Geographical Diffusion of US Modes or a Trend Toward Complexity: What is Behind the Surge in EPO Patent Voluminosity

Nicolas van Zeebroeck[σ], Bruno van Pottelsberghe[α] and Dominique Guellec[δ]

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to identify the sources of the drastic increase in the voluminosity of patent applications at the European Patent Office (EPO). Five main hypotheses are developed regarding the determinants of patents voluminosity: a time trend, a geographical contamination, technological specificities, IP strategy and the complexity of inventions. The results show that patent voluminosity, as measured with the number of claims, the number of pages, or the number of textual pages per claim, can be explained by all of these broad hypotheses. Nevertheless the results suggest that technological complexity and the various components of an IP strategy, are the most important determinants of the voluminosity of patent applications at the EPO. The evidence further shows that a geographical contamination occurs, especially from the USA, witnessing the impact of the fundamental differences between Common and Civil Law.

Keywords: Patent voluminosity, patent applications, IP strategy

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Article Outline

[σ] ULB – Solvay Business School – Centre Emile Bernheim – CP145/01 – Av. Roosevelt 21 | 1050 Brussels (Belgium) – nicolas.van.zeebroeck@ulb.ac.be
[α] ULB – Solvay Business School – Centre Emile Bernheim – CP145/01 – Av. Roosevelt 21 | 1050 Brussels (Belgium) – bruno.vanpottelsberghe@ulb.ac.be
[δ] European Patent Office – Erhard Str 27 | 80298 München (Germany) – dguellec@epo.org