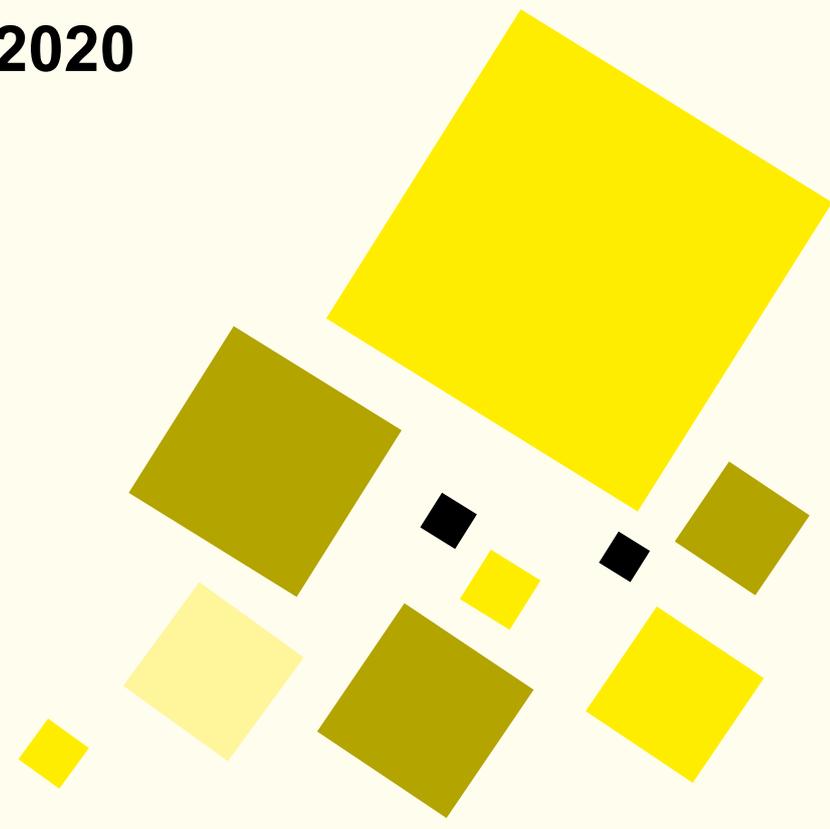


100
Patent Office
of the Republic of Latvia

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

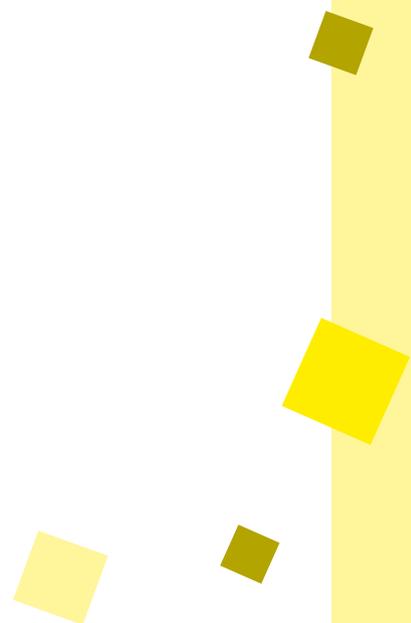


Patent Office Republic of Latvia
Citadeles 7/70, Riga, LV-1010, Latvia
<https://www.lrpv.gov.lv/en>



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Foreword

Dear reader!

2020 marks one hundredth year anniversary since the foundations were laid for industrial property protection in the Republic of Latvia and the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia was founded. We are standing at a turning point – on the one hand, traditions and values have been maintained, on the other hand, we are looking forward with confidence to what future will bring us. Over the past 20 years, the world has changed, which reminds that we must be ready to accept new challenges.

Covid-19 pandemic brought unprecedented changes, which still influence the society on a global scale. Due to the spread of Covid-19, the organization of work within the Patent Office was also a challenge. In-person customer service was limited as much as possible, encouraging clients to use e-services offered by the Patent Office.

Although the long-term effects of the pandemic cannot be measured or estimated, it is clear that the restrictions acted as a catalyst for more rapid changes in many areas. Countries with small, open economies can be considerably influenced by global and regional trends, consequently impacting the number of filed trademark, design and patent applications. Favorable improvements in business environment and investment climate can motivate to start a business, which could result in a decision to obtain protection of one or more industrial property objects.

Last year demonstrated that flexibility and ability to adjust to change is crucial. The Patent Office invested its resources to offer our clients a wider range of e-services and online tools. In spring 2020, the first online patent database was launched, which offers a possibility to obtain information about national patents, European patents validated in and extended to Latvia, as well as supplementary protection certificates. In the fall, eight new patent e-services were offered to the Patent Office's clients, ensuring continuous availability of the services. At the end of the year, a new e-service was launched – a fast track examination for new trademark applications. As a result, the decision on the registration is issued within 15 working days, without additional fee for the expedited procedure. Being able to access all core services that are offered by the Patent Office remotely is not only important dur-

ing these times, but also in the future, when the role of digitalization will be increasing in many of our processes.

By commencing digitalization of trademark and design dossiers, a major step towards digital transformation was taken. The digitalization project, implemented in cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office, will make these dossiers available electronically for clients and employees, with the help of internal systems and public databases. Currently, those dossiers that are included in the trademark and design registers are being digitized, as well as those that have been excluded from the registers in the last 10 years. The implementation of this project acts as a cornerstone in the Office's further development, because it embodies principles of paperless office in terms of document circulation and overall process management. The project serves as a basis for further digital development, which is planned to be expanded in the sphere of patents as well.

Awareness-raising activities on the importance of intellectual property rights protection evolved in the digital environment by familiarizing with and testing new digital solutions for online events, thus reaching a wider audience.

A new chapter in trademark legislation in Latvia was introduced on February 6, 2020, when the new Trademark Law entered into the force. It replaced the existing law, which was in force for more than 20 years. The new law covers aspects of trademark regulatory framework in more detail, thus ensuring legal certainty for the Patent Office clients.

In 2021, we will invest our resources to strengthen and enhance the stability of services offered, which includes continuing intensive work on the development of IT systems. We will also seek other ways to raise the quality of our services. We will continue and promote dialogue with the applicants, because the feedback from our clients is a vital source for further enhancement of the work done by the Patent Office.

Acting Director of the Patent Office
of the Republic of Latvia
Baiba Graube

Background

The Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia is an independent state institution operating under the supervision of the Minister of Justice, which implements the state policy in the field of industrial property, ensuring the registration of industrial property rights and raising public awareness about the protection of IP rights.

The framework of the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia competences:

- accepting and examining applications from legal and natural persons for the legal protection of inventions, designs, trademarks, topographies of semiconductor products and supplementary protection certificates, to perform their examination, granting patents for protection and issuing registration certificates,
- maintaining the registers,

- publishing the official gazette "Patents, Trademarks and Designs",

- examining professional patent attorneys and maintaining a list of professional patent attorneys,

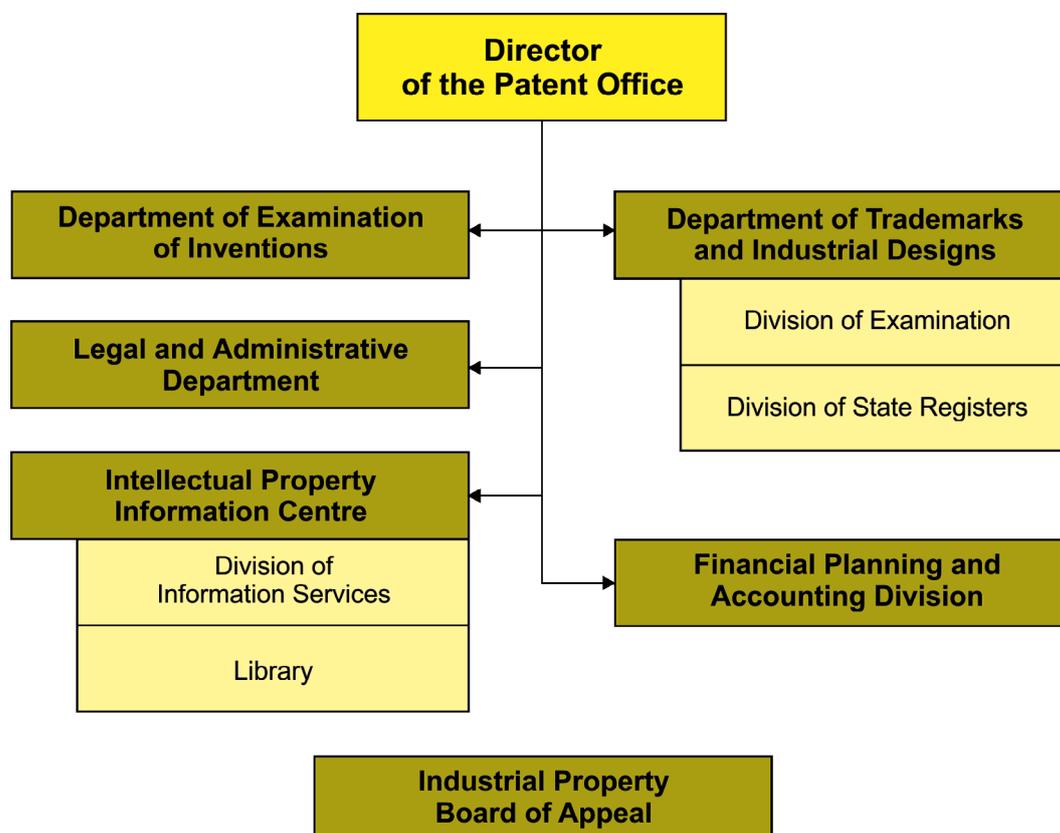
- raising awareness in Latvia about the protection of the industrial property rights and strengthening its value,

- ensuring the organizational and administrative operation of the Industrial Property Board of Appeal.

The Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia cooperates with Latvian, foreign and international organizations in the field of legal protection of industrial property rights and ensures the fulfilment of the functions stated in the respective international agreements binding to the Republic of Latvia.

Structure

In accordance with the Regulations of the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia, adopted on December 18, 2017



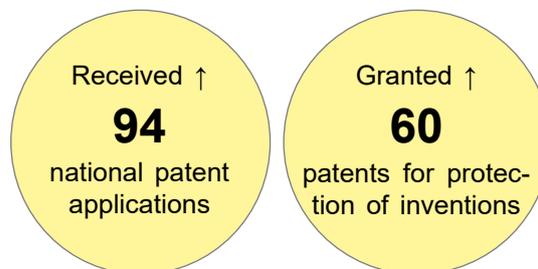
Statistics

2020

Trademarks



Patents



(93 from Latvian applicants)

Designs



(including 141 designs ↑)

Issued 60 design registration certificates ↑

Awareness raising

Organized 29 events ↓

Provided 843 responses to enquiries and consultations ↓

3 social media accounts *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *YouTube*

On the website www.lrpv.gov.lv 135 news ↑ in Latvian language were published and 42 news ↑ in English. The website was visited – 340,582 times ↓.

The Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia was mentioned in 206 publications ↓, of which 124 times ↓ was reflected in main media, while 37 were reported in radio and television.

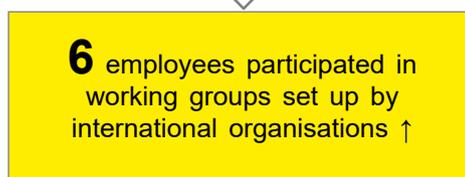
Services



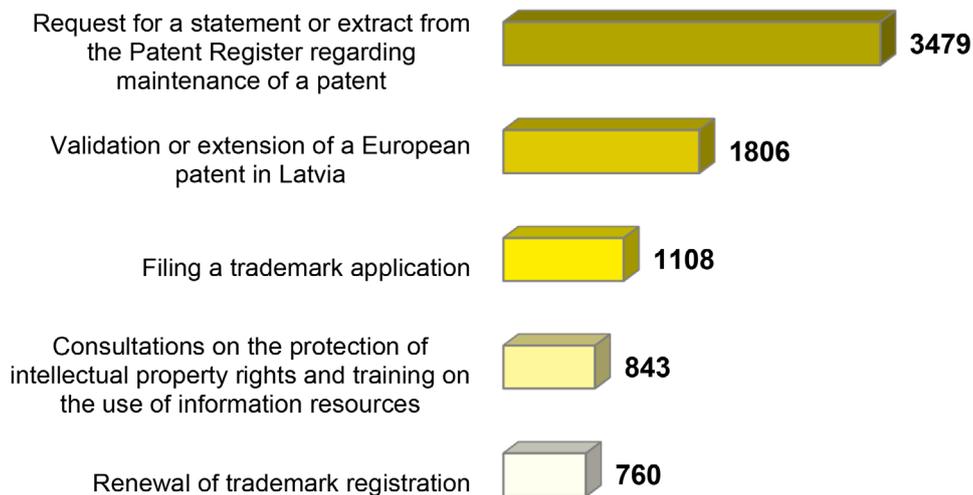
2 new projects have been introduced in cooperation with in EUIPO, which contributed to the development of services provided

39% applications for services have been received using e-services offered on the institution's webpage ↑

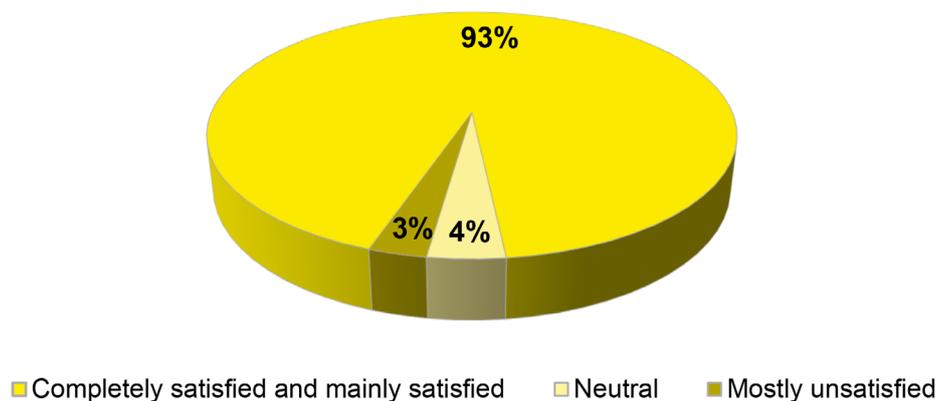
Staff and international cooperation



Five most frequently provided services



The overall customer satisfaction with the work of the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia



Centenary of the Latvian Industrial Property Protection System

The foundations of industrial property protection in the Republic of Latvia were laid soon after Latvia gained independence in 1918. A year later, work began on the development of the regulatory framework, and already in 1920, the Patent Office was established within the Industry Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. It had functioned effectively up to the occupation of Latvia in 1940 which terminated the institution's further activity. With the loss of state independence, the system of legal protection of industrial property also ceased to operate in Latvia in the way it did in the period of state independence. Only many years after, when Latvia regained its independence, the Patent

Office of the Republic of Latvia was restored resuming its activities in March 1992.

Therefore, the year 2020 was historically very important for the Patent Office as it marked the 100th anniversary of the Latvian industrial property protection system. The Patent Office celebrated the centenary with various events throughout the year, the most important of them being undoubtedly an international online conference "Intellectual Property – Vision Without Illusion", a publication of a book "A JOURNEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE. Latvian Inventors in the World" and an opening of an informative and educational exhibition "A Journey Towards Excellence".

The Conference "Intellectual Property – Vision Without Illusion"

On May 21, 2020, in the year when we celebrated the centenary of Latvian industrial property protection system, the Patent Office organized the international online conference "Intellectual Property – Vision Without Illusion". The conference was originally planned onsite, but the restrictions introduced due to the global COVID-19 pandemic changed the plans. A new conference format was created to organize it

online. Using modern solutions, the conference's interactive environment provided an opportunity for the participants to both ask questions and express opinions. More than 3,300 participants watched the conference online in the social media, while in 2020 another 1,450 people watched the [conference recording](#) in Latvian and English on *YouTube*.



The employees of the Patent Office and the conference moderator Mārtiņš Daugulis

"Today's event is our recognition of and gratitude to all those who over a century had been strengthening the system of intellectual property in Latvia, working selflessly for its growth, as well as contributing to the development of Latvia's innovations," Sandris Laganovskis, Director of the Patent Office, pointed out at the opening of the conference.

On its 100th anniversary, the Patent Office received congratulations from President of Latvia Egils Levits, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Jānis Bordāns, as well as from Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Dr. Francis Gurry, Executive Director of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) Christian Archambeau, and President of the European Patent Office (EPO) António Campinos.

The conference program was suitable for everyone interested. A number of Latvian and international experts and distinguished representatives in their field addressed the participants and engaged in discussions. Taking a step into the next century, the conference outlined the

most important aspects to be taken into account when developing the system of innovation and protection of industrial property:

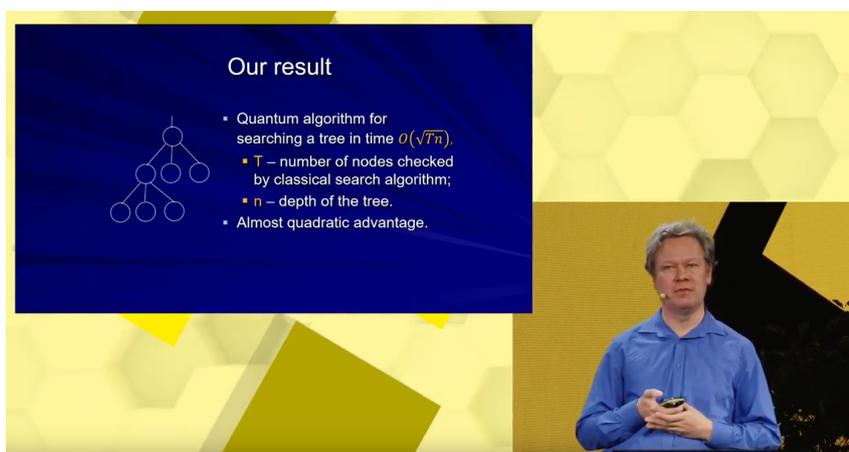
- Intellectual property-related matters should be included in school curriculum, thus fostering a responsible and innovative generation. The subject of intellectual property is being gradually integrated in the content of different subjects all over the world, especially in the countries of the European Union, to make young minds aware of the possibilities of protecting their intellectual work.

- With the rapid development of technologies and artificial intelligence-based solutions, it is necessary to create an appropriate legal environment for the protection of intellectual property that would provide the possibility to obtain exclusive rights with respect to quantum technologies, algorithms, etc.

- Active use of intellectual property rights by enterprises during the start-up phase of their development could facilitate more favourable growth rates on both the Latvian and foreign markets. #ipvision2020



Dr. Francis Gurry, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization



Andris Ambainis (University of Latvia) presents Latvian experience in quantum computing

The Book "A JOURNEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE. Latvian Inventors in the World"

On November 10, 2020, the Patent Office launched the book "A JOURNEY TOWARDS EXCELLENCE. Latvian Inventors in the World". The publication contains 25 inspiring stories about scientists who were born in Latvia and worked in exile, and whose inventions, scientific and research work promoted our country's name across the world.

The publication covers only a small part of the achievements of Latvian-origin inventors in such fields as aviation, aeronavigation, astronautics, foodstuff and clothing, computer science, medicine, biotechnology, outer space research, automotive industry, chemistry and physics, from the unique pipe design to the legendary Minox miniature spy camera.

The book is a valuable source of information that inspires and arouses admiration for excellence. It is the result of the joint work of the Patent Office's experts, researcher Ilze Grīnuma, H2E design studio's team, and McĀbols printing house.

The first to receive the book were President of Latvia Egils Levits and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Jānis Bordāns. At the same time, first copies of the book were sent to partners of the Patent Office and also to libraries. Its **electronic version** is available on the website of the Patent Office.



President of Latvia Egils Levits and Director of the Patent Office Sandris Laganovskis
(photo Ilmārs Znotiņš)



Director of the Patent Office Sandris Laganovskis and the Minister of Justice Jānis Bordāns

The Exhibition "A Journey Towards Excellence"

From November 12 to December 6, 2020, everyone interested was invited to see the informative and educational exhibition "A Journey Towards Excellence" in the shopping centre "Akropole". The exhibition featured 24 inspiring inventions that had a crucial role in the history of inventorship. They demonstrated the achievements of brilliant minds of Latvian origin in aviation, automotive industry, chemistry, medical technology, food production, agriculture, and in other sectors of economy.

The attendants got acquainted with the inventions that had been patented starting already with 1873, when Riga-born Jacob Davis made an invention that changed the clothing industry forever and that is known even now – Levi Strauss jeans with metal rivets. Many of the exhibited inventions were highly appreciated and gained recognition at their time, for example, chemist Vilhelms Ostvalds received the Nobel Prize, but Juris Upatnieks, one of the founders of holography, was only a step away from receiving it.

Several inventions displayed at the exhibition still serve as brilliant evidence of their time, for example, the aircrafts designed by Kārlis Irbītis or Walter Zapp's Minox camera. Some of the historical solutions are also known to our younger generation, such as extravagant Porsche cars and Pringles chips.



Photos from the exhibition "A Journey Towards Excellence"



Department of Examination of Inventions

The Department of Examination of Inventions examines applications for the legal protection of patents, grants patents, as well as maintains the relevant registers. There are 8 employees in the department.

In 2020:

- 94 national patent applications were received, 93 of them submitted by Latvian applicants.

- 1,557 applications were received for the validation of European patents in Latvia, while 11 applications were received for the extension of European patents to Latvia.

- 73 national patent applications were published, and 60 Latvian patents were granted for the protection of inventions.

- 1,836 translations of European patent claims were prepared for publication in the official gazette of the Patent Office and in the public patent database.

- 45 applications for supplementary protection certificates were received, whereas 44 supplementary protection certificates were granted.

The statistics show that, despite the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent decline in economic development, the number of national patent applications can be considered as stable. Latvian universities and scientific institutes were unchangeably the most active patent applicants; the activity of individual applicants also remained at the previous year's level, while a positive trend was observed in relation to small and medium-sized enterprises, whose number of patent applications increased significantly as compared to the year 2019.

Number of patent applications submitted by Latvian applicants	2020	2019
Individual applicants	22	21
Small and medium enterprises	23	10
Universities/scientific institutes	48	51
Total	93	82

Main achievements:

- In 2020 the work on the development of the Patent Administration Information System (PAIS) was completed. Along with the introduction of PAIS, the Patent Office launched the first publicly available patent database, providing the opportunity for everyone to search for and obtain information on inventions patented in Latvia, valid patents and supplementary protection certificates. The database brings together extensive information on **published national patent applications, granted Latvian patents, European patents validated in and extended to Latvia**, as well as **supplementary protection certificates**.

- The range of e-services of the Patent Office was supplemented with patent e-services. The new e-services provide patent applicants with several advantages: confidential online filing of a patent application with no need for an on-site visit; paying annual patent maintenance fees in a user-friendly way; accuracy and continuity of data entries. It is possible to apply online for the validation of a European patent and a supplementary protection certificate, and to get other patent-related services online.

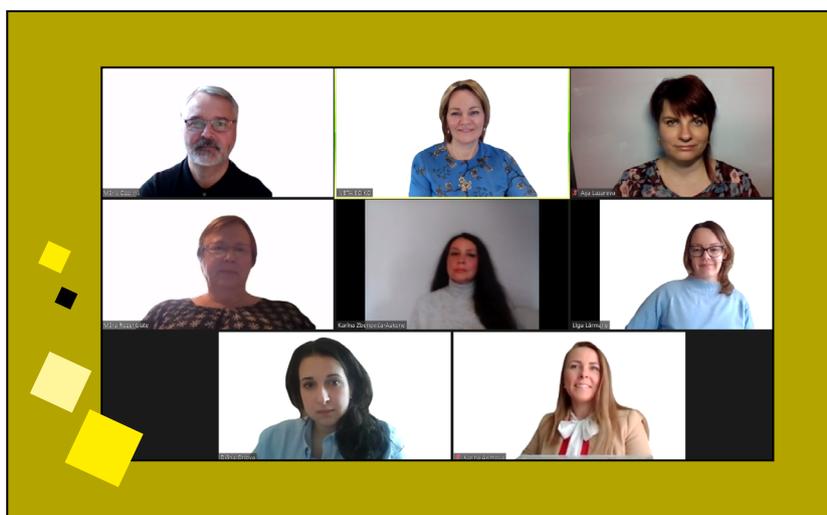
- Last year, the Patent Office continued a pilot project on patent search, launched in cooperation with the EPO, which provided the opportunity for national patent applicants to obtain a patent search report prepared by an internationally recognized expert for free. The pilot project has been aimed at improving the quality of national patents, and it has provided a stable support for Latvian applicants on their way to obtaining patents also outside Latvia. The analysis of the statistics show an increase in patent applications seeking not only national but also international protection.

During the reporting period, the Patent Office received 37 patent search requests, 30 of which were sent to the EPO that in its turn prepared 22 search reports. In 2020 there was an increase in the number of patent search requests to the Patent Office, 30% up in comparison to 2019. Equally active in filing patent applications were small and medium-sized enterprises (~40%), and universities and scientific institutes (~40%), less active were individual applicants (~20%).

Since 2020, in addition to applying for a free patent search with a written search report by the EPO, two more support mechanisms have been introduced for national patent applicants wishing to pursue a patent protection abroad: support for the filing of an international patent application (PCT) providing for the possibility of getting refund of a PCT application fee payment, and support for the examination of a European patent application. Last year, three

applicants received support for filing international applications. Of all patent applications published last year for which a patent search had been conducted, almost 60% resulted with filings of PCT or European patent applications. The pilot project will run until September 1, 2026.

The EPO's performance indicators for 2020 show that 27 European patent applications were filed from Latvia, 22.7% up in comparison to 2019.



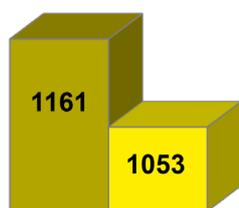
The employees of the Department of Examination of Inventions

Department of Trademarks and Industrial Designs

The Department of Trademarks and Industrial Designs examines applications for the legal protection of trademarks and industrial designs, registers trademarks and industrial designs, as well as maintains the relevant registers. There are 16 employees in the department.

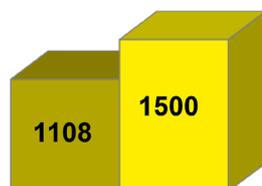
In 2020:

- 2,214 trademark applications were received.



■ Under national procedure
■ International registrations of trademark in Latvia

- 2,608 trademarks were registered.



■ Under national procedure
■ Under Madrid system

- 771 trademark renewal applications were received; 760 extracts were issued from the Register of Trademarks on trademark registration renewal.

- 80 domestic trademarks obtained international registration under the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks (Madrid Protocol).

- 40 applications were received from EUIPO for the conversion of an EU trademark into a trademark application in Latvia.

- 79 design applications were received containing 141 designs. All applications were of Latvian origin.

- As a result of examination, 111 designs

were registered under the national procedure in 2020. Under the international procedure, in accordance with the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement, 23 registrations containing 39 designs extended to Latvia, were examined.

- 291 EU trademark applications were filed from Latvia with EUIPO, and 244 trademarks were registered. 110 Community design applications were filed from Latvia with EUIPO and obtained registration.

Although the number of trademark applications under the national procedure slightly decreased as compared to 2019 – and this trend had been expected with the global crisis caused by Covid-19 – overall, the number of trademark applications could be described as stable and in line with the economic activity. In turn, the number of national design applications increased.

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in trademark applications filed from Latvia with EUIPO. It should be mentioned that in 2020 the number of designs submitted to EUIPO from Latvia was the largest since 2004.

Main achievements:

- On March 6, 2020, a new Law on Trademarks entered into force, and the previous Law on Trademarks and Indications of Geographical Origin, which had been in force for more than 20 years, expired. The Law on Trademarks implements in Latvia the requirements of Directive (EU) 2015/2436 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2015 to approximate the laws of the Member States relating to trademarks. The new legal framework updates and restructures the existing legal norms, as well as includes adjustments that have a positive impact on the business environment by promoting legal certainty in the protection of trademarks and allowing right holders to effectively protect their rights in court. The range of signs that trademarks can consist of has been expanded, a new service – a certification mark – has been introduced, as well as the requirement for a graphic representation has been withdrawn, thus opening more opportunities for applicants.

- The Patent Office offers a new e-service – the opportunity to submit a trademark application for fast track examination at no extra charge,

where the decision on trademark registration is issued within 15 working days. This service has several benefits: for applicants it is a faster, easier and more secure way of filing a trademark application, as it reduces the possibility of making mistakes when selecting terms for the list of goods and services, and for the Patent Office it means facilitating and speeding up the formal examination of applications.

- In 2020, the digitization of paper dossiers of active trademarks and designs and of those expired in the last 10 years was started.

It will significantly save time for searching and processing documents as well as for registration and post-registration procedures. As a result of digitization, the sustainable storage and circulation of information will be ensured, as well as the negative impact on the environment will be reduced.

- The clients of the Patent Office have been increasingly using e-services, which became especially relevant during the past year. 65% of all trademark applications and 75% of design applications were filed online.



The employees of the Department of Trademarks and Industrial Designs

Intellectual Property Information Centre

The Intellectual Property Information Centre informs the public about the protection of intellectual property rights. Its work has been affected by the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic – since mid-March, following the rules set up by the government, all events have been held on various online platforms. There are 11 employees in the department.

In 2020:

- The Patent Office participated in 29 events.
- The events were attended by small and medium entrepreneurs, representatives of technology transfer contact points, students, academic staff, scientists, professional patent attorneys, judges, customs officers, schoolteachers, student enterprises, and others.
- 843 consultations and responses to enquiries were provided, including 250 clients were individually trained on using electronic resources.
- 41 advanced information searches were made.
- 6 lectures were given.
- The Patent Office was represented at three international trade fairs.

Main achievements:

- On September 10, in cooperation with the WIPO and EUIPO, an **online seminar** on intellectual property-related issues was organized for Latvian and European judges, other judicial staff, and intellectual property professionals, bringing together almost 1,200 people.
- In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the Customs Board of the State Revenue Service, the Consumer Rights Protection Center and the Economic Crimes Enforcement Department of the State Police, an informative campaign "Fake Reality ... Still a Reality" was organized. The campaign focused on three types of counterfeit goods: cosmetics and hygiene products, pharmaceuticals and toys. The total audience reached by the campaign was 3,417,638 people. A landing page, aimed to raise awareness about the infringements of intellectual property rights, was created: www.viltotarealitate.lv.
- The Patent Office continued its cooperation with the business education association "Junior Achievement Latvia", participating in the Young Entrepreneurs' Days and annual trade fairs of student enterprises, evaluating their performance and awarding the best student enterprises in nomination "Student Enterprise's Knowledge-based product/service". In total, 1,990 teachers and schoolchildren were informed about intellectual property matters at various activities.



The regional online seminar for judges and intellectual property professionals



Campaign "Fake Reality... Still a Reality" launch event



The jury and the winners of student enterprise competition, organized by "Junior Achievement"



- A video competition "Create. Do. Protect" was organized for students in cooperation with the Association of Professional Patent Attorneys of Latvia, the Latvian National Group of the International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property, the National Center for Education, and business education association "Junior Achievement Latvia". The competition inspired a great interest among students – a total of **33 videos** were received from 27 schools.

The winners of the video competition "Create. Do. Protect" – Ērika Brikmane, Evelīna Markevica and Loreta Lebedoka, grade 5 of Sigulda Primary School No.1, with the WIPO award – "Schoolchildren's Trophy"
(photo Lolita Šteinberga)

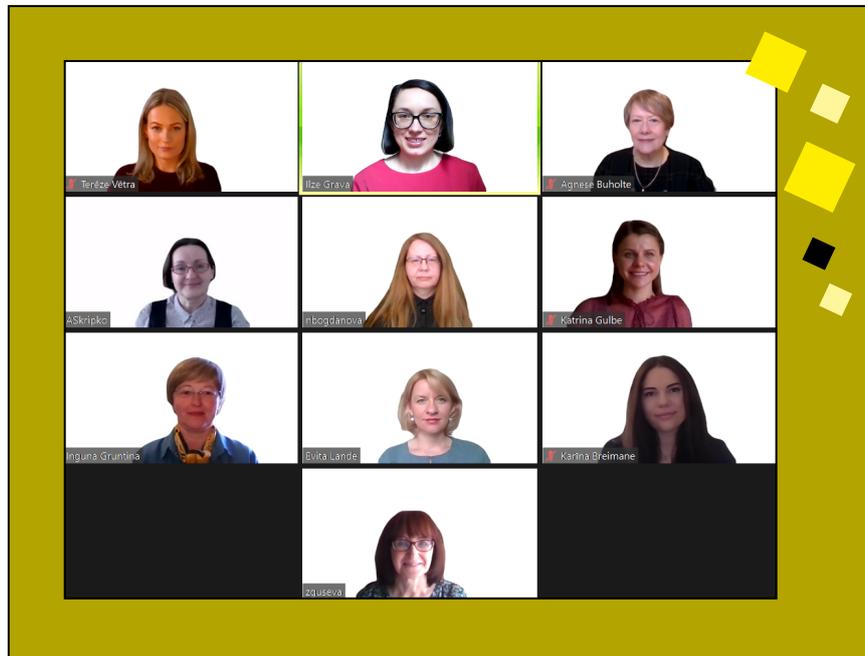
- In order to promote knowledge, innovation and technology transfer activities, to ensure the commercialization of scientific research results, as well as to build sustainable relationships and professional communication, the Patent Office coordinated the conclusion of cooperation agreements between the partners of Latvian universities and research institutions.

- In 2020, the Patent Office engaged in the State Chancellery's project on establishing a unified, centralized platform for managing websites of state institutions. The aim of the project was

to improve the accessibility of institutions' websites and to make them available to all groups in society.

- In 2020, the Patent Office continued to implement an initiative aimed at entrepreneurs – offering intellectual property pre-diagnosis service.

- A new activity was launched in autumn – informing new companies about the possibility to register and protect their trademark using the services offered by the Patent Office.



The employees of the Intellectual Property Information Centre

Financial Planning and Accounting Division

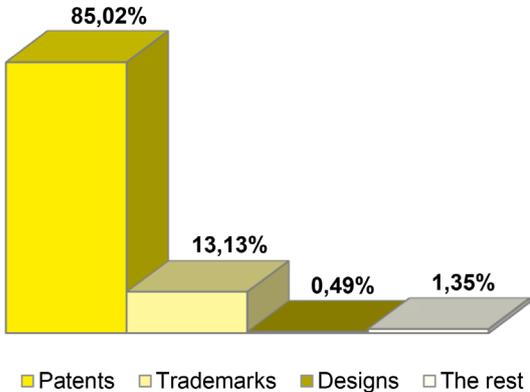
The Financial Planning and Accounting Department performs accounting work, ensures compliance with the essential requirements of the accounting work organization, carries out tax administration and budget planning. The functions of the department are performed by 5 employees.

In 2020:

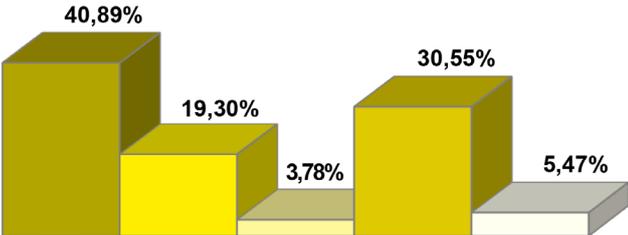
- An invoice generation system is successfully operating, which provides an automated information exchange process between the Resource Management System Horizon and the Patent Office Information Systems Trademarks and Designs "Back Office" and "Front Office".
- In 2020, the Patent Administration Information System (PAIS) was added to the invoice generation system, whose implementation and testing process also involved employees of the Financial Planning and Accounting Division.
- Controlled and administered international payments under EPO, EUIPO and WIPO cooperation agreements.

Revenue from paid services

- In the accounting of the Patent Office, 7,913 prepaid invoices for paid services were issued and processed, including 1,446 invoices for trademarks and designs and 1,197 invoices for patents were submitted as e-services.
- The price list of paid services provided by the Patent Office consists of 131 types of paid services.

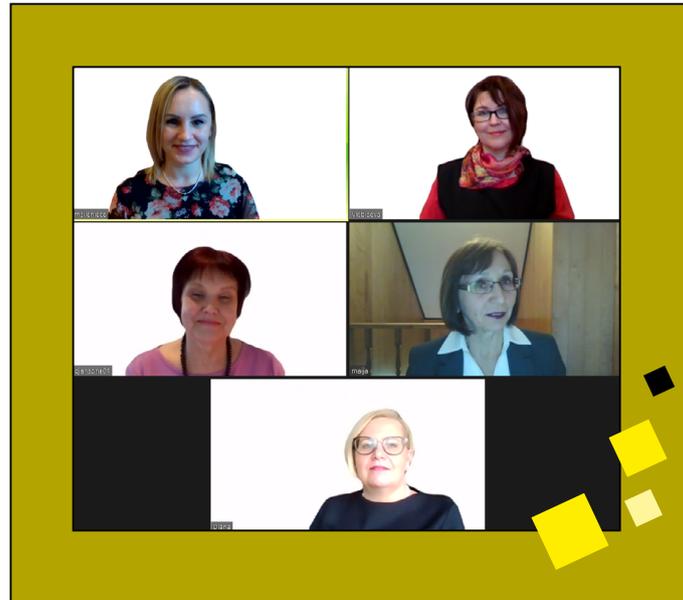


Expenses



- Compensation
- Maintenance and current expenditure related to the operation of the institution
- Capital expenditure
- Expenses for international cooperation/expenses in the international cooperation framework
- Maintenance expenditure transfers

In 2021, the implementation of the Visma Self-Service System Horizon HoP "Invoices" solution is planned, which will ensure fast and convenient entry and coordination of invoices from any smart device, as long as the Internet is available.

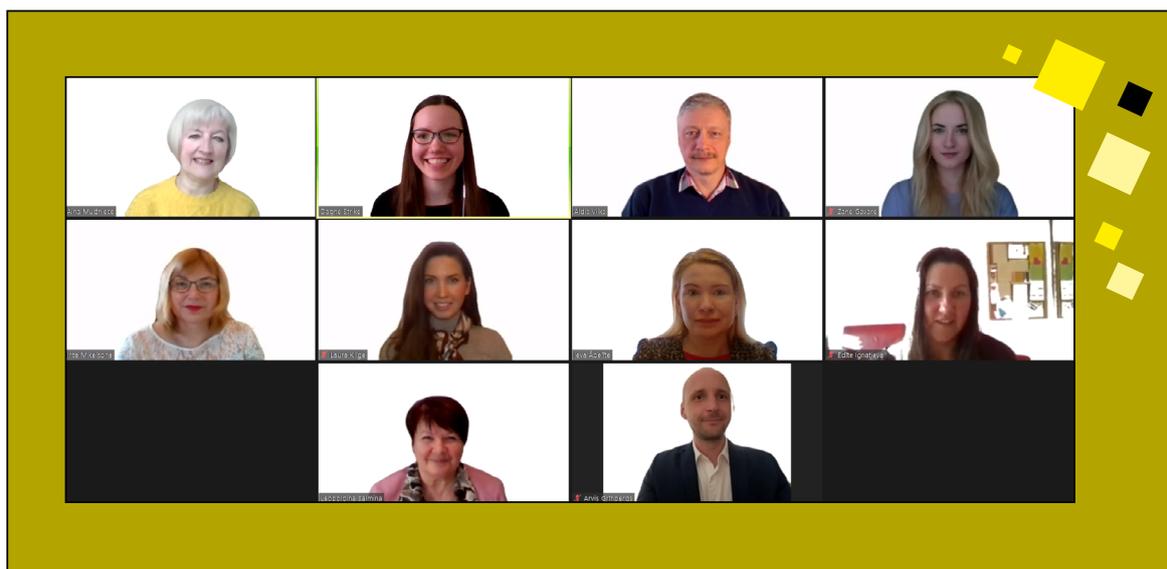


The employees of the Financial Planning and Accounting Division

Legal and Administrative Department

The Legal and Administrative Department ensures the legal and administrative activities of the Office, handles human resource management and record keeping matters, implements

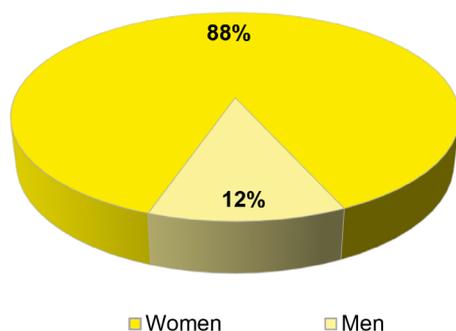
international cooperation and information technology management. The work of the department is ensured by 16 employees.



The employees of the Legal and Administrative Department

In 2020:

The Patent Office team consisted of 60 employees.



The team of the Patent Office is educated, experienced and professional – 92% of all employees have a higher education, more than half of the employees have been working in the Office for at least 10 years or more.

In 2020, the Patent Office continued and successfully expanded multilateral cooperation with international organizations in the field of industrial property by implementing new projects, partici-

pating in working groups, providing employees the possibility to receive professional training, contributing to initiatives that approximate the practices of EU Member States in trademark and design registration and post-registration procedures.

Intensive work was carried out on the development of a number of legislative amendments, which will continue in year 2021 – it is planned to make amendments to the Patent Law, Cabinet Regulation No.224 "Regulations on Patents and Patent Applications", Cabinet Regulation No.146 "Regulations Regarding the List of Professional Patent Attorneys, Procedures for the Maintenance Thereof, and Procedures for the Qualification Examination of Professional Patent Attorneys" and to the Law on Industrial Property Institutions and Procedures.

During the reporting period 12 official gazette "Patents, Trademarks and Designs" publications were created. The official gazette publishes the entries in the registers and the information specified in the industrial property laws and

regulations, which refer to registration of objects of industrial property. The official gazette is published on the website of the Patent Office.

100 entries were made in the **list of professional patent attorneys**:

- 2 entries regarding the inclusion of a new professional patent attorney in the list;
- 95 entries regarding the amendments to the list of professional patent attorneys;
- 3 entries regarding the inclusion in the list of professional patent attorneys of an EU citizen who has the rights to act as a patent attorney in another EU Member State in accordance with the laws and regulations of that country.

Main achievements

- In cooperation with EUIPO two important projects in the field of information technology were implemented – "ECP2: Major Improvements to Front Office" with improvements made to the trademark and design e-services system in order to meet the requirements of the new Trademark Law and "ECP1: Front Office" offering clients a new e-service free of charge – fast track examination of trademark applications. Also, EUIPO project "ECP5: Capture and Store Historical Files" was launched, which aims to digitalize the existing paper dossiers of trademarks and designs.



EUIPO visit to the Patent Office on February 12, 2020

- A number of employees of the Patent Office were approved to participate in working groups of international organizations. Three employees of the Patent Office participated in the EUIPO working groups as well as three employees participated in the EPO working groups.

- Last year five employees of the Patent Office – Baiba Graube, Ieva Plūme-Popova, Diāna Bojāre, Arvis Grīnbergs, Santa Darģe – received awards from justice sector and the Ministry of Justice for an exemplary and dedicated performance of work duties, demonstrating integrity, long-term and creative work and significant contribution to the development of the Latvian legal system, as well as for the promotion of international cooperation.

- In 2020 the Patent Office hosted the annual Nordic-Baltic meetings for the Heads of the Patent Offices, as well as the meetings of

the working group representatives from these offices, which this time took place online. Representatives meet twice a year to discuss topical issues in the region. Last year's meetings paid particular attention to the way how the offices adapted to pandemic conditions.

- The Patent Office has implemented a **quality management system** for its core processes, which is certified as compliant with the international standard ISO 9001:2015 requirements. A quality management system surveillance audit took place in August 2020 and it was carried out by an international audit company "DNV GL LATVIA" Ltd. The external audit was carried out remotely and "Risk Management" was selected as an important area of the audit. Non-conformities were not detected during the audit, the management system was found to be effective and compliant with the standard.

The Industrial Property Board of Appeal

The Industrial Property Board of Appeal (hereinafter – the Board of Appeal) is a collegial decision-making institution appointed by the Cabinet and which examines extrajudicial disputes arising from registration and post-registration procedures concerning invention patents (including supplementary protection certificates for medicinal products and plant protection products), topographies of semiconductor products, trademarks, designs. The Patent Office ensures the organizational and administrative operation of the Board of Appeal. The Board of Appeal consists of four members.

In 2020:

- 13 appeals were received:
 - 6 appeals were filed against the decisions of the Patent Office to refuse the registration of a trademark;
 - 5 appeals were filed against decisions in the field of supplementary protection certificates;
 - 1 appeal was filed against a decision rejecting the request for renewal rights and 1 appeal was filed for the decision of the Patent Office to refuse to accept trademark priority.
- 52 oppositions were received:
 - 51 oppositions were filed against the registration of trademarks. In total about 2% of the registered trademarks were contested;
 - 1 opposition was filed against the registration of a design.

- 113 oppositions were examined in substance, of which 58 were fully satisfied, 48 were partly satisfied but 7 were rejected in full. 11 appeals were examined: 2 appeals were fully satisfied, 1 partly satisfied, but 8 were rejected. About one third (37 cases) have been examined in oral proceedings, the rest – in writing. In 28 cases, the oral procedure was requested by the submitter of the notice of opposition or appeal.

Considering the state of emergency announced in Latvia due to Covid-19 and the restrictions imposed, at the end of 2020 the Board of Appeal started to organize hearings remotely – on the MS Teams platform. In 2020, the written decisions of the Board of Appeal in cases where the dispute was settled in substance take up a total of 1,108 pages.

Regarding 3 decisions of the Board of Appeal in trademark appeal cases and 4 decisions in opposition cases, persons have applied to the court. In 2020, the Riga City Vidzeme District Court examined the following 7 oppositions:

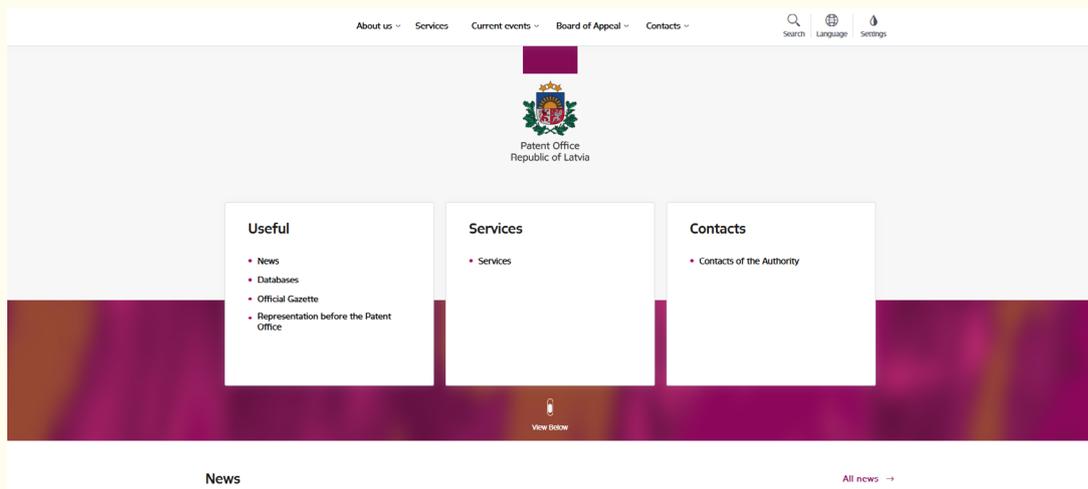
- In 3 cases, the ruling was the same as that decided by the Board of Appeal;
- 1 ruling was the opposite, as decided by the Board of Appeal (later the Riga Regional Court decided in the same way as the Board of Appeal);
- In 3 cases, the Riga City Vidzeme District Court also recognized the unfair intention of the trademark applicant in relation to non-similar goods and services.

In the second instance court – Riga Regional Court – in 2020, only one opposition case was heard, and the ruling coincided with the decision of the Board of Appeal.



The members of the Industrial Property Board of Appeal

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'About us', 'Services', 'Current events', 'Board of Appeal', and 'Contacts'. On the right side of the menu, there are icons for 'Search', 'Language', and 'Settings'. Below the navigation is the official coat of arms of Latvia, with the text 'Patent Office' and 'Republic of Latvia' underneath. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'Useful', 'Services', and 'Contacts'. The 'Useful' column lists 'News', 'Databases', 'Official Gazette', and 'Representation before the Patent Office'. The 'Services' column lists 'Services'. The 'Contacts' column lists 'Contacts of the Authority'. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a 'View below' icon. The footer contains the word 'News' on the left and 'All news →' on the right.

Navigation: [About us](#) [Services](#) [Current events](#) [Board of Appeal](#) [Contacts](#) [Search](#) [Language](#) [Settings](#)

Patent Office
Republic of Latvia

Useful

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