

European Patent Office:

As of July 01, 2002 four new countries will become members of the European Patent Convention (EPC):

Bulgaria (BG), the **Czech Republic** (CZ), **Estonia** (EE) and **Slovakia** (SK) may then also be designated in a European Patent application. 24 European countries are now members of the EPC.

A European Patent may be applied for the below mentioned states:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria*), Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Czech Republic*), Germany, Denmark, Estonia*), Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia*), Turkey, Cyprus.

*) as of July 01, 2002

Granted European Patents may be extended to:

Albania, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Rumania and Slovenia.

If the United Kingdom is designated in a European Patent the patent protection can also be extended to **Hong Kong.**

Advantage of a European patent application:

The application is filed in one language only and the examination proceedings are carried out centrally in one language. The cost is thus substantially lower than in the case of a respective number of national applications.

TOPIC:

FOUR FURTHER COUNTRIES WILL JOIN THE EUROPEAN PATENT CONVENTION ON JULY 01, 2002

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for Clients and Colleagues

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