

Austria Ranked 6th for Patent Applications

Austria was among the top nations for patent applications in the year 2020 - 6th place in the EU and 11th worldwide - and particularly stands out in the field of green technology. Austria outperformed the EU average for building and climate-friendly transport technologies, wastewater purification and recycling.

Vienna, 27 May 2021 – Austrian companies registered a total of 11,534 patents worldwide in 2020. Accordingly, the number of Austrian patent applications has more than doubled since the year 2000. Austria especially stands out in the field of environmental technologies and is significantly above the EU average in the green tech sector. The number of patents for renewable energies is steadily increasing compared to the decrease in patent applications related to fossil energies. Furthermore, the Alpine Republic is particularly strong in traditional industrial sectors such as mechanical engineering, transport technologies, electrical engineering, measurement and control technologies and chemistry.

Research intensified during the pandemic

The Austrian Patent Office witnessed increasing demand (+ 9 percent) for its services in 2020, the year of the coronavirus pandemic. In 2020, a total of 2,737 patent applications were submitted, surpassing the comparable figure of 2,724 patents in 2019. This was hardly surprising to Marion Biber, Managing Director of the state-owned investment promotion consultancy ABA - Invest in Austria. "Austria is the land of hidden champions, which convince the global market thanks to their high level of innovative strength - from fire-fighting vehicle manufacturer Rosenberger to the mechanical engineering specialist Engel, which equips Lego, amongst other companies, and which applied for an additional 35 patents in the year 2020 alone." Engel is the world market leader for injection moulding and other machinery required by plastics producers.

AVL List is a further top Austrian company which has been the leader in patent applications since 2012 and registered 180 new patents in 2020. Based in Graz, AVL is the world's largest independent company for the development, simulation and testing of all kinds of drive systems for all industries, in particular the automobile industry. More than 700 patents and utility models have been registered with the Austrian Patent Office alone in the last few years. At present AVL is devoting particular attention to the fields of sustainable mobility and autonomous driving. Another top inventor is Julius Blum of Vorarlberg, which is ranked third in the overall rankings. The flap, hinge and pull-out systems developed by Blum ensure the proper functioning of almost every kitchen.

Marion Biber is convinced that "companies pressing ahead with innovation and expansion will emerge from the crisis as winners." This is confirmed by AVL CEO Helmut List. AVL reported a decline in revenue in 2020, the first time in many years. At the same time, the company substantially increased its in-house research and development efforts, which in turn resulted in a considerable rise in the number of patents.

On balance, companies in Austria invested € 6.1 billion in research and development in 2020, accounting for 50 percent of total Austrian R&D expenditures. International companies whose subsidiaries in Austria carry out R&D also made a significant contribution, investing some € 2 billion. European companies showcase their strength both in Austrian statistics and the Report of the European Patent Office. Among the top ten companies for R&D in Europe are Siemens AG (6th), Robert Bosch (7th) and BASF (10th), all of which are extremely active in Austria. Siemens Mobility Austria AG registered 28 patents in 2020, and BASF is currently expanding its global production for enzymes at the new location in Tyrol.

Above the EU average for green technologies

Austria performed above the EU average in the field of environmental technologies and per capita patent applications in the years 2015-2018, especially in the fields of green building technologies, wastewater purification and recycling and climate-friendly transport technologies. This encompasses innovations such as the “smart façade” of the Graz University of Technology, which developed a simulation model to determine the energetic potential of adaptive façade systems. Strohecker Architects show how building in the future can function in a completely emission-free and environmentally compatible manner. They are working on the Wood House 4.0 which is based on an environmentally friendly natural wood construction relying on a wood plug system free of binding agents and metal. “German companies not only benefit from environmentally conscious customers in Austria but, above all, competent and highly qualified partners for product development and well-trained skilled workers”, Marion Biber concludes.

Über die Austrian Business Agency (ABA)

ABA – Invest in Austria ist die Betriebsansiedlungsagentur der österreichischen Standortagentur Austrian Business Agency (ABA), die zum Bundesministerium für Digitalisierung und Wirtschaftsstandort (BMDW) ressortiert. Mit ihren drei Abteilungen ABA – Invest in Austria, ABA – Work in Austria und Location Austria bewirbt die Standortagentur Österreich im Ausland als Wirtschafts- und Forschungsstandort, attraktiven Arbeitsmarkt für Fachkräfte sowie als Drehort für internationale Filmproduktionen. Im Rahmen der Kampagne *Forschungsplatz Österreich* möchte ABA – Invest in Austria auf interessante Forschungsergebnisse und Entwicklungen am Forschungs- und Wirtschaftsstandort Österreich aufmerksam machen.

Über die Forschungsprämie in Österreich

Die Prämie für Forschung und Innovation beträgt seit Anfang 2018 14 Prozent. Sie kann von jedem Unternehmen, das in Forschung, Innovation und Entwicklung investiert, beantragt werden – unabhängig von Unternehmensgröße, Branche oder Firmenstruktur. Ein Anspruch auf die Forschungsprämie besteht auch dann, wenn das Unternehmen keinen oder nur geringen Gewinn erwirtschaftet. Die Auszahlung erfolgt als Cash-Prämie rasch und relativ unbürokratisch. Im Rahmen der steuerlichen Forschungsprämie sind sowohl die eigenbetriebliche als auch die in Auftrag gegebene Forschung prämienbegünstigt. Die über den aktuellen Stand der Technik hinausgehende experimentelle Entwicklung von Modellen, Produkten und Prozessen wird dabei ebenfalls berücksichtigt. Häufig werden von den Unternehmen aber bei weitem nicht alle Forschungs- und Entwicklungskosten für Prämienzwecke eingereicht. Dabei können diese sogar unabhängig vom Projekterfolg geltend gemacht werden. Neben Löhnen und Gehältern, Kapitalinvestitionen in Anlagevermögen und Immobilien sowie forschungsrelevanten Ausgaben wie zugekaufte Leistungen, Finanzierung- und Gemeinkosten können auch Kreditkosten angeführt werden, die bereits vor Projektbeginn angefallen sind.

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