

the PCT is carried out in the same way and applying the same quality standard as for a European application in so far as the same requirements are examined.

There is no difference between an international and a European search, either in respect of the method and thoroughness of the search or in respect of the sources of prior art searched.

2. Objective of the search

Art. 15

Rule 33

GL/ISPE 15.01

The objective of the international search is to discover the prior art which is relevant for the purpose of determining novelty and inventive step. The international search as such, thus, does not differ from a European search.

3. Search documentation

Rule 34

GL/ISPE 15.45-15.51

Section B-II, 3. in the Guidelines for Examination in the EPO applies *mutatis mutandis*.

4. Search report

Art. 18

Rule 43

GL/ISPE 16.01

An international search report is prepared containing the results of the search, in particular by identifying the documents constituting the relevant state of the art (see GL/PCT-EPO B-X, 9).

Rule 43bis.1

The search report is accompanied by a written opinion of the International Searching Authority (see GL/PCT-EPO B-XI).

5. Time limit

Rule 42.1, 43bis.1

GL/ISPE 2.13, 16.05

The time limit for establishing the international search report and the WO-ISA is three months from the receipt of the search copy by the ISA or nine months from the priority date, whichever occurs later. In practice this means that the search and the written opinion should be established no later than 16 months from the priority date.