

österreichisches patentamt

# JAHRES BERICHT

2016

# DEAR READER,

In this Annual Report, we have adopted a new approach once again. We have been inspired by students of the Academy of Fine Arts and asked them to design our cover. We hope that you will like the work of the young artist selected just as much as we do.

The idea behind our Annual Report is: We do not want to overburden you with a performance review but rather illustrate, page by page, what we do for creative people. They inspire us, for example, to develop new services. We do not only want to present these services but also would like to showcase the people behind them.

Moreover, you will read about the data that were important to us in 2016 and about the enterprises which applied for a particularly high number of patents and trademarks in Austria. For the first time, you will also find a map of Austrian inventor hotspots in this Annual Report.

By the way, "national" does not mean small. Regardless of the market that our customers target, we do everything to ensure that they really reach it. Our enterprises do not have to go it alone worldwide. We help them on their way. We simplify this journey.

In that sense, I hope that this Annual Report will contain some surprises for you. Browse through it!

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Mariana Karepova President of the Austrian Patent Office

# THE ARTIST. STEFANIE HINTERSTEINER

This year, our Annual Report ventures on a balancing act between art and innovation. The print on the cover was created by Stefanie Hintersteiner, born in 1990, who studies Graphic Arts and Printmaking Techniques at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She won the competition that we organised for the design of our Annual Report.



Stefanie Hintersteiner actually comes from the field of textile design and already studied at the Hetzendorf fashion school. The topic of screen printing that underlies the illustration on the front of the Annual Report bag has occupied her for a long time. "The pattern is based on an abstract human figure. I selected a different section for each print, the paper was positioned at random," she says about the genesis of her work.

She used stamps for the cover headline: "I wanted to add some craftsmanship to the print – after all, many inventions are also based on craftsmanship."

#### Jörg Leichtfried

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Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology

#### Mariana Karepova

President of the Austrian Patent Office JL: Madam President, how are you? What are our bright minds doing?

MK: Everything's fine. The creativity of the inventors is contagious. We, too, are continuously working on new services – especially for start-ups. The Patent Check and Fast Track have been smash hits.

JL: Perfect. Our start-up entrepreneurs deserve full support. The government's start-up package, for example, reduces non-wage labour costs to make it easier to set up business. Importantly, however, start-ups have to protect their ideas early enough.

MK: That's at the very centre of our efforts!

JL: This means that the 500 million euro that we use to promote the development of new technologies is invested safely. Excellent!

**MK:** We provide swift and unbureaucratic support – for example by means of PRIO, the provisional patent application, and the Patent Scan. Speaking of inventors: Did you already have a look at the photos of the National Patent Award ceremony?

JL: A great evening! True to the motto "Curtains up for our inventors". Only the host – Michael Ostrowski – was a bit cheeky. Simply a genuine Styrian. 😔

**MK:** Our economic mission to Mexico was another highlight of the past year. I am happy that Austrian enterprises are now able to get faster protection for their products there – with our Patent Prosecution Highway from Vienna to Mexico City, so to speak.

JL: We paved the way for them. It was a rather intensive trip: four agreements in only four days in order to help our enterprises to gain a foothold abroad.



MK: The trip meant a lot of work, but we also achieved a lot. Still, we had time to celebrate our national holiday. Do you recognise the gentleman in the middle of the photo?

JL: Where did you dig that up? It is really impressive how easy we can transmit photos and data nowadays, isn't it. In future, this will even get better: We are working on a strategy to deploy the 5G mobile network.

MK: Our customers will definitely like that! After all, many file their applications online with us. We by the way, this year, our Annual Report is a bit different from other years – just loose sheets ...

JL: Really? Why so?

MK: So that everybody can take out the right information for them.

JL: Well, then, I will pin the data from Styria on my pin board at the office. Or the old patent document of inventor Nikola Tesla. Somehow he is the founding father of our e-mobility initiative.

MK: Enjoy reading. See you soon!

JL: See you soon. And don't forget: Keep on supporting our inventors!

Gerald Pilz Deputy Vice-President Central Services Andrea Scheichl Vice-President Legal and Support Division

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**Stefan Harasek** Strategy and Data Analysis Katharina Fastenbauer Deputy Vice-President Technology and PCT

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Section De

Management Team

Dietmar Trattner Vice-President Technology Division Mariana Karepova President Christoph Mandl Communication and Customer Care Centre and the second second

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# WELOVE INVENTIONS

When your kitchen drawers close gently and silently, the know-how comes from the company Blum in Vorarlberg. When you drive your car by night and the headlamp beams are raised or dipped automatically, technology developed by the company Zizala from Lower Austria is integrated into your vehicle. And when you pay very quickly at the supermarket checkout by simply swiping your bank card or smartphone at the counter, then you use near-field communications, an innovation to which the electrical engineer Franz Amtmann from Styria made decisive contributions.

Patents are essential for all those enterprises. Whenever innovations are not protected, they will be copied - unfortunately, we hear about such experiences very, very frequently. At the Patent Office, we are very proud to support many successful innovation pioneers and, as a result, major Austrian flagship enterprises by providing advice and assistance for their protection strategies - in Austria and all over the world.

Be it a multinational corporation or a basement inventor: in case of doubt, inventions should always be protected before they are presented to the public. This is the only way to safequard the stability and economic value of innovations. Therefore, always go to the Patent Office first! And if you are not sure whether your development really is a technical evolution: Let's talk about it - that is our favourite topic. We simply love inventions!

#### The Patent Office speaks our language

For a company like Blum that is driven by innovations, the protection of intellectual property is a must. The experts of the Patent Office speak our language. It's a pleasure to work with them," the Blum's patent experts agree. "However, inventions are not made by companies but always by people. We are also aware of that at Blum. Therefore, we have already focused on broad-based

education and training in our own company for many years," states Managing Director Gerhard E. Blum whose company invests four percent of its annual turnover in research and development. "We try to protect all new developments by patents. The ranking of Austrian patent applicants underlines how innovative we are.

Gerhard E. Blum, Managing Director

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# TRADEMARKS STEER EXPECTATIONS

You are certainly all too familiar with that: When you have a look at the milk shelf in the supermarket you see organic milk, milk from Lower Austria or the Tyrol, lactose-free milk, milk filtered for freshness... the choice is endless. You have made your own experiences: The milk with the green package lasts particularly long, the one with the blue logo comes from your region, and so on. Why is that possible? Because there are trademarks. They have to be distinguishable and help consumers orientate in the product jungle.

Trademarks are our business. We, at the Austrian Patent Office protect your brand for example word trademark, figurative trademarks, combined word and figurative trademarks and three-dimensional trademarks (e.g. the shape of a bottle). Even sounds are protectable as sound trademarks – just think of the long-drawn-out "Almdudler" call. Every year, the Patent Office examines around 7,900 trademarks from all over the world to assess if they are eligible for protection. After all, a trademark has to be individual and must not be general or descriptive: "bread" for bakery products or "hair studio" for a hairdressing salon would not be distinctive enough – we cannot protect that.

With your trademark, you can also succeed abroad – either in the EU or with an international trademark providing protection in up to 98 countries. Before obtaining an international trademark you have to apply for or register an Austrian trademark.

Further information:

www.patentamt.at/en/trademarks/ http://euipo.europa.eu www.wipo.int/madrid

Trademarks steer expectations. When consumers get to know a trademark they associate it with their own experiences or observations. Expectations are powerful, they influence perception and brain activity and they provide motivation: A good wine will taste better in a good bottle. A good and familiar trademark automatically recalls associations that, ideally, are positive, unique and relevant for purchasing. Importantly, however, the trademark's promise has to be honoured in each and every situation. The customer must be able to rely 100 percent on the product's quality – or whatever the promise is.

Univ.-Prof. Martin Schreier, Head of the Institute for Marketing Management at the Vienna University of Economics and Business



## IN TEN DAYS FROM A FLASH OF INSPIRATION TO A REGISTERED TRADEMARK

W. And and

Flashes of inspiration do not care about deadlines. Those who have a brilliant idea for a new brand cannot wait too long to get protection for it. This is why we offer Fast Track, the accelerated trademark registration procedure, to permit registrations within only ten working days. This is quite remarkable, not least in international comparisons: no other patent office can keep pace with us.

Since its introduction in autumn 2016, more than 615 trademark applicants have benefited from this service. Currently, one out of three trademark applicants already uses Fast Track. Overall, around 7,900 trademarks from all over the world are filed with the Austrian Patent Office annually.

This speed can only be achieved if all involved parties pull together – it is the co-operation of the applicants that actually makes the accelerated procedure possible. Thus, if you want to register your new trademark swiftly, you best check beforehand whether identical or similar trademarks exist already (e.g. on the information portals see.ip or TMview). On our website, you will find a list showing the products or services for which you can apply for trademark protection. This list is the same for all intellectual property offices in the EU.

An Austrian trademark costs 372 euro for ten years. Prolongation is possible for an unlimited period of time. Further information: www.patentamt.at/en/fasttrack

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## SWEATING IS ATHING OF THE PAST

An everyday problem gives rise to an ingenious idea: When Fabian Gutbrod studied in Villach, he used to cycle to the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences and was all sweaty when he attended his lectures. He did have a good bicycle indeed – but wouldn't it be nice to electrify it? Fabian Gutbrod started tinkering and designing. "It was only after more than one year that I realised that I had developed a unique product," he says today. During his master course he worked to finalise the retrofit drive together with the build! business in-cubator. He applied for a patent. When he received the – negative – patent office's decision, the passionate cyclist was just busy preparing the market entry of his invention "add-e".

Hence, Fabian Gutbrod had to experience himself how difficult it is to continue to work on innovative projects without adequate protection. As a result, the Patent Office has become the most important contact for him: "The PRIO application with personal support is a fabulous tool." In fact, the inventor is actually not wildly in favour of patenting. "However, this is not because I think that the protection of intellectual property is not important but rather because we live in times in which it is easier to share knowledge than ever before. If a patent is used improperly, it may hamper innovation and research."

A lack of knowledge on patent-related issues seems to be widespread among start-ups and SMEs. According to a study of the European Commission, only nine percent of all the 22 million European SMEs have obtained protection for their intellectual property. Those companies jeopardise the foundations of their business. So it is even more important that the Patent Office offers competent contact partners. Fabian Gutbrod is aware of that, too: "They make sure that development continues to be worthwhile on the one hand and that barriers are not created for investors and other developers on the other hand."

Last year several new services were introduced for start-ups. For further information see Sheets 8 (PRIO) and 9 (Patent Check).

#### In search of uniqueness

What is the unique characteristic, the new aspect? That is THE crucial question for my investments. The value of a company depends on its intellectual property. Thus, it is much better when it is already protected so that the ideas cannot be copied by anybody else. The Patent Office does not only help enterprises, it also helps me getting a feeling if it is worthwhile to support creative minds.

Michael Altrichter, business angel and impact investor



## PRIO-MORE THAN: A PROVISIONAL SOLUTION

Christian Seyringer, your contact person for PRIO christian.seyringer@patentamt.at +43 (0)1 534 24-329

You are a start-up and have invented something. The technical drawings are almost ready, the search for investors is under way, and you are thinking about marketing actions. Sooner or later the topic of intellectual property rights crosses your mind. "Can my invention be patented?" you ask yourself. And: "Can I really take the time to comply with all the formal requirements for filing a patent application? Or should I better invest my time into further development?" So, will you rather wait before getting protection? But what if somebody else files a similar invention prior to you?

This is precisely the dilemma addressed by PRIO – the provisional patent application with the Austrian Patent Office. It closes the gap between a "regular" patent application and the phase of inventions in which not everything is ready yet. We give your invention an earlier "date of birth" that is effective worldwide for one year. This means that your invention is deposited in our virtual safe. You have evidence that you created the innovation.

PRIO is very important, for example, if you want to go public with your invention to find investors or co-operation partners. During the twelve-month period but, of course, also afterwards the experts of the Patent Office are available for you for ongoing advice. You are actively reminded of deadlines as well – after all, as you know, one year passes by faster than you might think.

The Patent Office offers this service for start-ups at a much reduced rate: Instead of 342 euro for a patent application, PRIO only costs 50 euro. Only when you file a regular patent application, the remaining fees will be charged. Get more information at www.patentamt.at/en/prio



# 10,000 EURO FOR THE ROAD TO YOUR PATENT

This offer is almost too good to be true: The full power of research promotion (experts of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and the Patent Office) is available for you to evaluate the patentability of your invention – and all that is supported by the government (at a rate of 80%) up to an amount of 10,000 euro per company. The experts assist you until you apply for a national or maybe even an

Hannes Raumauf, your contact person for the Patent Check hannes.raumauf@patentamt.at +43 (0)1 534 24-342

international patent, if applicable. This is made possible by the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (bmvit) and the National Foundation for Research, Technology and Development.

It is hardly surprising that the Patent Check is an extremely popular product: The first 100 Checks went like hot cakes within a few weeks. And demand continues to be high! Moreover, what is particularly noteworthy: 80 percent of the Check recipients are newcomers to research. Hence, the Check mainly introduces start-ups or businesses being set up to patenting.

#### Your concrete benefits from the Patent Check:

- ➡ Fast clarification if your invention stands a chance
- → Patent searches together with experts specialised in your technical field
- → Patent monitoring: Who is fishing in my pond?
- → Funding for national and international patent applications

Any further information: www.patentamt.at/en/patentcheck

#### We only offer covered checks!

The Patent Check is covered by twofold expertise – by the most experienced research and technology experts of FFG and around 100 patent specialists from all fields of technology working for the Austrian Patent Office. I am happy that by introducing the Patent Check, we have supplied a tool that Austrian companies really missed to date.

Klaus Pseiner, Managing Director of the Research Promotion Agency (FFG)



# STUDENTS KISS SMARTER

Eight teams, eight enterprises, 24 hours: that was the set-up of the Innovation Marathon of Technical University Austria (Vienna) that took place at the European Forum Alpbach in 2016. Leading Austrian companies, such as KTM, voestalpine and ATELS, defined various tasks for students who had to find an innovative solution to them within one day and one night.

Their support team: the experts of the Austrian Patent Office who performed patent scans on site, i.e. they screened patent documents from all over the world to ensure the novelty of the students' ideas. Each group was coached by a company. After only 24 hours, the solutions were presented. For example, the "phone kiss" that establishes a simple and fast connection between two mobile phones to enable data exchange as well as energy transfer when mobile phones merely touch each other.

A Marathon participant, who was also an actor by training, came on stage and asked another Alpbach scholarship holder: "Excuse me, would you please kiss me?" In fact, he did not want a kiss from her but only from her mobile phone. They both took out their phones and put them together. That was called a "smart kiss" in the concept of the students. Within just a few seconds, it was possible to transfer so much energy via the circuit boards that the phone should at least last long enough for the user to get to the next electrical socket.

By the way, the students of course did not disclose any technical details in their presentation. With a view to possibly getting a patent, they kept their idea secret for the time being.

Within the framework of the Alpbach Technology Talks, another Innovation Marathon will take place in August 2017. We are again on board! www.patentamt.at/en/alpbach/

From left to right: Christoph Mandl, Christian Laufer, Mariana Karepova, Stefan Harasek, Andrea Scheichl

# And how much patent is in you?

Markus P. inventor of the anti-bullshit flaps: Markus P. inventor of the anti-bullshit flaps:



Hildegard Etz is in charge of the Patent Scan hildegard.etz@patentamt.at +43 (0)1 534 24-215

You are working on your dissertation or master thesis and have the feeling that you are right on track to make a brilliant invention – but you do not have the time and the nerve to search more than 100 million patent documents worldwide to find out whether you really are mulling over a completely new technical solution?

PROJECT

This is exactly what the Patent Scan can do for you: It gives students an overview of inventions already protected in their technical field, provides useful information on the "language of patents" and patent literature and is a kick-off for the patent that may be concealed in your thesis.

You learn what you can do with a patent. You get to know the state of the art in your specific field. And you will never again forget to check out your innovations at the Patent Office. All those services are rendered free of charge by the Patent Office. Within four months, the experts deliver the customised Patent Scan.

We offer the Patent Scan for final projects on technological issues at all public universities. Further information at www.patentamt.at/en/patente/patente-service/patent-scan/

# OF DRY SHOWERS AND ANTI-MOLE COBS

Christian Laufer, press relations officer

"What was the most bizarre invention of the past year?" That is a question that Christian Laufer hears very often. He works as a press relations officer at the Patent Office. Almost everything that is communicated to the public passes over his desk sooner or later – press releases, campaigns and newsletters but also this Annual Report.

When asked for bizarre inventions, he already had to disappoint journalists many times. But, Christian Laufer admits: "Somehow I found that the patented anti-mole cob was awesome!" Another one of his favourite inventions is the "dry shower" for patients. That may sound self-contradictory, but it really exists and is useful especially in everyday hospital life.

Alas, nobody has invented a panacea for creative stoppage during writing as yet. But at least there are reasonably sturdy keyboards – something that Christian Laufer urgently needs, as he says himself: "When I have overcome my early morning writer's blockade, I may strike the keys somewhat harder."

> When you work at the Patent Office you have to get to the bottom of things. I take that to heart too. My conclusion: Never judge a patent by its title.

# ALWAYS OFF THE PHONE AT THE PLAYGROUND

Elisabeth Lager-Süß, legal expert

Elisabeth Lager-Süß makes sure that Austria's voice is heard. Together with her colleagues, she gets involved in everything at the international level: from common rules for the forthcoming Unitary Patent to the simplification of international patent rules.

When it comes to the know-how of the Austrian Patent Office, she is quite generous: She organises, for example, trainings for patent offices from developing countries. The legal expert shows her strict side as a knowledgeable lay judge at the Higher Regional Court in Vienna, whereas she welcomes foreign delegations all the more warmly.

> I am not one of those who are constantly on the phone at the playground. When I am at home I can fully be with my daughter. This is made possible by the Patent Office: a good, flexible and accommodating place of work that enables me, as a mother, to balance work and family life optimally.



Barbara Komlody

Isabelle Blaimauer

Customer Care Team

Christa Warmuth

Christoph Mandl

Danjela Preyer (not shown in the photo)

# HOTSPOT FOR PEOPLE WITH GOOD IDEAS

Dresdner Strasse is a very busy street in Vienna's Brigittenau district. Trams and cars pass through it, shopping centres are located there and you can even study at the University of Applied Sciences around the corner. Something that certainly not all the passers-by know: There is also an important hotspot for people with good ideas at Dresdner Strasse. The Patent Office can not only be contacted by e-mail or phone but also has a Customer Care Centre that is available for personal contacts every day – for around 45,000 times a year. Without an appointment or other obstacles. You may simply drop by!

The team of the Customer Care Centre answers questions such as: How much does a trademark cost? Can I patent my invention? Does it exist already? I have invented something great – what do I have to do? For special inquiries, we have an in-house technical and legal information service.

By the way, we do not only want to give the right answers to your questions – we also want you to feel welcome. So, take a seat and connect to our free WLAN for visitors (password: WeLove1nnovations). The Customer Care Centre offers specialised literature on patents, trademarks and designs as well as on scientific and technical topics. While the atmosphere is open at our Office, there are also retreats – after all, it should not be possible for everybody to listen in on what you discuss with our experts.

Visit us - we are looking forward to meeting you!

Dresdner Strasse 87, ground floor 1200 Vienna Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. +43 (0)1 534 24, info@patentamt.at www.patentamt.at



### THE UNITARY PATENT IS TO COME, BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN OPEN

Brexit also affects the Unitary Patent and has raised several questions. Does the United Kingdom have to leave the Unitary Patent after Brexit? After all, the country is one of the three patent giants of Europe. Would the Unitary Patent be less attractive if the UK market was not covered? We are very curious of future developments in this field given that the Unitary Patent is a new and useful opportunity for Austrian enterprises to open up foreign markets. Only when the UK and Germany sign the agreement, the go-ahead will finally be given.

The Unitary Patent automatically protects an invention in up to 25 countries. This saves quite some costs, in particular since extensive translations will not be needed anymore. For many applicants, especially for start-ups and entrepreneurs setting up business, it will still be no picnic. A single court decides on patent protection in all 25 countries – at a cost of up to 20,000 euro. The Unitary Patent itself costs 5,620 euro.

We help you apply this new instrument in a way appropriate for you. When you file your application with us we can research the invention for you. By the way, this is also possible without an application: Before you take further steps, we can take care of patent searches. Those cost only 258 euro.

Contact: Johannes Werner

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During the many years of co-operation between AVL and the Austrian Patent Office, great trust has developed in the competency of the experts. The searches carried out by them provide a reliable basis for obtaining protection internationally. With the European Unitary Patent, the Austrian Patent Office will continue to play an important role as a guide and advisor. This is of great importance for enterprises like AVL List that have to re-position themselves again and again on worldwide markets.

Prof. Helmut List, CEO, AVL List GmbH

Patent Prosecution Highway

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### ON THE PATENT PROSECUTION HIGHWAY AROUND THE GLOBE

Austria is the home country of THE manufacturer of fire engines: the Rosenbauer company from Upper Austria which, like other Austrian technology frontrunners, is active far beyond the national borders. At a major trade fair, the company discovered an identical copy of a Rosenbauer engine. An employee had this copy engrossed directly at the trade fair – with a round of applause from the fair participants. Why was this possible? Because Rosenbauer had the engine patented internationally. Otherwise, the company would have had to accept this counterfeit product without being able to take action.

It is a key issue for us to accompany enterprises after patenting in Austria wherever they need protection. This is possible on the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH), the shortest route from an Austrian patent to the protection of an invention in another country.

Our agreements with other patent offices ensure that foreign offices trust in searches carried out in Austria. This requires high quality standards as well as reliable and professional searches, which we assure in our day-to-day work at the Patent Office. At present, there are such patent agreements with 21 countries – including export markets like Germany, the United States and China that are so important for Austrian companies. By the way, on average, 100 applications filed with us are followed by 70 further applications in countries all over the world.

FASTER TO MEXICO

In last year's autumn, a Patent Prosecution Highway was opened to Mexico. During a visit jointly made by Federal Minister Jörg Leichtfried and the Patent Office's President Mariana Karepova the relevant agreement was signed. Its importance is illustrated by figures: The 20 top applicants of the Austrian Patent Office alone have obtained 300 patents in Mexico since 1995. Now it will be considerably faster and easier to get there.

Invitation: Which country is the destination of your patent journey? Where should we sign further international agreements?

Hannes Raumauf, your contact person for PPH hannes.raumauf@patentamt.at +43 (0)1 534 24-342

Let us know at www.patentamt.at/en/pph

Maria Daniela Mutz

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Thomas Fellner

Petra Asperger

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Nullity Department

Heinrich Bauer

Eva Fessler

# KORNSPITZ AND OTHER NULLITIES

What if a good trademark or patent becomes an everyday term or is not sufficiently innovative? Just think of the Walkman, the portable audio player. The trademark resulted in a great success for the company behind it – until "walkman" became customary in current language. Google is also trembling – just think about it: Does the verb "to google" still belong to the trademark or is it already a synonym for "to search for information on the internet"? If yes, competitors could request the cancellation of the trademark.

In Austria, the Patent Office decides on such issues. Hence, we do not only provide advice, grant patents and register trademarks, but also ensure legal clarity if somebody wants to have a patent, trademark or design cancelled.

The Kornspitz grain rolls have been a top seller in Austria since the 1980s – but today Kornspitz is not a trademark anymore but a generic term according to a decision by the Nullity Department that was confirmed by the Supreme Court as the court of last resort. Another example: We cancelled a patent that would have monopolised all soft contact lenses because the invention was not novel. As a result, consumers save money because unnecessary royalties need not be paid.

The robed ladies and gentlemen are our most experienced experts: On panels, they prudently decide on the maintenance or cancellation of patents, trademarks and designs. This expertise and care is indeed necessary since each case is unique. Sometimes it is the inventor who has to be protected, while sometimes the panel has to acknowledge that the general public has to be protected. Our panel members love this exciting and varied work as no case is like the other.

Contact: Maria Mutz, maria.mutz@patentamt.at, +43 (0)1 534 24-226 Petra Asperger, petra.asperger@patentamt.at, +43 (0)1 534 24-253 Winners of the National Patent Award

Michael Bacher, Patent of the Year 2016



Jörg Leichtfried, Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology

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Mariana Karepova, President of the Austrian Patent Office

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Dan Badstuber, Trademark of the Year 2016 Alois Hechinger, Trademark of the Year 2016

# GRAND STAGE FOR GREAT IN VENTORS

Yes, they deserve to be celebrated on a grand stage. That is what happened when the National Patent Award was presented by Jörg Leichtfried, Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology, together with the Patent Office's President Mariana Karepova for the first time in 2016. It was no coincidence that the ceremony took place on 9 November, the birthday of the legendary inventor and actress Hedy Lamarr. Her son Anthony Loder attended the event in person.

#### And here are the winners of the first National Patent Award:

The Patent of the Year award went to a team of inventors from the Vienna University of Technology and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences. Meinhard Breiling, Michael Bacher, Sergey Sokratov and Frederick George Best impressed the top-class jury with their new, resource-efficient method for producing snow in an artificial cloud.

In the category Trademark of the Year, the winner was Alois Hechinger with his furniture label Johan. The trademark design convinced the jury not only beacuse of its sustainability aspirations but also on account of its clear design language.

In the category for the best female inventor – the Special Hedy Lamarr Award –, the winner was Alberta Bonanni, researcher at the Johannes Kepler University Linz. Her invention – a laser based on an environmental-friendly material – operates in the infrared range of the spectrum and is used in high-speed optical data transmission worldwide.

**Applause for the jury!** Without the jury, there would not be a National Patent Award: We are happy that we were able to find so extraordinary personalities for selecting the winners. Many thanks to them for their efforts!

Sabine Seidler, Rector of the Vienna University of Technology Werner Gruber, Director of Vienna Planetarium, physicist and author Monika Kircher, Senior Director for Industrial Affairs at Infineon Technologies Austria AG Maria Baumgartner, co-founder of Speedinvest Ingrid Kernstock, manager of the Take Off aviation programme

Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger, Rector of the Vienna University of Economics and Business Andrea B. Braidt, Vice-Rector for Art and Research at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna Guido Kucsko, IP team of Schönherr Rechtsanwälte GmbH Maximilian J. Riedel, CEO of Riedel Glas

NB: Continue to work on your innovations - we are going to present the next National Patent Award in 2018!


### GIFTED AND TALENTED-BUT FREQUENTLY NOT SELF-CONFIDENT ENOUGH

"This invention sets new standards based on its interdisciplinary approach, sophisticated cutting-edge technology and high market potential," this is how the jury's spokesman Werner Gruber commended the invention of award-winner Alberta Bonanni. Together with her team, she developed an infrared semiconductor laser based on gallium nitride at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, which earned her the National Patent Award in the Hedy Lamarr category for the best patent granted to a female inventor.

### What sparked your enthusiasm for physics?

Literature, the arts and science have always been of great importance in my family. The decisive moments for me were when my uncle who was a doctor allowed me to look into his microscope and all those evenings when my father showed me the constellations in the sky when I was a kid.

### And how do you try to inspire your students?

Through my own enthusiasm. I try to show it every day in my lectures and in the lab.

#### Only a small percentage of all patent applicants are women. What do you think are the reasons therefore?

That is not just a problem with regard to patent applications but it applies in all fields of science and to executive positions in general. Women, even highly gifted and talented ones, still are not self-confident enough, and this lack of self-confidence is unfortunately not eliminated but rather reinforced in many schools and families.

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### What does the National Patent Award mean for you personally?

This Award is a great recognition for my team and me. I hope that this Award also makes other women aware of how enthusiasm and passion can bring about significant achievements in science.

> Alberta Bonanni, National Patent Award Winner 2016

### ANYTHING BUT LONELY

Veronika Doblhoff-Löffler, physicist

Veronika Doblhoff-Löffler is well rested when she gets to work. "As a technical examiner, I need to be highly focused so that I can review the complex patent specifications," she says. She started as a trainee at the Patent Office and learned the tasks to be completed in the Technology Division of the Patent Office from scratch.

Her work is highly specialised: She primarily examines inventions such as conveyors and bucket wheel excavators – in a nutshell: "all devices that transport material from one place to another," as Veronika Doblhoff-Löffler describes the scope of her activities. Apart from technology, language is the great passion of the graduated physicist and English linguist. "At the Patent Office, I can combine that quite well. On the one hand, the specifications of the inventions as well as our decisions have to be very detailed and precise, but on the other hand, they must be readily understood so that somebody else can work with the patented invention."

Patent examiners definitely do not work only in isolation in their rooms, Veronika Doblhoff-Löffler explains: "We discuss ideas. Two pairs of eyes are better than one. So, examining patents is not a lonely job – and that's good."

Since May 2016 when I started to work as a trainee at the Patent Office, I have not been able to believe my luck: I get support from trainers who are so nice and competent, I work together with colleagues who are so wonderful and helpful, I report to managers who are so friendly and well qualified and my tasks are so varied and exciting. I could not wish for a better job. MAKING THE FACTS PLAIN

> Sascha Wagner, process engineer

Regardless of whether an invention was made by a tinkerer in a basement or by the research department of a big company, when it reaches the desk of Sascha Wagner it always gets the same level of attention. "That's not only true for my Department of Physics and Civil Engineering, but for the Patent Office as a whole. And I have always liked this basic approach at our Office," says Sascha Wagner.

The graduated process engineer mainly examines applications in the fields of construction technology, piping systems and vehicle components. He never holds the inventions in his hands as the examination is performed on the basis of technical drawings and descriptions, but this does have advantages: "Of course, I like to see the inventions in real life. But the assessment focuses exclusively on the documents submitted in writing. In this way, you are not distracted by good presentations and you stay objective," explains Sascha Wagner.

He takes great care that his decisions are always specific and worded comprehensibly. After all, they are to give the inventors a good and clear indication of whether the invention is patentable or not. Sascha Wagner is sorry that he has to issue negative decisions sometimes: "Naturally, the private misfortunes and disappointed expectations that result from such a decision do not go unnoticed. But it would help no one if I would turn a blind eye."

> I like to work at the Patent Office because the future passes my hands!



### INVENTIONS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a car was a pure luxury. The handling of such a vehicle, however, was hardly glamorous. Take the headlights, for example: They had to be operated by means of oil or candles; gas lamps were used seldom because it was impossible to refill them on the road. Lamp manufacturer Otto Scharlach from Nuremberg devised a solution to that problem. He obtained a patent on a "vehicle lantern with an acetylene gas lamp that can be replaced by a candle" from the (then Imperial and Royal) Patent Office in 1899. The ingenious twist was that the threads of the gas lamp and the candle holder were identical – thus, the lamp could be replaced anytime.

In fact, that was not really satisfactory and, hence, electrical solutions were used for car headlights for the first time in the mid-1920s. Soon it became evident that it would be necessary to switch between different light intensities. Osram already put a two-filament bulb – the "bilux lamp" – on the market in 1925. One filament generated the dipped beam and the other one the raised beam. The continuous development of this technology is evidenced by a patent document dating from 1936 when Robert Bosch AG from Stuttgart filed an application on a technology in Austria that resulted in a considerably stronger driving beam to make driving easier on inter-urban roads.

Today, the frontrunner of automotive lighting technology comes from Austria: Zizala is one of the most active applicants of the Austrian Patent Office and supplies its products to practically all major car makers – from Skoda to Audi and from BMW to Rolls-Royce. Headlights are getting smarter and smarter and thereby contribute significantly to safety on the road. And nobody burns their fingers anymore when turning them on.



# TRADEMARKS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Three simple letters, including the characteristic "Ö", in signal red: that is how Austrian train passengers know their ÖBB – the Austrian Federal Railways – for many decades. Over the years, the logo developed and was modernised again and again – and still kept its recognition value. Or are you able to state ad hoc (without looking at the front of this sheet) in which respects today's ÖBB logo differs from the one dating from the 1970s? Well, that's it.

The biggest change in the brand presentation was made in the 1970s: At that time, the characteristic three letters replaced the "winged wheel". This international symbol of trains and rail transport had been used since the onset of railways in Austria in 1837 – for more than one hundred years. In 1974, ÖBB also invented the "screw" that lasted in diverse variants for roughly 30 years.

In 2004, the screw was finally abandoned. With a view to its increasingly international operations and modernisation, the Austrian Federal Railways opted for red letters without graphical elements. The slogans of ÖBB also evolved – from "Man fährt wieder Bahn" (everybody takes the train again) to "Zukunft am Zug" (on track to the future) and on to "Jetzt kommt Bewegung rein" (getting into motion now).

When you read these lines, the introduction of the new ÖBB claim will already have started: It is "Immer in Bewegung" (always in motion) – to be launched in 2017 when railways celebrate their 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Austria.

In the ranking of Austria's most valuable trademarks, ÖBB has been among the top ten for many years – currently it is in the fifth place, behind Red Bull, Swarovksi, Novomatic and Spar.

























# PRIVILEGES: OUR TREASURE TROVE

When we hear the name Tesla today, we first think of trendy electric cars from California. Tesla Motors borrowed its name from an eminent inventor of Serbian origin: Nikola Tesla who was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1856. His inventions in the field of electrical engineering resulted in 280 patents in 28 countries – including Austria.

One of them is shown on this sheet. It is a "privilege", the forerunner of patents that was introduced in 1899. A total of 95,377 privileges constitute the "art collection" of the Patent Office and, so to speak, are the missing link between the Technical Museum and the Museum of Art History. Expressive calligraphy, technical drawings (frequently coloured), obviously old-fashioned language, highly varied formats (due to lacking instructions): We are very proud that we have such a treasure trove on our premises, not least because of the famous applicants such as Ludwig Bösendorfer, Thomas Alva Edison and Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin. Taken together, the privileges also provide insights into the technological history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but that is not all: The Academy of Sciences used these documents, for example, to investigate the development of industrial language in Austria.

Given that their paper is more than 100 years old, the privileges also provide for a haptic experience. To preserve them, however, we are digitising them – at the beginning of 2017, more than 690,000 pages had been processed. Piled up, the privileges would constitute a 210 m-tall tower. This is higher than the 202 metres of the Millennium Tower located close to the Patent Office in the Brigittenau district of Vienna.

> NB: Are you interested in our treasure trove? You can have a look at it in the library of the Patent Office (1<sup>st</sup> floor at Dresdner Strasse 87)!

#### This is where Austrian inventions have their home

10



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Patent and utility model applications 2016

#### This is where Austrian trademarks have their home



#### Ranking of Austrian regions



Our top 5 for trademarks – Congratulations!

Österreichische Lotterien Gesellschaft m.b.H. 26

SPAR Österreichische Warenhandels-AG 24

G.L. Pharma GmbH 18 Brauerei Jos. Baumgartner GmbH 18

Verlagsgruppe News Gesellschaft m.b.H. 14 Red Bull GmbH 14 Hofer KG 14

Salzburger Verlagshausgesellschaft m.b.H. 12 Zumtobel Lighting GmbH 12

Trademark registrations 2016

The Britter Constant Praties

# SO MANY NOVATIONS PASS THROUGH







## MPRINT

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This Annual Report is full of ideas. The best idea of my life still has to mature a bit.

> Ines Ornig managed the project "Annual Report 2016".

NOVATION

ROGRESS



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