

TREND REPORT

Foreign applicant developments Germany



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Introduction

In the development of patents in a country, foreign applicants often play an important role, and the same applies to Germany. This report analyzes the development of foreign applicants in Germany and study the patent profile of foreign applicants in Germany over the past 10 years (Data as of April 10, 2024).

Part 1:

General information

In the past decade (2014-2023), there were a total of 1,206,066 patents from both domestic and international sources in Germany, of which 44.88% came from domestic applicants and the remaining 55.12% came from foreign applicants (as shown in [Figure 1](#)). Among foreign applicants, American applicants have applied for the most patents in Germany, with 175,970, followed by Japan. In addition, Chinese, French, and Korean applicants have also applied for a large number of patents in Germany. The following analysis focusses on foreign applicants.

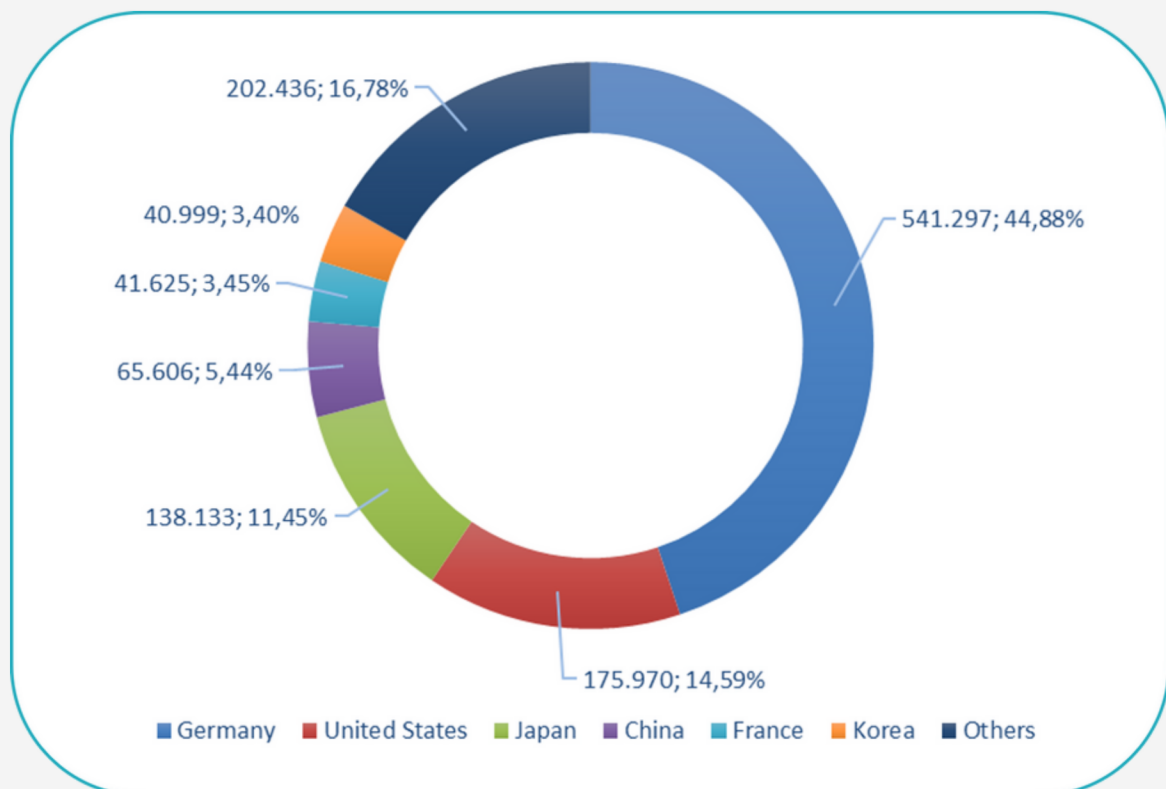


Figure 1 Top regions of origin

From the trend of patent applications, since 2017, the number of patents applied by foreign applicants in Germany has shown a downward trend (as shown in [Figure 2](#)). According to information released by the German Patent and Trade Mark Office (DPMA), the number of patents filed by foreign applicants in Germany in 2023 was 20,187. It can be inferred that the reasons for the above phenomenon (the downward trend of patent volume after 2017) may be: on the one hand, a decrease in actual application volume, and on the other hand, some data has not yet been publicly available and cannot be searched.

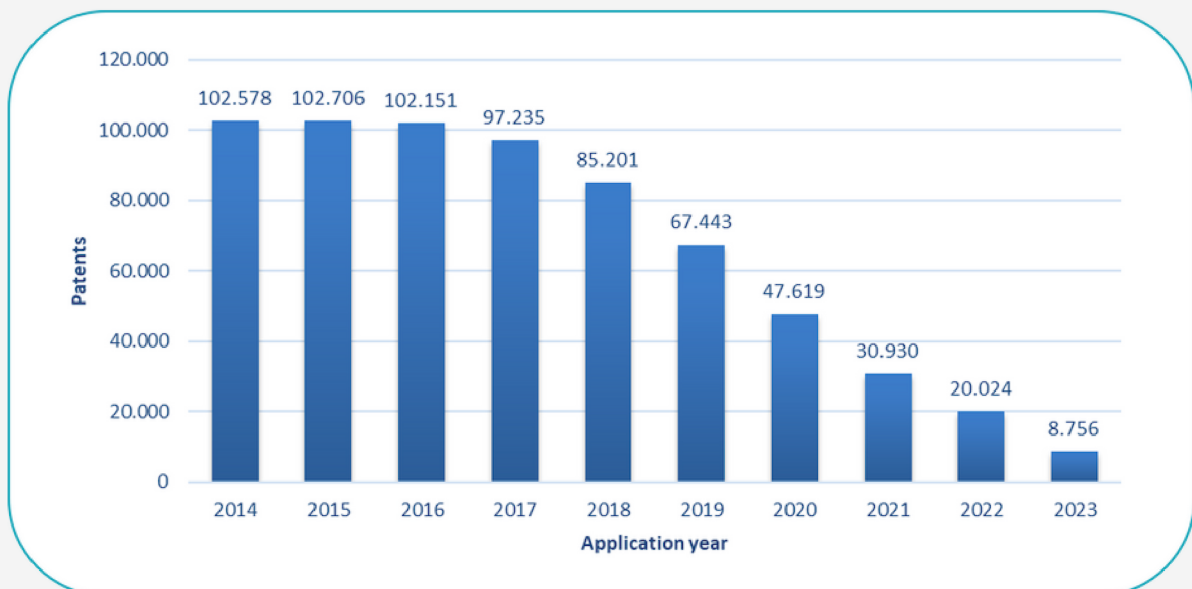


Figure 2 Application to grant ratio in China (2012-2021)

In Germany, foreign applicants can apply for patents through PCT, EPO, or directly to Germany. Therefore, this report also analyzes patent application trends from different routes. It can be seen that since 2017, the number of patents applied to Germany through PCT or EPO has significantly decreased, while the proportion of patents directly applied to DPMA has significantly increased (as shown in [Figure 3](#)). Because applying for a patent directly to DPMA not only incurs lower costs, but also provides a 7-year 'request for examination period' (for details: https://www.dpma.de/english/patents/examination_and_grant/index). Therefore, the direct application route has gained the favor of foreign applicants. In addition, directly applying for patents in Germany is mainly because many foreign applicants have competitors concentrated in Germany, such as the automotive industry, where foreign car manufacturers (such as Toyota) and car suppliers (such as Denso) are top applicants.

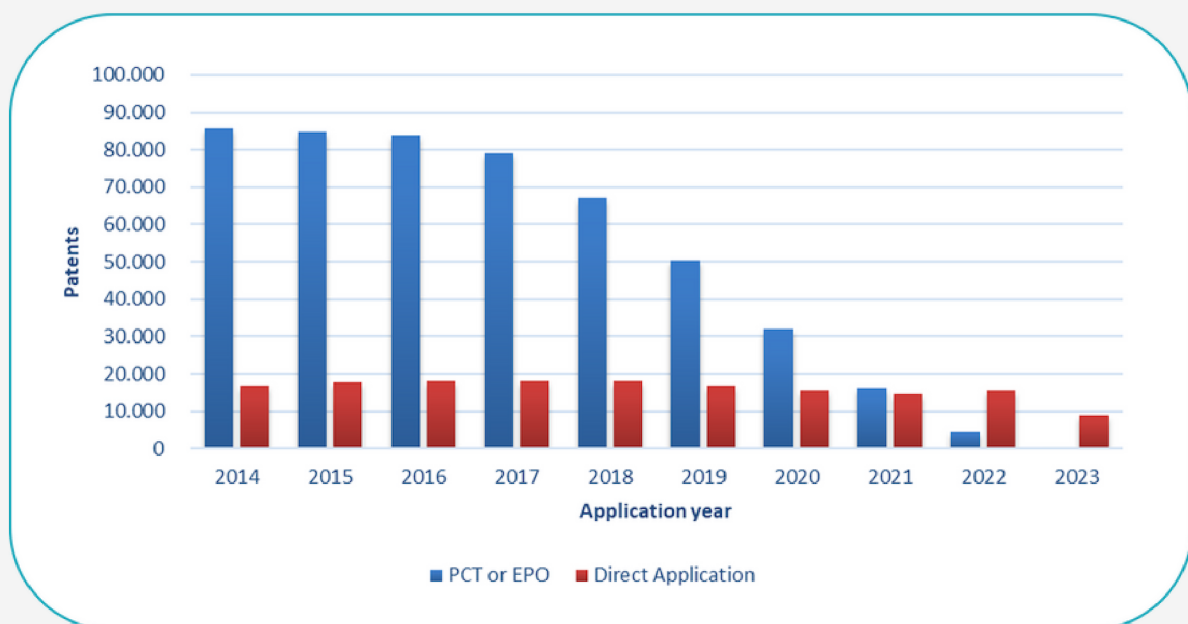


Figure 3 Patent application trend from different routes

From the perspective of patent types, domestic applicants in Germany mainly apply for inventions, with a low proportion of utility and foreign designs (as shown in [Figure 4](#)).

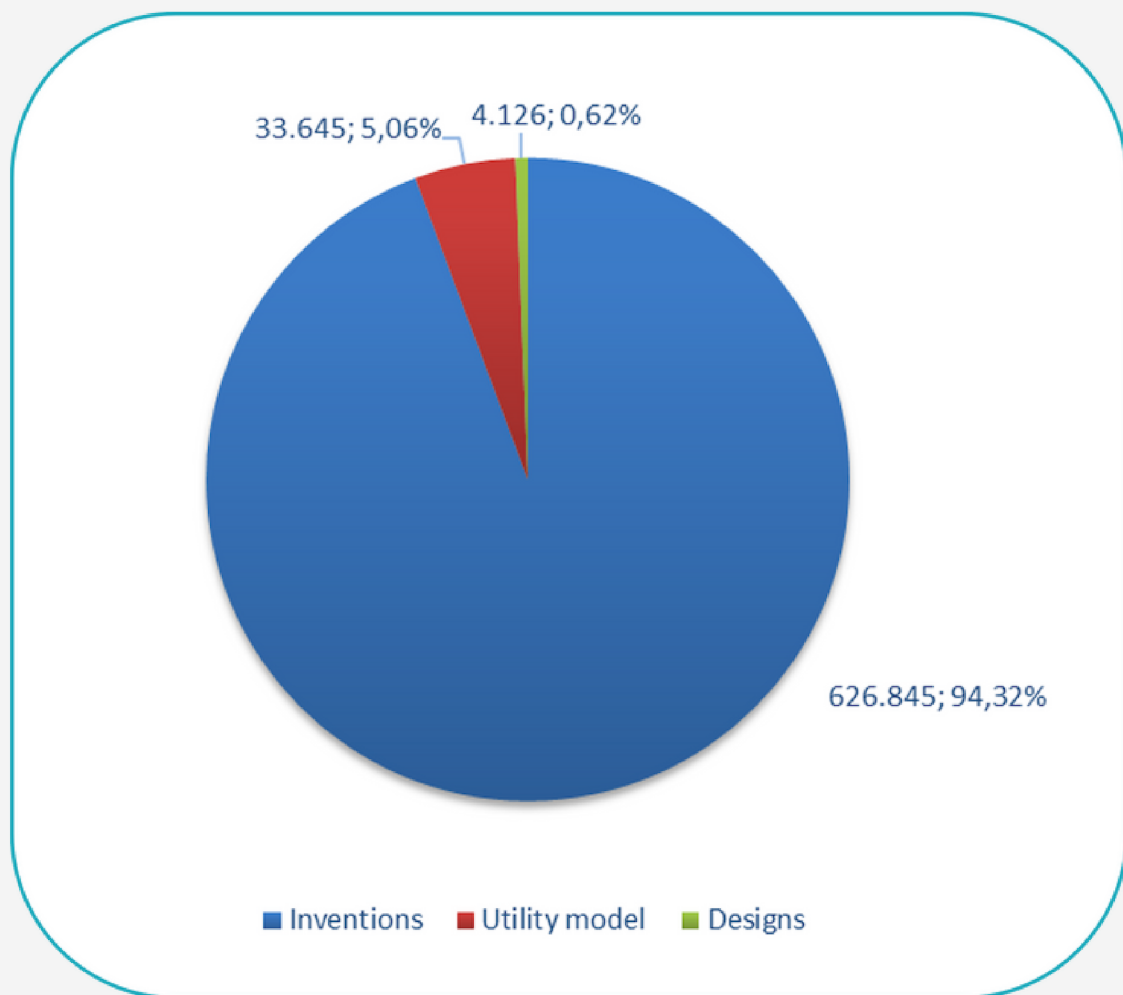


Figure 4 Patent types

From the legal perspective, most of the patents applied by foreign applicants in Germany are in force, accounting for 67.34%, and an additional 16.65% are pending, reflecting the high quality of these patents (as shown in [Figure 5](#)).

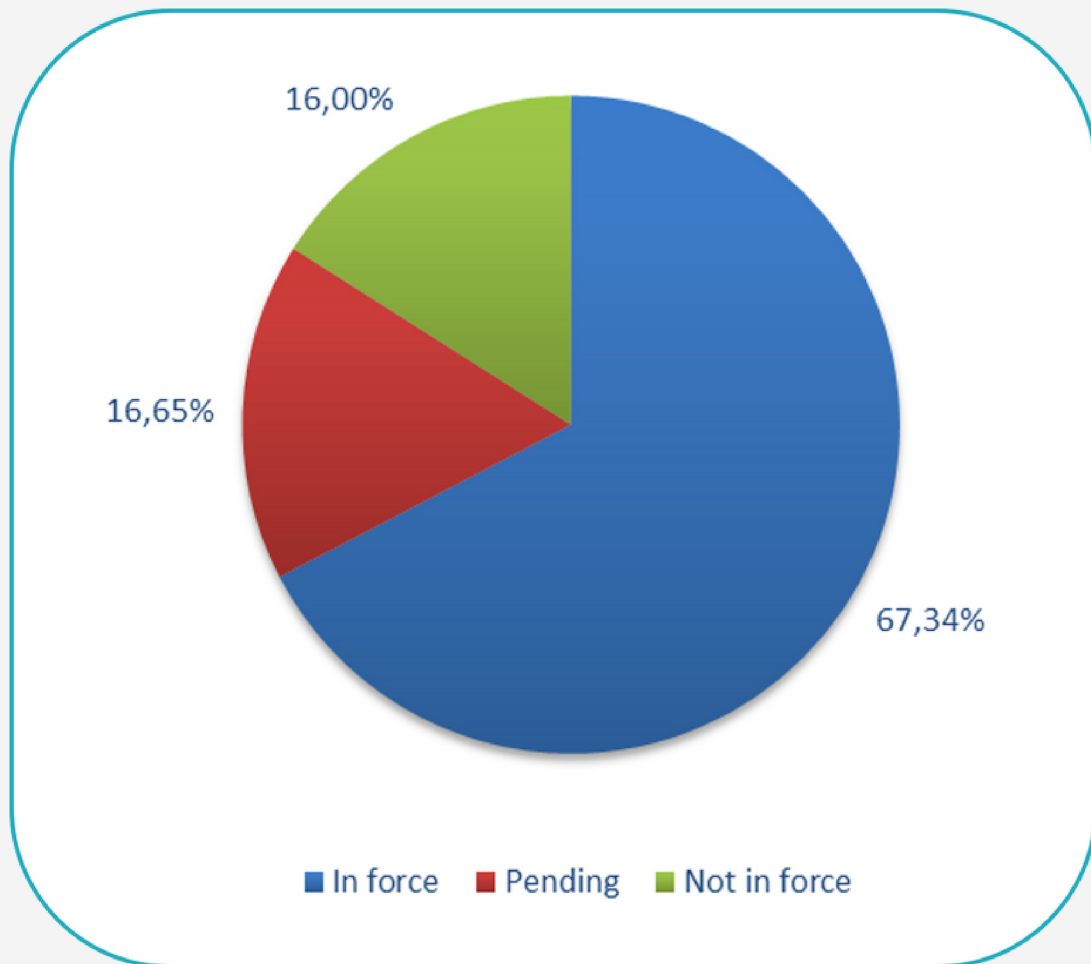


Figure 5 Legal status

Part 2: Geographic Territories

Analyzing the technical fields of foreign applicants applying for patents in Germany (as shown in [Figure 6](#)), it can be seen that patents in the field of communication are the focus of attention for foreign applicants, such as G06F (Electronic Digital Data Processing), H04L (Transmission of Digital Information), and H04W (Wireless Communication Network).

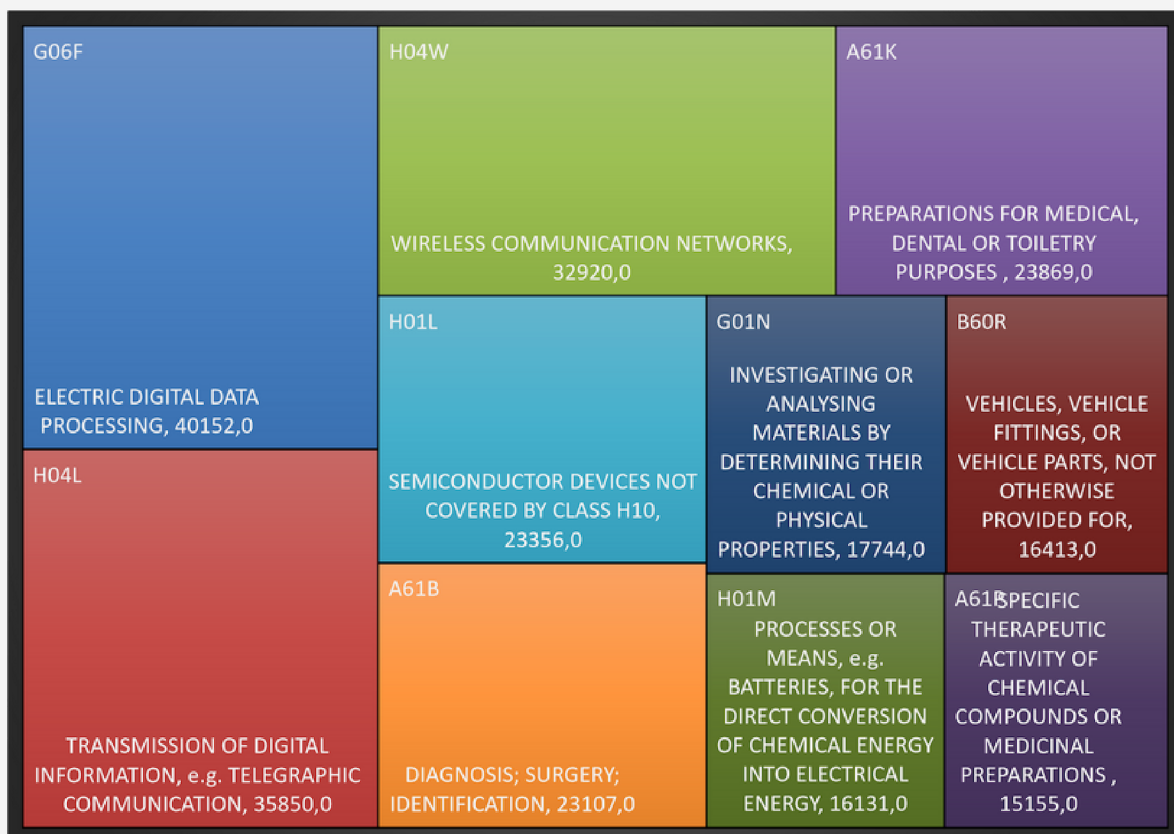


Figure 6 The top 10 IPC classification numbers

Part 3: Standardized Current Assignees

From the perspective of applicants, Ford has applied for the most patents in Germany among foreign applicants, reaching 16,802, followed by General Motors, Huawei and Samsung Electronics (as shown in [Figure 7](#)).

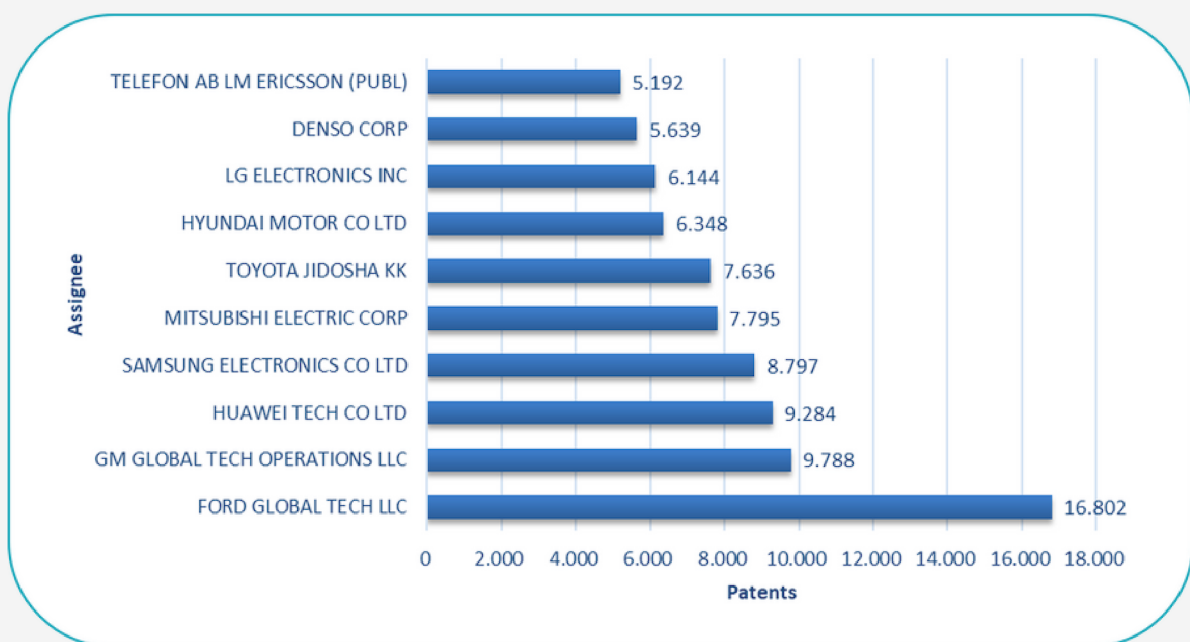


Figure 7 The top 10 standardized current assignees

Conclusion

The foreign applicants in Germany are mainly concentrated in countries such as the United States, Japan, China, Korea. Their patent applications in Germany are mainly concentrated in the field of communication. Meanwhile, in recent years, the number of patent applications submitted by foreign applicants in Germany has shown a downward trend, but the proportion of direct patent applications to Germany has significantly increased.

Note: All numbers used and statements made in this report are indicative and for information purposes only. No warranty or liability is given nor accepted for anything published in this report.

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