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China Leads the World in PCT Applications in 2020

On March 2, the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) released the data of the international filings for patents, trademarks and industrial designs in 2020.

In 2020, international PCT applications grew by 4% to reach 275,900, which is the highest number ever. The top five countries in PCT filings were China (68,720), the U.S. (59,230), Japan (50,520), the Republic of Korea (20,060) and Germany (18,643). The top five countries in international trademark application via WIPO's Madrid System for the international Registration of Marks were the U.S.(10,005), Germany (7334), China (7075), France (3716) and the U.K. (3679).

Among the top ten origins, China (+16.4%) is the only country record double-digit growth in 2020. In terms of international design system, despite a substantial decrease, Germany remained the largest user of the international design system. Among the top ten origins, the U.S. (+62.7%), Turkey (+34.7%) and China (+22.7%) are the only three countries to record growth in 2020.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, the number of Chinese patent application filings through the PCT system has continued to grow. China filed 68,720 PCT applications in 2020, up 16.1%, continuing to lead the world in this field.

Chinese companies and universities are excelling in PCT filings. For the fourth consecutive year, China's Huawei Company was the top filer in 2020 with 5,464 published

PCT applications , followed by Samsung Electronics of the Republic of Korea (3,093), Mitsubishi Electric Corp. of Japan (2,801), LG Electronics Inc. of the Republic of Korea (2,759) and Qualcomm Inc. of the U.S. (2,173). The top ten-university list comprises five universities from China, which were Shenzhen University, Tsinghua University and Zhejiang University, Dalian University of Technology and South China University of Technology.

https://english.cnipa.gov.cn/art/2021/3/6/art_2509_157298.html

Intellectual Property Court of SPC Releases Annual Report and Typical Cases

According to a report released by the Intellectual Property Court of the Supreme People's Court (SPC), it has accepted 5,121 cases, with 4,220 of them concluded since its establishment in 2019.

The report also said that the cases accepted by the Court last year increased as much as 63 percent compared to 2019 due to the continued rise in intellectual property disputes. The amount of compensation awarded in intellectual property cases increased by 79.3% year on year.

In 2020, the Court heard 376 technology-related IP cases involving parties from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and foreign countries, with 281 of them concluded.

As a standing judicial organ under China's Supreme People's Court, the IP Court was set up to hear civil and administrative appeals on technology-related intellectual property disputes and anti-monopoly disputes, and it

aims to help prevent inconsistency of legal application and improve the quality and efficiency of the trials related to IPR.

Since the cases handled by the Court are complicated and demand specific knowledge and skills in the sector, the Court has selected 39 professional judges across the country, and 36 percent of them have technical and legal interdisciplinary backgrounds to better fit the job.

Also according to the report, the Court has issued 10 judicial interpretations and normative documents to make it more convenient for parties to present evidence, shorten the litigation cycle, reduce the cost of safeguarding rights and increase the amount of compensation. It held 114 series of Judges Conference in the past two years to study difficult legal issues related to IPR and established a talent pool with more than 450 technical investigators covering more than 30 technical fields.

<http://english.ipraction.gov.cn/article/ns/202103/337168.html>

China Rules Record Compensation for Technology Theft

SPC's Intellectual Property Court ordered a record high compensation of 159 million yuan (around \$24.6 million) for the theft of technology secrets in an appeal case.

It is believed to be the largest compensation that the country's courts have awarded in commercial secret infringement disputes.

A chemical producer based in East China's Zhejiang province was found guilty of stealing technology secrets about vanillin from another company based in the same province and shall pay the sum in compensation to the obligee, the tribunal said in its ruling.

<http://english.ipraction.gov.cn/article/tc/202103/337170.html>

Patent and Trademark Pledge Financing in China Gains the Largest Increase in the 13th Five-Year Plan Period

In 2020, the total confirmed amount of patent and trademark pledge financing reached 218 billion, showing a year-over-year growth of 43.9%. The number of pledge projects was 12,093, showing a year-over-year growth of 43.8%.

According to statistics, in 2020, the amount of patent pledge financing in China was 155.8 billion yuan. Banks and banking financial institutions such as credit unions were the largest pledgers, covering 67.4% of the pledge projects. Industrial enterprises pledged 97.9% of the total number of pledged patents.

After the Covid-19 struck, liquidity became especially important for the resumption of work and production. CNIPA created a green channel for the registration of patent and trademark pledges and have since provided fast-track services for over 5000 enterprises.

To sharply increase the efficiency of the registration process, CNIPA revised its provisions of the pledge of trademarks, adopted the notification-commitment system, and simplified registration materials and procedure, reducing the time frame to only two working days. As for patent pledges, the time frame for processing of paper documents has been reduced from seven working days to three working days, and to one working day for digital processing.

<http://english.ipraction.gov.cn/article/ns/202103/338118.html>

SAMR: Results in Fighting IPR Infringement and Counterfeiting in 2020

In 2020, market regulators throughout the country organized and launched special actions, such as IPR enforcement, further strengthened governance in key areas, key commodities and key markets, and actively

exerted the deterrent power of administrative law enforcement.

In the whole year of 2020, a total of 316,000 cases were investigated and handled in various special actions, of which over 31,000 cases were concerned with trademark infringement, and over 28,000 cases were concerned with law violations of trademarks on key commodities of public health and safety concern, such as anti-epidemic supplies, food, household products and electronic products. More than 120,000 law enforcement actions have been launched at key entity markets with high incidence of IPR infringement and counterfeiting.

<http://english.ipraction.gov.cn/article/tn/202103/339194.html>

China Files More European Patent Applications Despite Pandemic

Patent applications from China in Europe grew by 9.9 percent in 2020, the highest growth rate among the ten leading patent filing countries despite the impact of COVID-19, the European Patent Office (EPO) said in March.

The increase contrasts with lower patent application numbers from most other leading technology regions. For instance, U.S. firms filed 4.1 percent fewer applications last year than that of 2019, while Europe's patents were down 1.3 percent, and those from Japan decreased by 1.1 percent.

Patents filed from South Korea posted comparably stronger growth, up 9.2 percent, according to the EPO Patent Index 2020.

The top three technology fields with the most patent applications from China were digital communication, which accounted for 26.5 percent of all patent applications at the EPO, computer technology, as well as electrical machinery, apparatus and energy.

Among the leading technical fields across all countries at the EPO, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology showed the biggest increases in terms of patent filings, which increased by 10.2 percent and 6.3 percent respectively, while transport showed the largest drop of 5.5 percent last year.

<http://english.ipraction.gov.cn/article/ns/202103/338865.html>

China-EU Agreement on Geographical Indications Takes Effect

The bilateral agreement between China and the European Union (EU) on geographical indications (GI) took effect on March 1, 2021.

GI is a label used for identifying the geographical origin of a product, and is an important type of intellectual property right. According to the agreement, 100 GIs from each side, involving liquor, tea, food and farm produce, came under protection on the same day.

The second GI list, consisting of 175 GIs from each side, is set to go through protection procedures within the next four years.

The China-EU GI agreement was signed on Sep 14, 2020 after 22 rounds of official negotiations since 2011. It is China's first comprehensive, high-level bilateral agreement on GIs, the statement said, adding that the agreement will facilitate exports and imports of related products.

China became the EU's largest trading partner in 2020, with the bilateral trade volume reaching \$649.5 billion.

<http://english.ipraction.gov.cn/article/ns/202103/337339.html>