

European Patent Office (EPO)

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In 1973, the European Patent Convention (EPC) established an international organization (the “European Patent Organization”), the aim of which is to strengthen cooperation among European states (the “Contracting States”) regarding the grant of patents. In particular, the EPC allows an applicant to obtain patents [throughout most of Europe](#) on the basis of a single European patent application subjected to a single, centralized granting procedure, rather than filing and prosecuting individual applications in each country. The [EPO](#) is the office responsible for administering this procedure. The EPO is a separate agency from that of the [European Union Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#), which focuses on trademark and design rights in European countries.

A patent granted by the EPO (a “European patent”) does not in itself confer pan-European patent protection. Rather, the European patent must be validated separately in each country where the applicant wishes to obtain patent protection. Broad European protection on the basis of a European patent will be possible if the [Agreement on a Unified Patent Court](#) comes into force. Protection outside of Europe is also possible through extension or validation agreements between the European Patent Organization and partner states. See the EPO website for more information about these [extension states](#) and [validation states](#).

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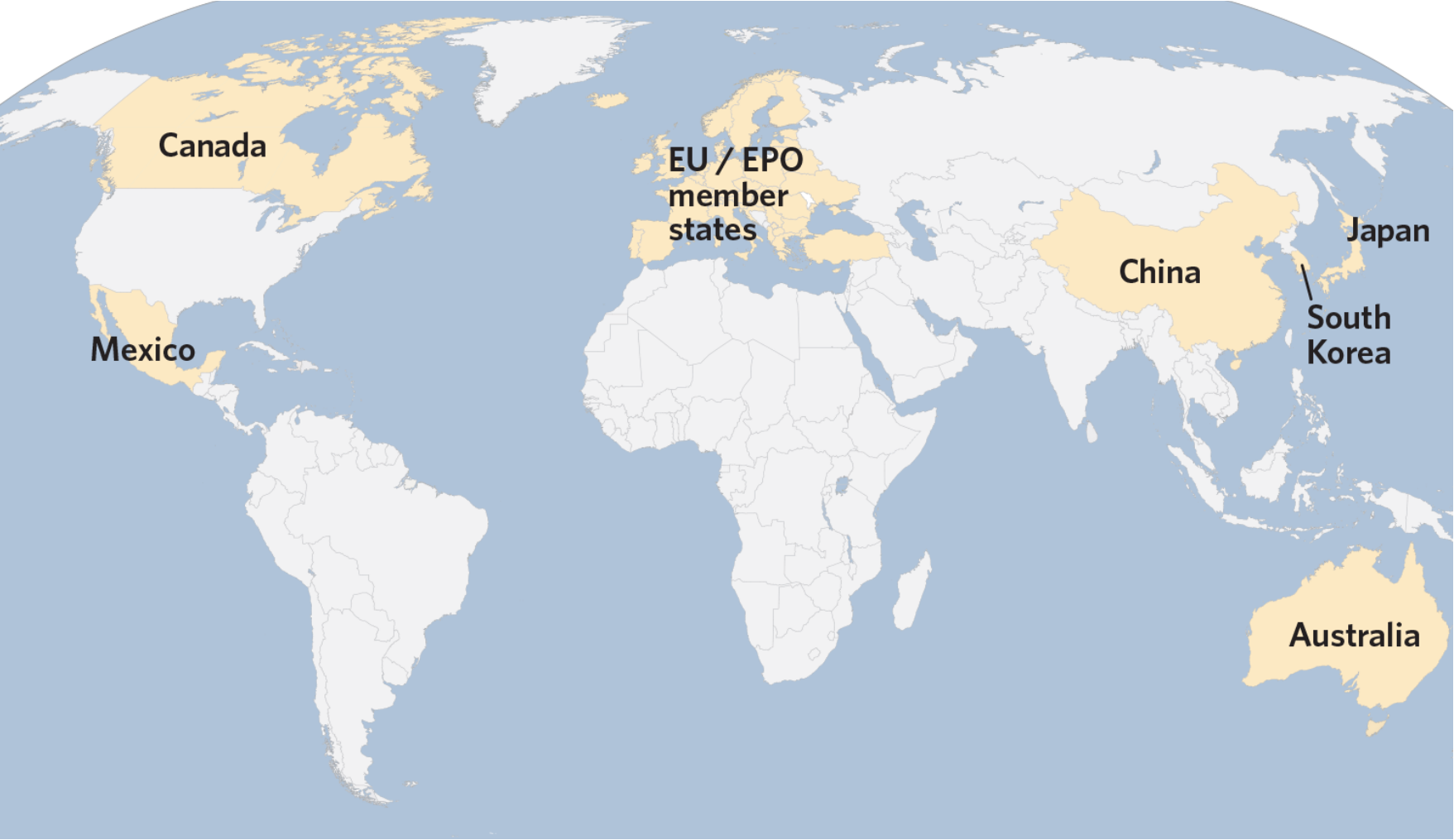
- › Paris Convention (possibility of securing “priority” for overseas IP filings)
- › Patent Cooperation Treaty (international patent applications)

Worksharing and other cooperative arrangements

- › Patent Prosecution Highway (accelerated examination)
- › Priority Document Exchange (electronic transmission of certain filing documents)
- › Global Dossier (display of information about patent applications in multiple countries)

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