

## **Annex**

In May, Italy announced its decision to join the unitary patent and rapidly ratify the agreement on a Unified Patent Court. The parliament's Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei Deputati) passed a resolution in favour of Italy's participation in the enhanced co-operation in June, confirming the favourable opinion given by the Senate in 2013. Rome is now waiting for the formal acceptance of its request to participate from the European Council and European Commission, something which is expected very soon.

The creation of a European patent with unitary effect for the EU member states has been expected for more than 40 years. It rests on two pillars: The unitary patent itself and the Unified Patent Court (UPC), a dedicated court that will hear cases related to unitary patents. The new patent scheme will create truly supranational patent protection for inventions in all participating member states of EU by treating them as a single territory. It will come into effect once 13 EU member states have ratified the Agreement to establish the UPC, including France, Germany and the UK as the countries with the largest number of European patents. Until now eight countries have ratified the Agreement: Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, Malta, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden.

The EPO and Italy have had a long and fruitful co-operation on the protection of patents, Italy having joined the European Patent Organisation in 1978. Quality and efficiency of the patent system is a joint priority: for example through a working agreement in place since 2008 between the EPO and the Italian Patent and Trademark Office, the EPO carries out prior art searches (currently more than 8 000 per year) related to national Italian patents.

Last year Italian companies and inventors filed almost 4 700 patents with the EPO, an increase of 0.5% compared to the previous year. With 2% of all filings, Italy is 7th among European countries filing patents at the EPO and has a diverse and evenly spread patent portfolio. The five leading fields of technology for EPO patent applications from Italy in 2014 were: handling (8% share all of patent applications from Italy), transport (7%), civil engineering (7%), special machines (6%), furniture (6%), and medical technology (6%).

