2024



Number of IAs by country of origin 2025



Filing through the WIPO International Bureau (IB) has never been typical for the applicants of the VPI. The average ratio of applications filed at the WIPO IB remained around just above 10% of the total number of applications received by the VPI. In 2025, only one application was filed through the IB, which is mainly due to the fact that most of the applications filed through the IB arrived from PL applicants in previous years. With the Polish numbers dropping, the IB filings almost completely disappeared in 2025.

2.1.3 LANGUAGES

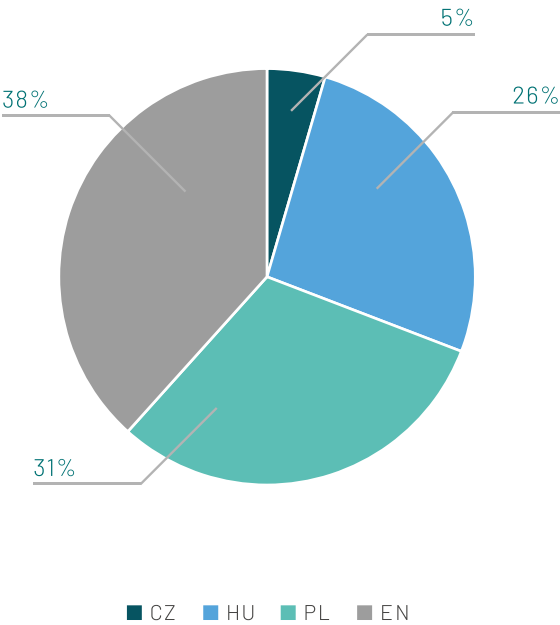
In previous years, applicants from Poland took the most advantage of using their national language when filing applications. This has been a steady trend for several years, although the ratio of Polish applicants

filing in English grew significantly over the years. This trend changed in 2025 with Czech applicants using their national language most (87%) followed by Polish applicants (75%) although the low number of Czech applications make it difficult to draw a trend.

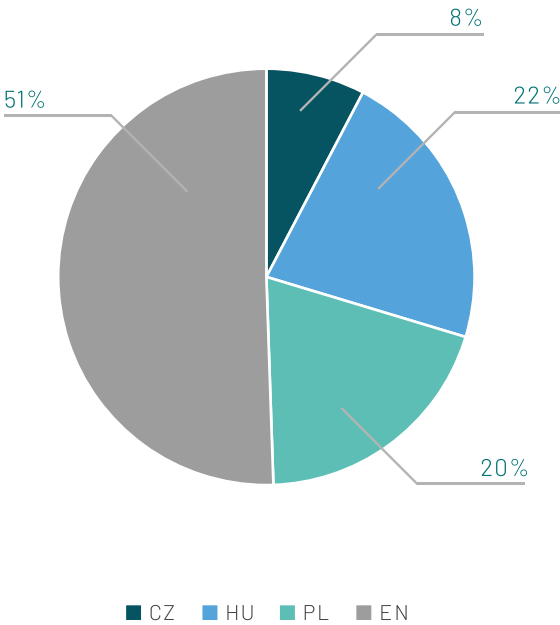
In case of Hungarian applications, a significant change can be seen with the ratio of applications filed in English growing from 43% to 61%. The amendment of the Hungarian law might also have an influence on PCT filings, given that it allows for national first filings in English language and late translations.

The following languages were used when filing international applications (IAs) in 2024 and 2025:

Breakdown of IAs by languages in 2024



Breakdown of IAs by languages in 2025

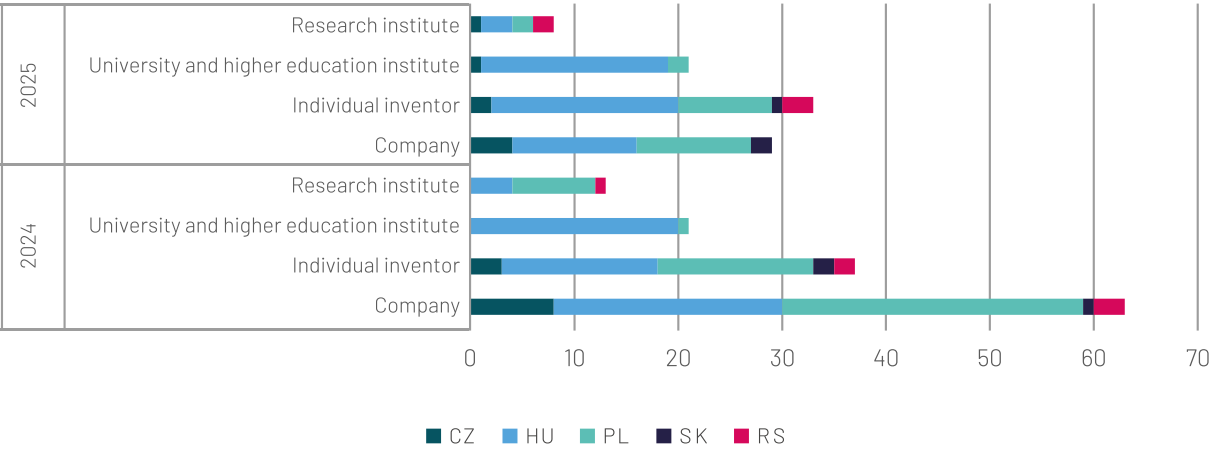


2.1.4 NATURE OF APPLICANTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The composition of the nature of applicants showed a significant change compared to last year and the years before. The ratio of companies further decreased to 32% from 47% (52,8% in 2023), while the ratio of applications filed by universities and higher education institutions grew significantly to 23% in 2025 from the 16% in 2024. Although the actual number is the same as the year before, it still represents a significant change. The majority of the applications still arrived from Hungarian applicants.

The ratio of research institutes remained the same in percentage, while the ratio of individual inventors grew, although the number of applications decreased.

Nature of applicants by country of origin 2024-2025



2.2 VPI'S WORK AS AN INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

The national offices of the Contracting States, as Branch Offices (BOs) of the VPI finished 112 international search reports (ISRs) in 2025, which is a 12% increase compared to the number of reports a year earlier. This figure is due to the high number of applications filed at the end of 2024 and rolled over to 2025.

The BOs concluded ISRs with issuing PCT/ISA/213 that allows for a 40% search fee refund in 80 cases during the year out of the 112 prepared ISRs. This represents 71% of ISRs which is a significant decrease from the 83% of the previous year.

Timeliness in transmitting ISRs is a strength of the VPI. In 2025, all ISRs were issued on time with 62% of the searches completed one week prior, 10% 2 weeks prior and 20% 4 weeks prior to the deadline. The majority of this achievement is due to the voluntary shorter search time that the VPI introduced and keeps in its internal work processes.

2.3 VPI'S WORK AS AN INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

The VPI received 7 demands for international preliminary examination in 2025 with one withdrawn. One demand was filed by Czech and the rest by Hungarian applicants.

The PL BO completed 1 IPER in 2025, and the HU BO completed 4, therefore the total number of IPERs completed in 2025 was 5.

2.4 SUPPLEMENTARY INTERNATIONAL SEARCHES AND INTERNATIONAL-TYPE SEARCH

No requests for supplementary international searches or international-type search arrived in the year under review.

III. OPERATION OF THE VPI IN 2025

The number of patent examiners employed by the national IP Offices of the Contracting States was in total 153 persons in 2025 which represents a small decrease compared to 2024.

The VPI Secretariat continued to operate with 2 employees.

3.1 USER-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

Search fee refund request deadline reminder

To be fully applicant-friendly, the Secretariat issues a reminder on form PCT/ISA/224 two months prior to the six-month deadline, inviting the applicant to request the refund from the international search fee.

In 2025, a total of 32 such reminders were issued which is a significant increase in the number of reminders sent out, with ten refunds expiring unclaimed after the six-month deadline. The VPI will continue this initiative to support the applicants in effectively managing their costs.

Update of Fees and Refunds page

Based on customer feedback, a new "Fees and Refunds" page received a new, electronic function to enable applicants to file refund requests online through the website in addition to the existing options such as email or the ePCT electronic system in 2024. To further improve this new page, the refund request process description was simplified and updated on the website to better help applicants in 2025.

Update of the Customer Survey

The VPI made several efforts to solicit feedback about its services throughout the past years. The customer feedback survey was updated and simplified in 2024 that

helped to gain a few replies, but with room to improve, the VPI initiated a new approach.

A reminder email is sent out to applicants a week after the completion of the search to invite them to fill out the survey. This practice was based on positive experiences gained from previous targeted customer surveys, where a secondary reminder invitation resulted in a higher response rate than the initial one.

The system proved to be effective with an outstanding 37% response rate. The responses were overwhelmingly positive including some professional suggestions that will be discussed at the working group meeting of the VPI. The practice is kept from this year on and reminders are being sent out on an ongoing basis.

3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE

After a successful internal audit in April, the external audit of the VPI's Quality Management System was successfully completed with SGS in July 2025. There were no nonconformities detected. SGS's Auditor supported the system of cross-checking the search results and the overall analysis of the cross-check results by the VPI.

3.3 MEETINGS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3.3.1 MEETINGS OF THE VPI

The Administrative Board (AB), the main governing and norm-setting body of the VPI held two in-person meetings in Munich in 2025 with the chairpersonship of the AB fulfilled by the Slovak Republic. The meetings were chaired by the President of the Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic, Mr Pavol Gregorčok.

The AB took decisions to authorize the Director to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Austrian Patent Office and the State Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Croatia. Furthermore, the AB also took a decision on the Authorisation for the Director to negotiate the terms of an Agreement on search cooperation with the Slovenian Intellectual Property Office.

The working groups of the VPI held two joint IT/Quality Management and Technical Expert's working group meetings on-line in 2025 that provide the solid foundation of the harmonization and quality assurance of the work of the four BOs throughout the year.

3.3.2 INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE VPI

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

As the administrator of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and the centre of international IP cooperation, the WIPO is one of the VPI's most important partner organisations. For this reason, the Director participated in the relevant meetings of the WIPO: 18th PCT Working Group meeting, the 8th meeting of the PCT Minimum Documentation Task Force, the 66th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, the 32nd Meeting of International Authorities (MIA) under the Patent Cooperation Treaty and PCT MIA Quality Subgroup meetings.

European Patent Office (EPO)

The harmonization of search work with the EPO practices to ensure high quality, standardized search results in Europe is of top priority for the VPI. For this reason and as in previous years, the VPI participated in the Harmonisation Files project (HF project)

with the European Patent Office (EPO) with 20 files in 2025.

Similar to the previous years, the VPI actively took part in the discussions at meeting of the 23rd Permanent Committee on Harmonisation of Search Activities (PCHSA) in November 2025.

According to the decision taken by the Administrative Council (AC) of the European Patent Organisation in June 2022, the VPI has observer status at AC meetings. The Director of the VPI participated in all AC meetings, attending partly online and partly in person in 2025.

Bilateral Relations

Preparatory work with the President of the Austrian Patent Office (APO) on the possible MoU were started in 2024 and brought results in May 2025 when the Director of the VPI signed the MoU with APO.

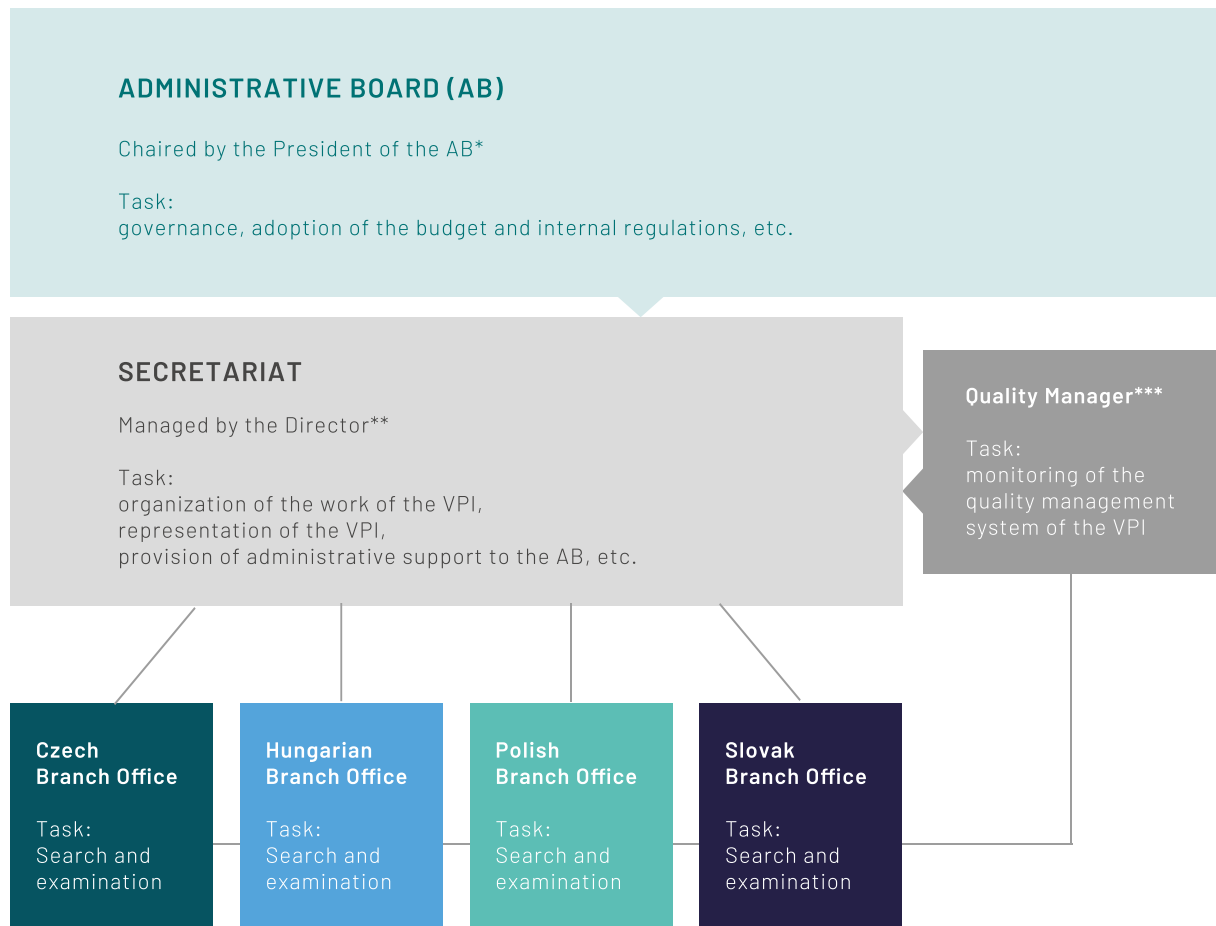
Preparatory work was completed to sign an MoU with the State Intellectual Property Office of Croatia with the signing planned in early 2026.

Informal discussions followed by formal negotiations were started with the Slovenian Intellectual Property Office on an Agreement on Search Cooperation.

Meetings of the IP Offices of the V4+Friends countries

The Director of the VPI attended the V4 IP Offices plus Friends meeting, which took place in Budapest on 25–26 September.

IV. ORGANIGRAM OF THE VISEGRAD PATENT INSTITUTE



*The President of the AB is elected from Members on a rotational basis.

**The Director of the VPI is appointed by AB.

***The Quality Manager is appointed by the AB.

IMPRESSUM

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