Espacenet – pocket guide

Searching

Smart search field identifiers and Advanced search fields

Smart search and **Advanced search** have been synchronised. The table below lists the field identifiers that you can use in **Smart search** and their equivalents in **Advanced search**.

Field identifier in Smart search		Description / Equivalent search criterion in Advanced search	Example
in new Espacenet	*in classic Espacenet*		
nftxt	-	All text fields or names	nftxt="extreme uv lithography"
ntxt	*txt*	Title, abstract or names	ntxt=microscope lens
ti	*ti*	Title	ti="mouse trap"
ab	*ab*	Abstract	ab="mouse trap"
desc	*desc*	Description	desc=lens
claims	*claims*	Claims	claims=laser
ta	*ta*	Title or abstract	ta="laser printer"
ctxt	-	Title, abstract or claims	ctxt=milking ctxt=robots
ftxt	*extftxt*	All text fields (title, abstract, description or claims)	ftxt=nanoparticles
in	*in*	Inventors	in=smith
pa	*pa*	Applicants	pa=siemens
ia	*ia*	Inventors or applicants	ia=apple OR ia="ries klaus"
pd[1]	*pd*	Publication date	pd=20180107
pr	*pr*	Priority number	pr=ep20050104792
pn	*pn*	Publication number	pn=ep1000000 pn=EPB1[2]
ap	*ap*	Application number	ap=jp19890234567
num	*num*	Numbers	num=ep1000000
ipc	*ipc*	IPC	ipc=A63B49/08
cpc	*cpc*	CPC	cpc="A61K31/13"
cpcc	*cpcc*	CPC C-sets	cpcc="C08F297/02"
cl	*cl*	IPC or CPC	cl=C10J3
ct	*ct*	Cited documents	ct=ep1000000

[1] You can search by the publication date of the earliest publication (e.g. EPA1) of a patent document but not by the publication dates of subsequent publications (e.g. EPB1). This is because subsequent publication dates are not indexed for search purposes.

[2] You can search by kind code, using the following type of query: pn=<CC><KC>.

Operators

Operator		Example in Smart search	Description
Boolean operators[3]	AND	pa=bosch AND pa=siemens	will retrieve documents where both **Bosch** and **Siemens** are applicants
	OR	in=smith OR in=huber	will retrieve documents where the inventor's name is **Smith** or **Huber**
	NOT	txt=laser NOT semiconductor	will retrieve documents containing laser, while excluding documents containing **semiconductor**
Proximity operators	prox/distance<nr	mouse prox/distance<3 trap	will retrieve documents where mouse and trap are fewer than three words apart, independently of the order in which mouse and trap appear
	prox/distance<nr/ ordered	mouse prox/distance<3/ordered trap	will retrieve documents where mouse and trap occur in that order and are fewer than three words apart
	prox/ordered	mouse prox/ordered trap	will retrieve documents where mouse appears before trap
	prox/unit=sentence	mouse prox/unit=sentence trap	will retrieve, in the first example, documents where mouse and trap occur in the same sentence
		cpc=(C08F220/38 prox/unit=sentence (EP))	will retrieve, in the second example, documents with the classification symbol **C08F220/38** assigned by **EP**
		cpcc=(C08F218/08 prox/unit=sentence (C08F220/06, US, EP))	will retrieve, in the third example, documents with the C-sets **C08F218/08** and **C08F220/06** assigned by US and EP
	prox/unit=paragraph	mouse prox/unit=paragraph trap	will retrieve documents where mouse and trap occur in the same paragraph
Comparison operators	all[4]	ti all "paint brush head"	will retrieve documents containing all words entered within quotes but not necessarily in the order in which the words appear
	any[5]	ti any "motor engine"	will retrieve documents containing any of the words entered within quotes
	=	pa=siemens pa = "siemens ag"	will retrieve documents where either Siemens or Siemens AG are applicants
	>	pd > 1998	will retrieve documents having a publication date after 1998
	>=	pd >= 1998	will retrieve documents having a publication date in or after 1998
	<	pd < 1998	will retrieve documents having a publication date before 1998
	<=	pd <= 2018	will retrieve documents having a publication date in or before 2018
	within	pd within "1998 2018" pd within "1998, 2018"	will retrieve documents published between 19980101 and 20181231.[6]

[3] The default operator in **Smart search** is "AND". Boolean operators have precedence from left to right.

[4] This will give the same results as ti=paint AND ti=brush AND ti=head.

[5] This will give the same results as ti=motor OR ti=engine.

[6] This will give the same results as pd >=1998 AND pd <=2018.

Searching by date

Date formats: You can search by publication date in **Smart search** and **Advanced search** using any of the following formats:

Format	Example
yyyy	2019
yyyymm	201903
yyyy-mm	2019-03
mm/yyyy	03/2019
mm.yyyy	03.2019

Format	Example
yyyymmdd	20190305
yyyy-mm-dd	2019-03-05
dd/mm/yyyy	05/03/2019
dd.mm.yyyy	05.03.2019

Date ranges: The following range formats are admissible for publication date range searches, using any of the allowed date formats:

Format in Smart search	Format in Advanced search, Publication date	Example in Smart search	Example in Advanced search
<Date1>:<Date2>	<Date1>:<Date2>	1998:2018	1998:2018
"<Date1>:<Date2>"	<Date1>:<Date2>	"01.1998:12.2018"	01.1998:12.2018
pd within "<Date1>:<Date2>"	<Date1>:<Date2>	pd within "1998:2018"	1998:2018
pd="<Date1>:<Date2>"	<Date1>:<Date2>	pd="199801:201812"	199801:201812
pd within <Date1>,<Date2>	<Date1>,<Date2>	pd within 1998,2018	1998,2018
pd=<Date1>,<Date2>	<Date1>,<Date2>	pd=1998-01,2018-12	1998-01,2018-12
pd within <Date1> <Date2>	<Date1> <Date2>	pd within "1998 2018"	1998 2018
pd=<Date1> <Date2>	<Date1> <Date2>	pd="01/1998 12/2018"	01/1998 12/2018

Nested queries

Parentheses can be used to specify the order in which the search terms[7] and operators should be interpreted. Information within parentheses is read first, and information outside parentheses is read next.

Example: (mouse OR rat) AND trap

If there are nested parentheses, the search engine processes the innermost parenthetical expression first, then the next, and so on, until the entire query has been interpreted.

Example: ((mouse OR rat) AND trap) OR mousetrap

[7] A search term is a word, classification symbol, assigning office, date or patent number.

Truncations

Truncation symbols (wildcards) available in **Smart search** and **Advanced search**:

Wildcard	Description	Examples
*	stands for a string of characters of any length	car* will retrieve car, cars, card, cart, care, carbon, etc.
?	stands for no characters or one character	car? will retrieve car, card, cart, care, etc., but not cards, carbon
#	stands for exactly one character	car# will retrieve card, cart, care, cars, etc., but not car, cards

Restrictions

- Left truncation (?car) is not supported.
- If two alphanumeric characters precede a ? or # symbol (co? or pa#), then a maximum of three truncation symbols is allowed (ca??? will retrieve call, cart, card, care, cable, etc.).
- If three or more alphanumeric characters precede a ? or # symbol, then a maximum of seven truncation symbols is allowed.
- There must be at least three alphanumeric characters preceding a * symbol.
- Wildcards cannot be used when searching by IPC and/or CPC. The data is auto-posted up to classification group level. This means that all sub-levels will also be searched at the same time. At sub-group level, please use **/low** in combination with the "=" operator. If you search by **B65D81/24/low**, the system will, for example, also search for results classified as B65D81/26.

Search limitations

- Queries are limited to a maximum of 500 search terms and by the maximum URL length supported by your browser or email provider.
- You can no longer use Boolean operators within fields. However, you can select the operator **Any** (corresponding to **OR**) or **All** (corresponding to **AND**) above the fields and use it to perform an equivalent search when entering multiple search items next to each other within a field.
- When you use the operator **/low**, a classification symbol can only be used with the operator **=** and only one classification symbol can be used per field.
- English, German and French are the only searchable languages (coverage differs depending on the language).
- XP documents cannot be searched.[8]

[8] You can, however, search patent documents that cite XP documents, using the field identifier "ct", e.g. ct=XP027140896 OR ct=XP055152842.

Filters

Refining your search with filters offers the following advantages:

- no limit on the number of filter criteria you can apply, whereas the number of search items you can use in **Smart search** or **Advanced search** is restricted (see "Maximum number of terms / search items per query" section)
- statistics available for all filters (applicants, inventors, IPCs, CPCs, countries of applicants or inventors, etc.)

Once you have activated the **Filters** toggle, you can filter your search results

- on family or publication level by:
  - Countries
  - Languages
  - Publication date
- on family level exclusively by:
  - Priority date
  - IPC main groups
  - IPC subgroups
  - CPC main groups
  - CPC subgroups
  - CPC country codes
  - Applicants
  - Inventors
- on publication level exclusively by:
  - Inventors – country
  - Applicants – country

You can apply or exclude each criterion listed in each individual filter.

Filtering on publication or family level

"Apply" function

- **on publication level**
  The result list will contain families where at least one member ("publication") of a family has to meet all the search and filter criteria (same effect as a search in **Smart search** or **Advanced search**).
- **on family level**
  The result list will contain families where the family as a whole – but not necessarily each individual family member – has to meet all the search and filter criteria.

Example: Prior art search for a document having a first filing date of 2 January 2017

Smart search query:
*(spectacle?? or lunette? or Brille?) and (hollow or creu??? or hohl??) and transpar**

Filter: Publication date
From 1849-01-01 To 2017-01-01

Results:
On publication level: 2 755 results (simple families)
On family level: 2 794 results (simple families)

Advantage of filtering on family level vs. filtering on publication level or adding more items to a Smart search or Advanced search

Narrowing down the search using pd ≤ 20170101 in **Smart search** (or equivalent built in **Advanced search**) will give the same results as filtering by publication date on publication level. When you do this, Espacenet will not find document ES1150117U, which was published on 20160204 and could be important for the prior art search, because it is in Spanish and does not meet both the search and filter criteria, i.e. the publication date (pd<20170102) and keywords (search items queried in English, French and German).

On family level, however, you will be able to find this potentially important Spanish document because the family as a whole – though not necessarily each family member – meets all the criteria: ES1150117U, published in Spanish, meets the publication date criterion (20160204), while the family member WO2017109242A1, published after 20170101, meets the keywords criterion (in English: glasses, hollow and transparent).

"Exclude" function

- **on publication level**
  - If one publication in a family meets the exclusion criteria but any other family member does not, the family will be displayed in the result list but the excluded publication will not appear in the result list as a representative of the patent family (see example EP1000000).
  - If each individual member of a family meets the exclusion criteria, the whole family will be excluded from the result list.
- **on family level**
  A family will be excluded from the result list if any of its members meets the exclusion criteria.

Advantage of using the exclude function on family level

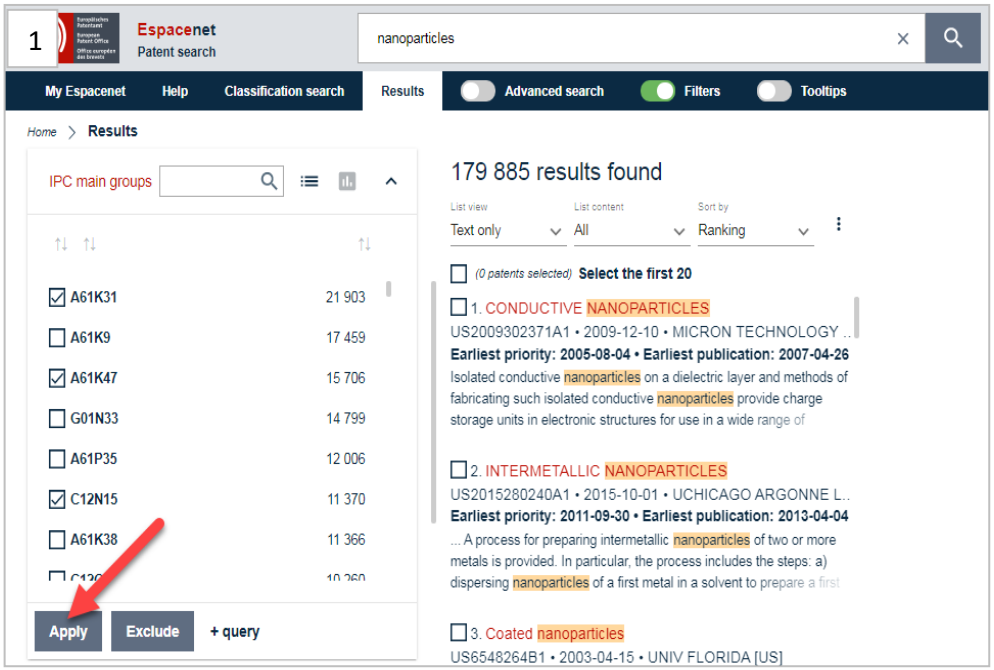
On family level, you can exclude from the result list the families for which patent protection has not been requested in a specific country (the excluded country). This could be useful in identifying market opportunities.

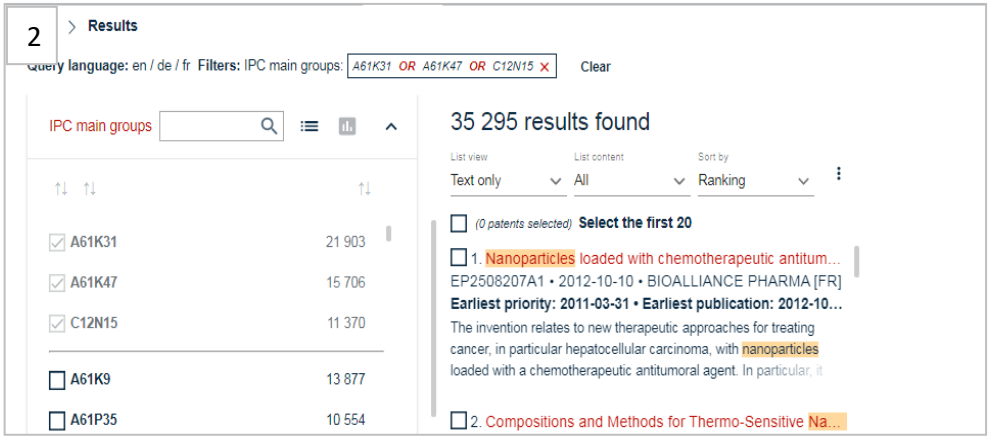
Combining filters with Boolean operators

Combination with OR

If you apply or exclude multiple criteria (e.g. IPC symbols) at the same time within a filter (e.g. IPC main group), the criteria will be combined with the OR operator.

Example:

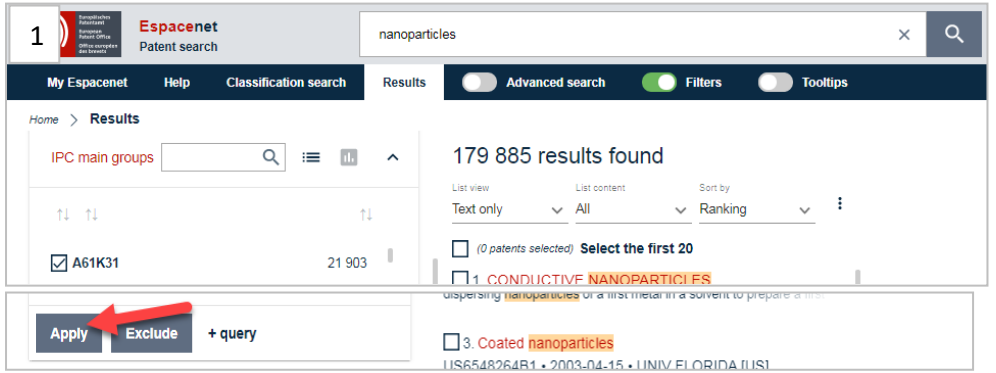


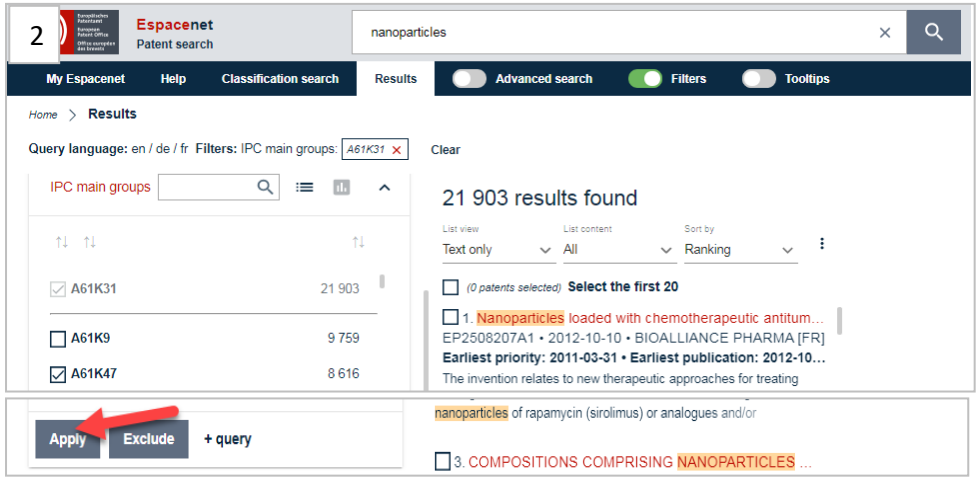


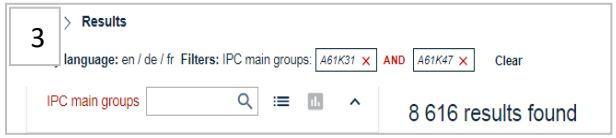
Combination with AND

To combine criteria with the AND operator, you must first apply or exclude one criterion within a filter. Then apply or exclude another criterion within the same filter, repeating this action as often as you wish.

Example:







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