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In several technical fields, Patents are the most efficient source of information for the following reasons.

- Accessibility: All patent documents have a universal format for the bibliographic data. More than 50 different fields, each representing valuable technical or strategic information, are accessible for each Patent. In addition to this, Patents are classified according to internationally agreed systems, which divides technical domains into more than 100,000 subdivisions.
- Content: A patent, to be valid, should enable a person skilled in that particular area to reproduce the invention. This strict requirement explains why 70% of the information contained in Patents is not available elsewhere. When a catalogue or an article describesa product in a few lines, the corresponding Patent often consists of 20 pages. Patentsrepresent about 350 million of A4 pages containing very relevant technical information.
- Concentration: Full patent collections are often present in national Patent Office archives.From a relevant list of patent documents you will need one or two hours in a patent libraryto collect all the data. In comparison, you will usually need several weeks to order andreceive the references quoted in a thesis.
- Up to date: A company is not inclined to make its inventions public. To get a legal protection for the invention, the company generally files

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Do not expect to cover the whole state-of-the-art by searching in national Patents only.

Databases available on *espa@cenet*® have also some limitations in the number and the quality of fields accessible that should be considered when drawing conclusions from the result of a search.

Commercial patent databases usually offer extra value, by the number of fields you can access, and due to the content of the abstract that has been rewritten to facilitate easieraccess to the document by keyword searches.

To sum up, a patent database user should always be aware of the content of the database he is using and know the limitations of the fields.

About Classification

Patents are classified according to various classification schemes covering all possible technical domains. When conducting a search, it is essential to systematically use this tool that offers an objective criteria to access relevant documents. Keywords are much more subjective as there are many words to describe a same concept.

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Seven points to consider before starting your search

Here are some basic things you need to know before you start searching.

1. The concept approach

Usually, a prior art search boils down to a combination of concepts defining the subject you are looking for.

A patent prior art search consists in finding relevant documents in a collection of patent documents. The fields searched are usually abstracts or classification symbols.

In a patent record, the content of the invention is described in the abstract and the classification symbols attributed to the patent have been chosen among the thousands available in the classification scheme and are usually indexes best characterising the technical content of the patent document.

In the abstract, you will find words, adjectives and verbs that linked together form sentences expressing your searched subject. If the expression of the subject remains the same in all relevant documents, words, verbs and adjectives vary from one relevant document to another.

The expression of the technical subject is a combination of concepts that will remain common to all relevant documents.

Knowing that the documents you are looking for have these common features ? these so called concepts ? your search will consist in finding documents where a given combination of concepts is present.

Since patent documents are classified, searching for a given concept should not be limited to a keyword search. A concept can perfectly be represented by a classification symbol.

A sound search strategy will therefore involve combination of keywords and classification symbols. An individual concept is usually defined by an "or" combination of keywords and classification symbols all relating to this concept.

The experience shows that it is not easy from the start to define all possible synonyms and classifications covering one concept. This usually remains an imperfect process. It can be tuned during the search itself: relevant documents reveal new ways to express your concepts. Using these new concepts more documents can be retrieved and so on. This becomes an iterative process that an experienced searcher brings to an end when he has the feeling that additional efforts will not bring more results.

concepts. Using these new concepts more documents can be retrieved and so on. This becomes an iterative process that an experienced searcher brings to an end when he has the feeling that additional efforts will not bring more results.

2. The more, the easiest

The easiness of a prior art search is proportional to the number of documents relevant to your subject that are contained in the searched collection.

If there are hundreds of documents relating to your searched subject in the databases the chances were very high that even using a clumsy combination of keywords you would find a relevant document. It is quite simple to understand why. Hundreds of relevant documents mean that there are almost hundred different abstracts in the database that describe more or less the same invention. Chances are therefore very high that all possible keywords one would think of are used in some of these abstracts. In other words, if you ask 100 people to describe this invention in a few sentences, you are sure to be able to retrieve at least one of these descriptions using your own combination of keywords.

Consequently, one can say that a search is difficult when the number of documents in the database corresponding to your subject is low. This is usually the case in real life: none or very few relevant documents relating to your subject exist. In such a case the iterative concept approach exposed previously is extremely powerful and should yield these few documents.

3. Think lateral

To get out of a search dead end try to think lateral to find new concepts defining your subject.

To retrieve additional concepts possibly covering the invention, you sometimes have to think lateral: exploring multiple possibilities and approaches instead of pursuing a single approach.

4. The limits of the concept approach

When a subject cannot be expressed in a "normal" sentence, the concept approach is not applicable or can only be applicable in presence of good indexing schemes.

It would be wrong to present the concept approach as "the" universal search strategy.

5. I found nothing

Absence of evidence is no evidence of absence

Even experienced searchers cope with cases where no relevant results have been obtained. This does not mean that no relevant document exists or can be found. The above maxim is well known among archaeologists: if you do not find remains of an old temple, it does not mean that the temple did not exist or cannot be found elsewhere.

In patent searches such phenomena happen quite often and for various reasons:

- A searcher may not have used the winning combination; a common case among novice searchers.
- Some fields you are using like the classification are absent from certain patent records. This can be the case in databases covering collections that have not be classified for instance.

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6. Use the Web to its full extent

Specific patent searches are sometimes best conducted using both the information available on the Web and in patent databases.

One often overlooks combined information that can be obtained from the World Wide Web and from patent sources. Patents or inventors are often mentioned in texts found on the Internet giving precious indications to be able to continue the search in patent databases.

7. Use the right tools

Using free patent search tools is not necessarily more cost effective than using fee based databases.

This last principle belongs to common sense. But many discussions with patent professionals often reveal that free tools are sometimes too blindly trusted. This is due to the incorrect impression that free services offer as much information if not more than commercial databases. Users need to be clearly informed on the limitations of free products. For instance, abstracts in *espacenet*, are not always available when they are present in some well-known commercial databases. In addition, even if you push free systems to their limits being aware of their strengths and of their weaknesses you will often spend much more time finding results than by using fee based tools. The costs of a patent professional spending 2 hours on a free system are often higher than the costs - working and database costs added together - of such a professional spending 15 minutes on a fee based system.

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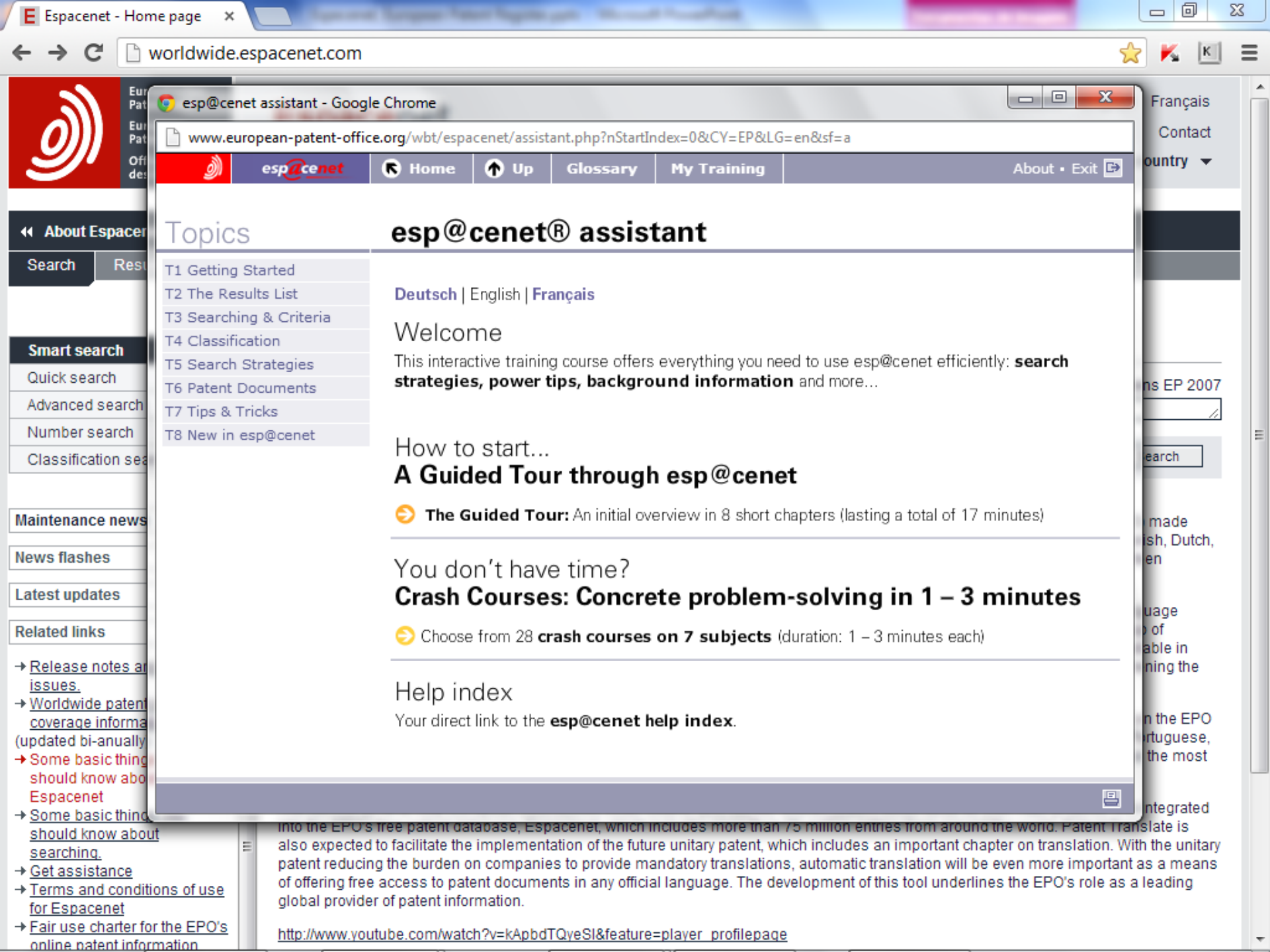
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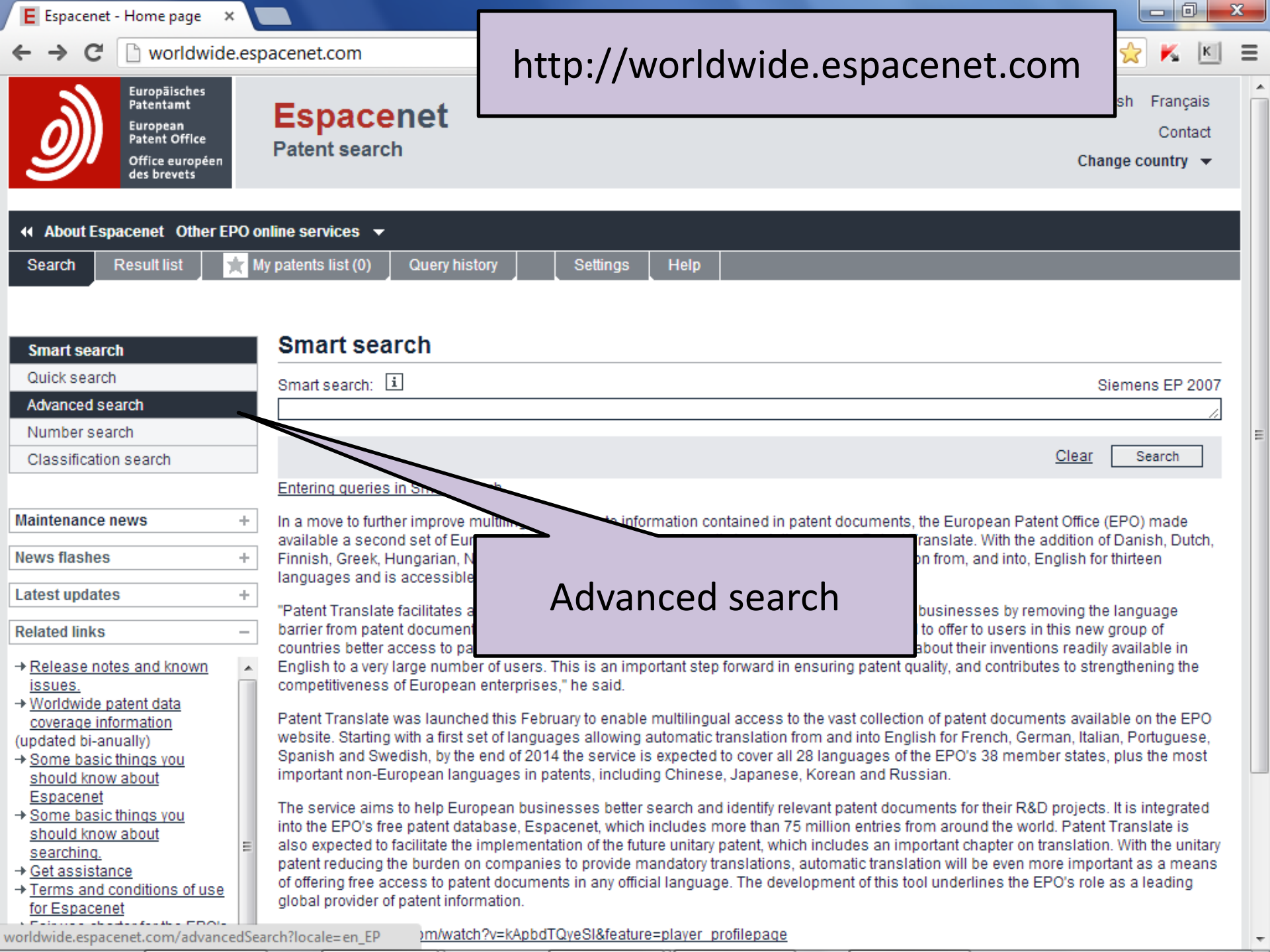
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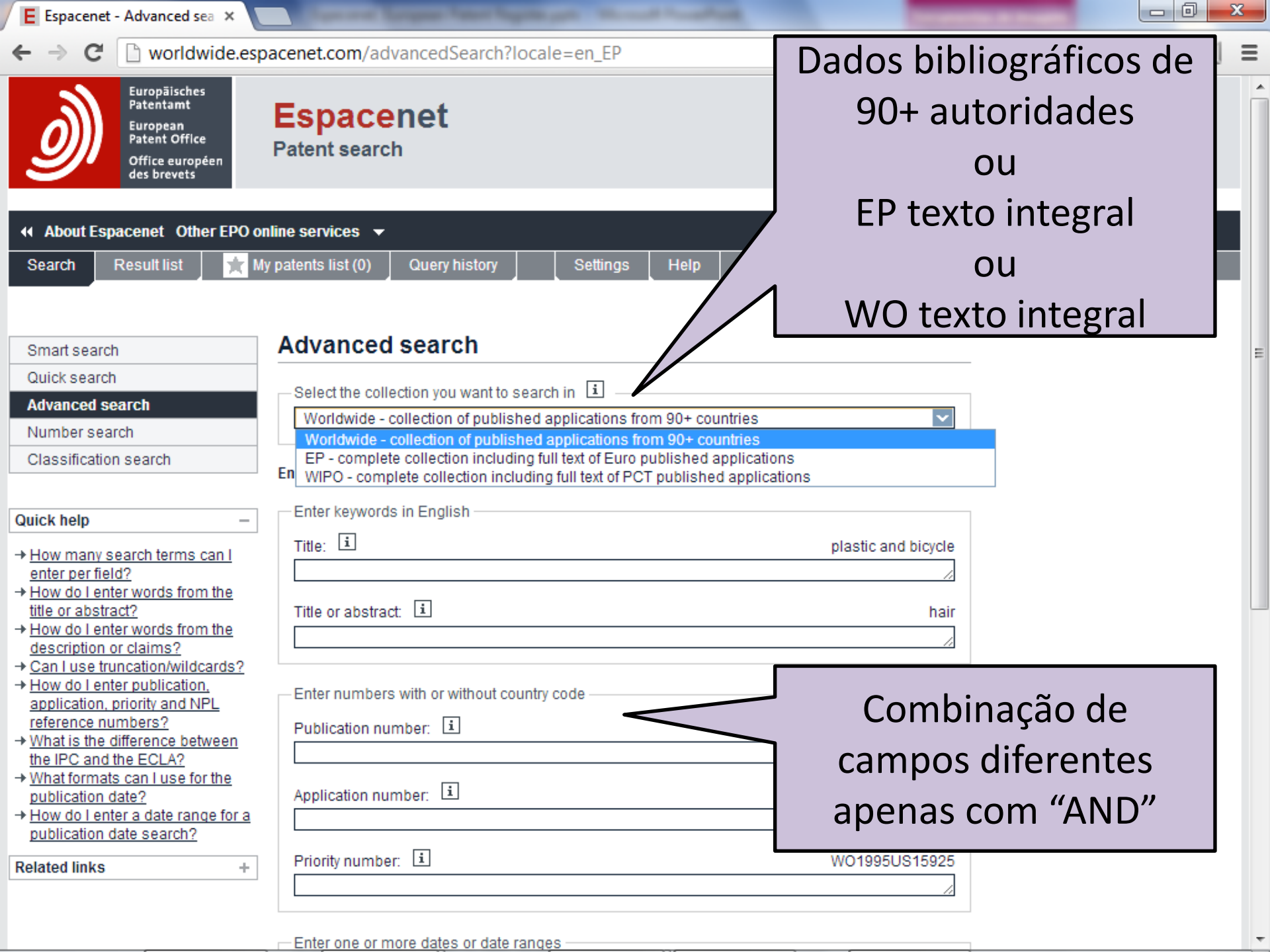
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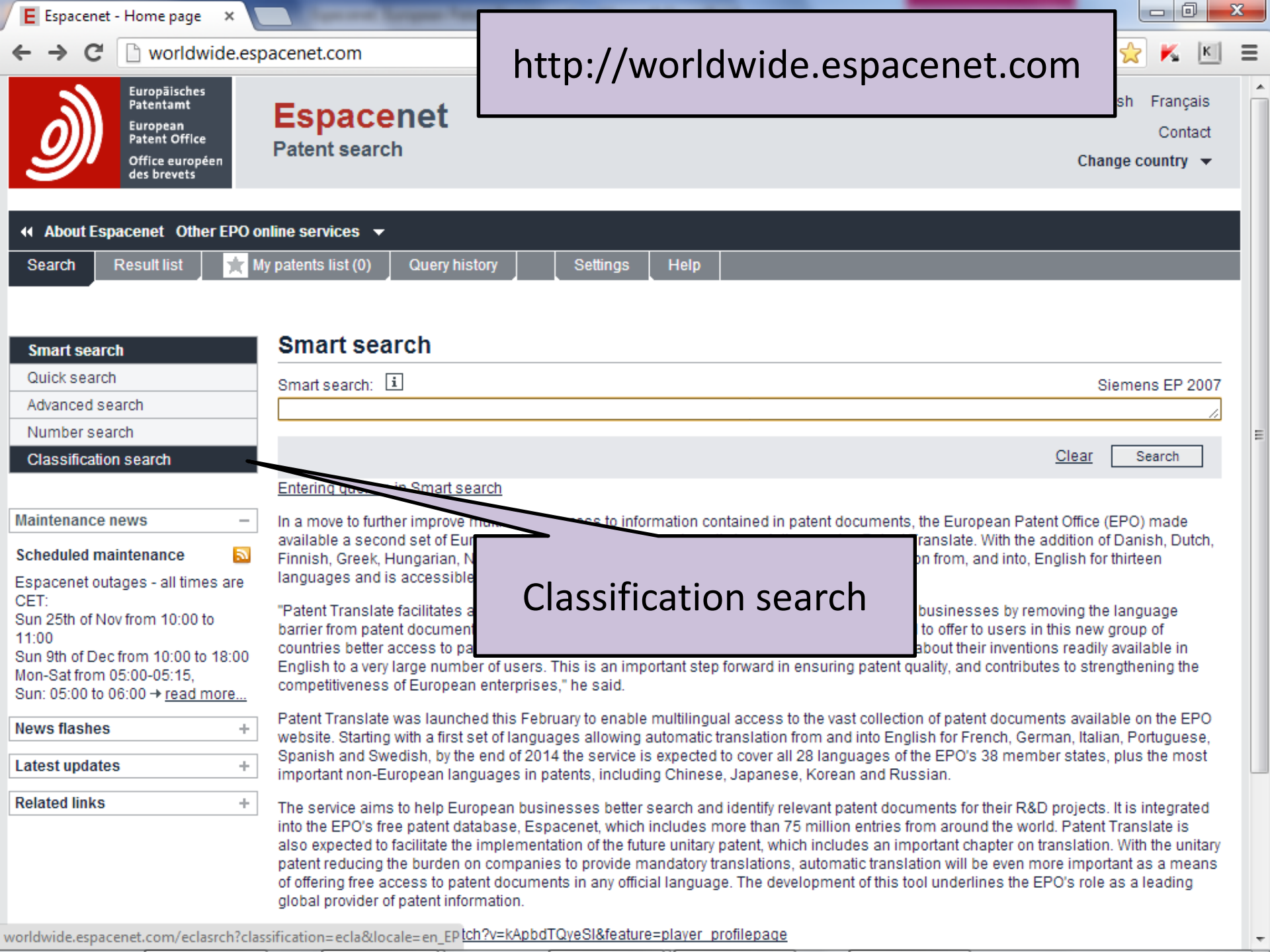
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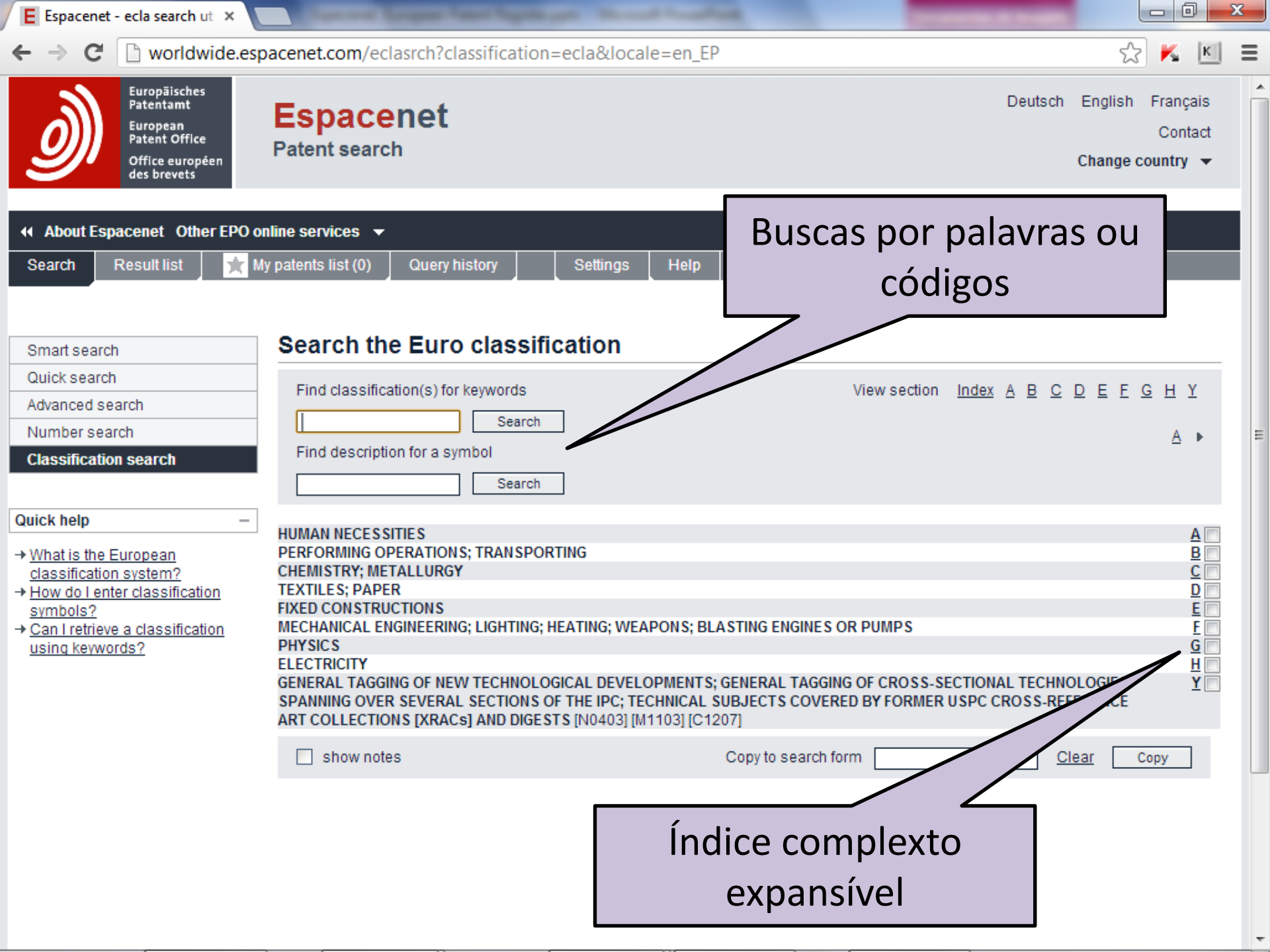
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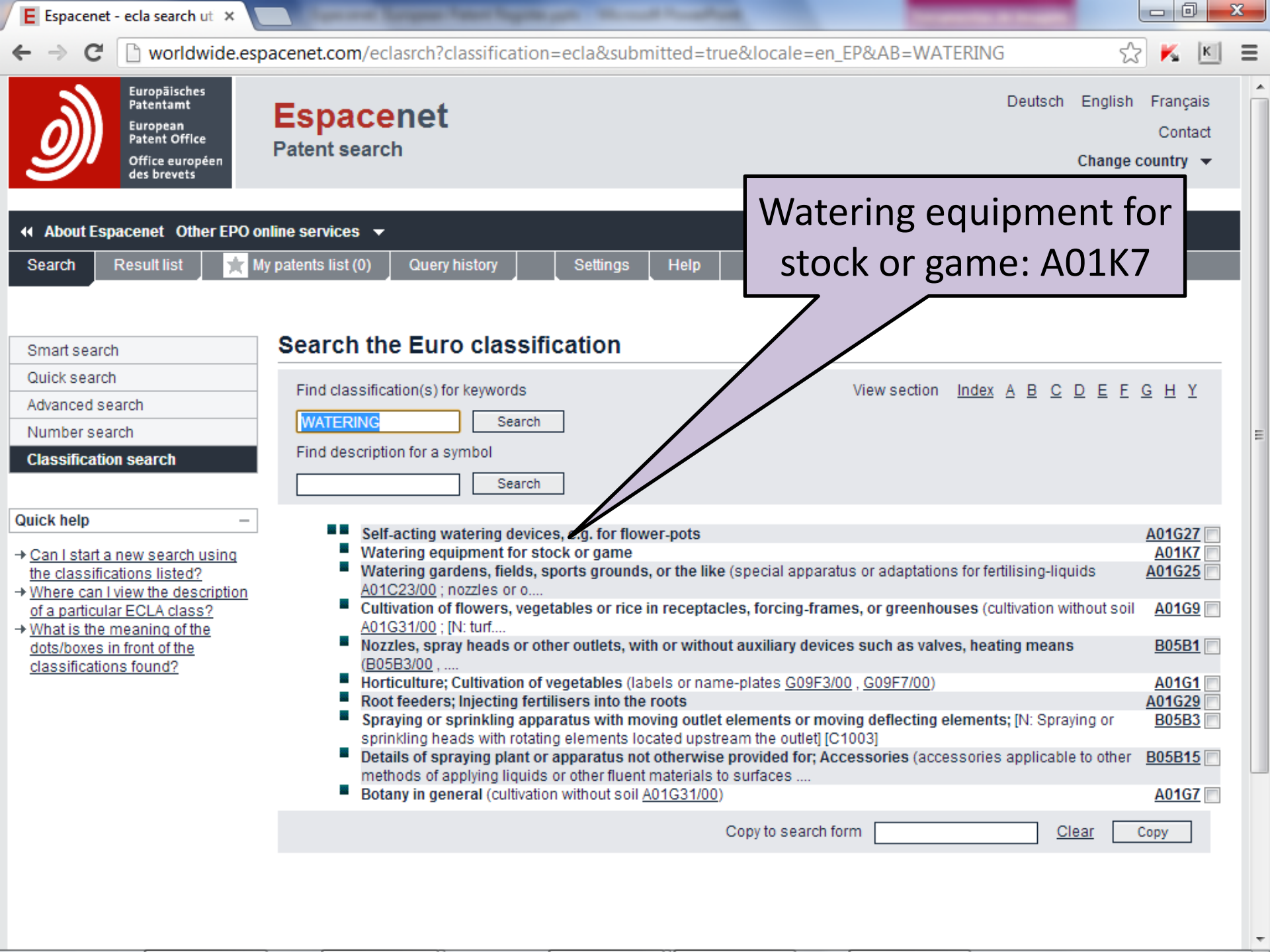
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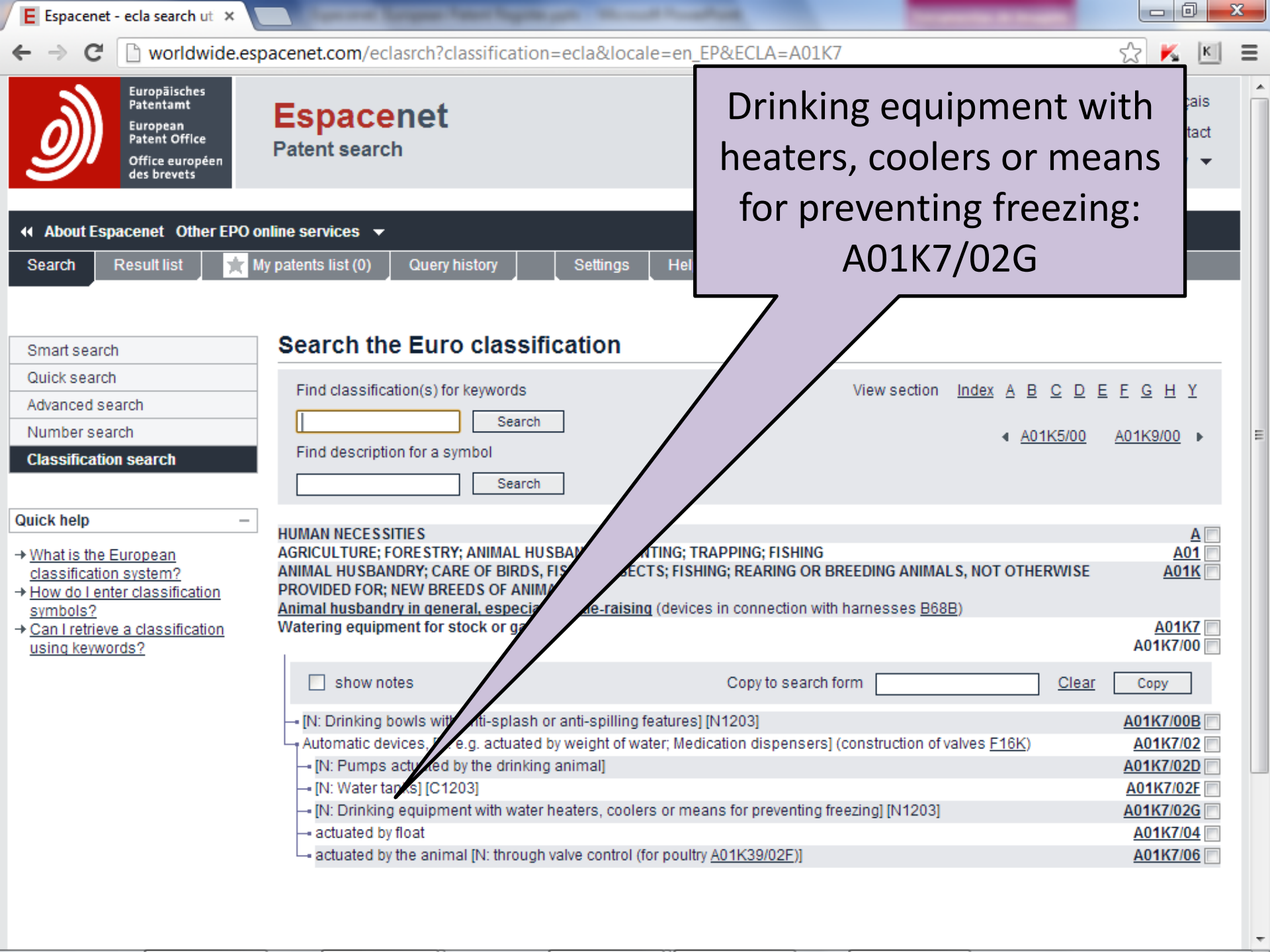
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Animal husbandry in general, especially stock-raising (devices in connection with harnesses B68B)
Watering equipment for stock or garden
A01K7
A01K7/00
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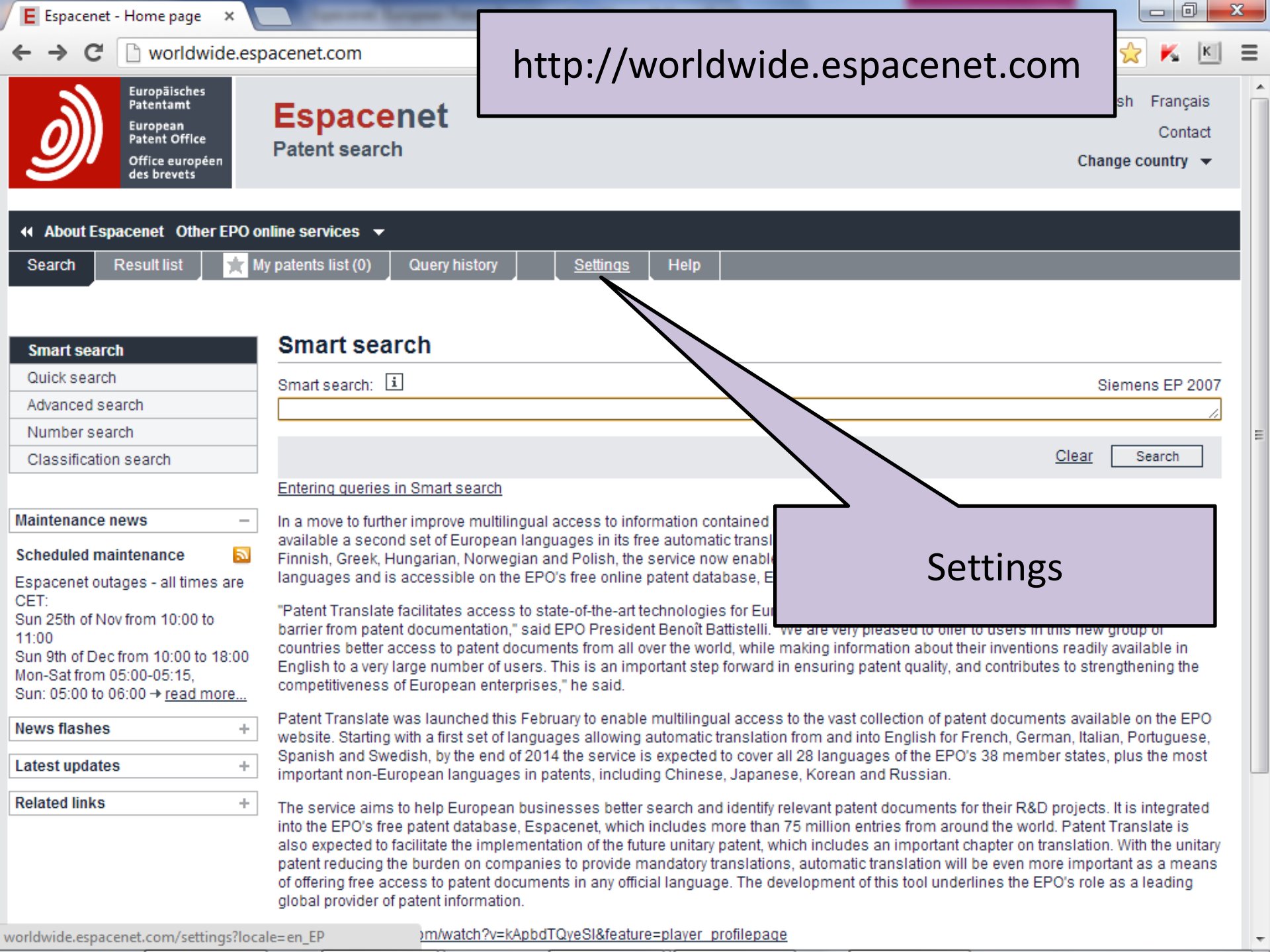
[N: Drinking bowls with anti-splash or anti-spilling features] [N1203]
A01K7/00B
Automatic devices, e.g. actuated by weight of water; Medication dispensers] (construction of valves F16K)
A01K7/02
[N: Pumps actuated by the drinking animal]
A01K7/02D
[N: Water tanks] [C1203]
A01K7/02F
[N: Drinking equipment with water heaters, coolers or means for preventing freezing] [N1203]
A01K7/02G
actuated by float
A01K7/04
actuated by the animal [N: through valve control (for poultry A01K39/02F)]
A01K7/06
Drinking equipment with heaters, coolers or means for preventing freezing: A01K7/02G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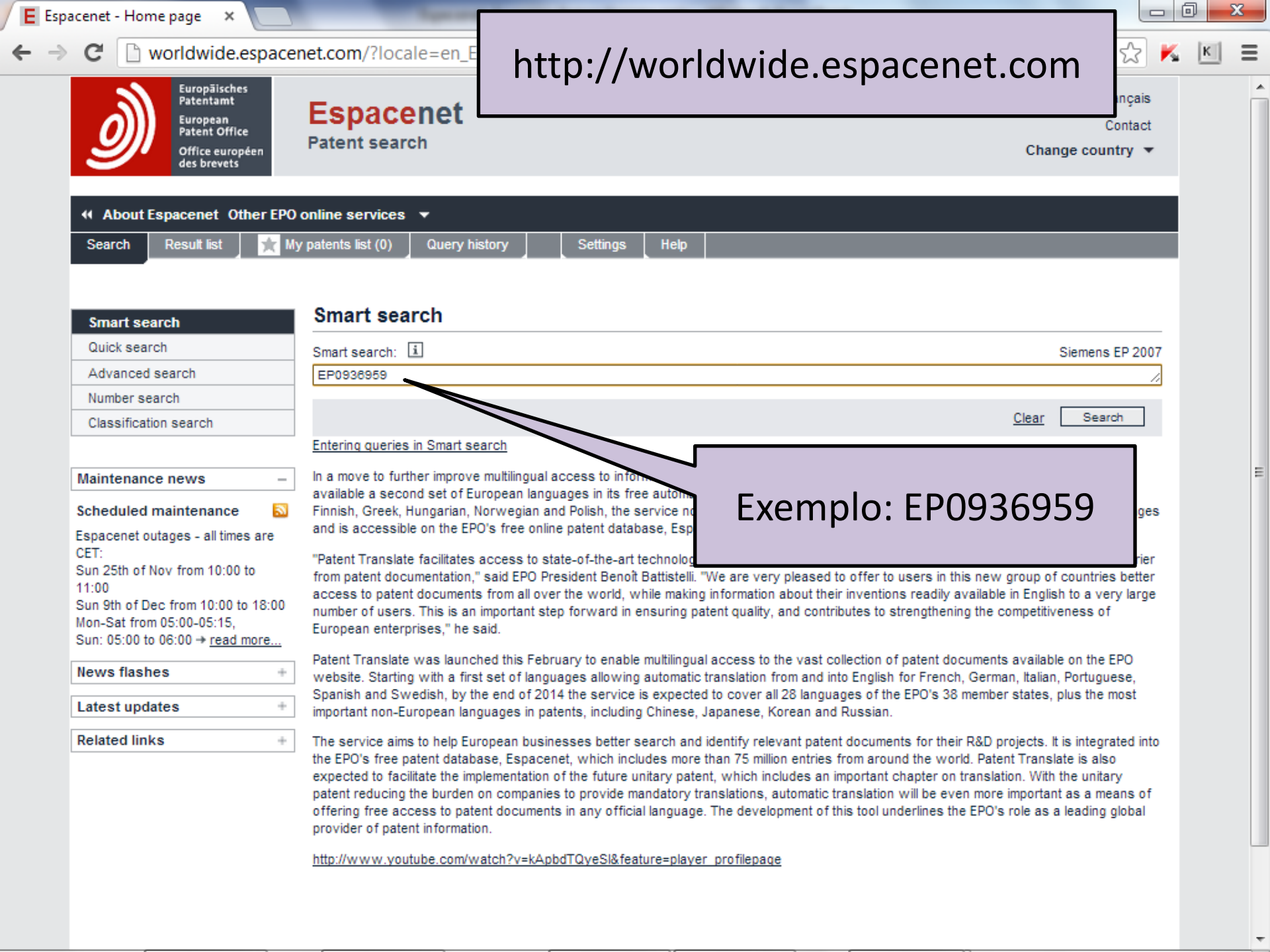
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1. MULTIPLE FUNCTION TOOL

Inventor:	Applicant:	EC:	IPC:	Publication info:	Priority date:
HARRISON MARC [US] ELSENER CARL S [CH] (+5)	VICTORINOX AG [CH]	B25F1/00B B25F1/02 B25H3/00C	B25B7/22 B25F1/00 B25F1/02 (+3)	EP 0936959 (A1) 1999-08-25 EP 0936959 (A4) 2001-11-14 EP 0936959 (B1) 2003-12-10 EP 0936959 (B3) 2008-10-15	1996-10-29

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Inventor(s): HARRISON MARC [US]; ELSENER CARL S [CH]; ELSENER EDUARD A [CH]; ROHRER ALBERT F [CH]; ROHRER WALTER X [CH]; GIARRITTA FRANCO [CH]; ROPER RIDDELL [US] +

Applicant(s): VICTORINOX AG [CH] +

Classification: - international: ***B25B7/22; B25F1/00; B25F1/02; B25F1/04; B25H3/00;*** (IPC1-7): B25B7/22

- Euro: B25F1/00B; B25F1/02; B25H3/00C

Application number: EP 19970907608 19970204

Priority number(s): WO1997US02185 19970204; US19960739707 19961029

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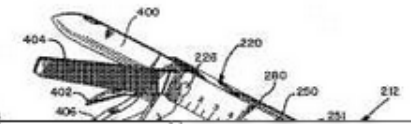

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Most recent event	23.11.2012	Request for limitation of patent allowed: despatch of communication	published on 26.12.2012 [2012/52]

Applicant(s)

For all designated states
VICTORINOX
Schmiedgasse 57
6438 Ibach / CH

[2003/30]

Inventor(s)

01 / HARRISON, Marc
568 Bristol Ferry Road
Portsmouth, RI 02871 / US

02 / ELSENER, Carl, S.
Rainweg 15
CH-6438 Ibach / CH

03 / ELSENER, Eduard, A.
Gutschweg 12
CH-6440 Brunnen / CH

04 / ROHRER, Albert, F.
Oberfeld 35
CH-6430 Schwyz / CH

05 / ROHRER, Walter, X.
Mangelegg 123
CH-6430 Schwyz / CH

06 / GIARRITTA, Franco
Baumgartenstrasse
CH-6432 Rickenbach / CH

07 / ROPER, Riddell
2nd floor, 40 Dexter Street
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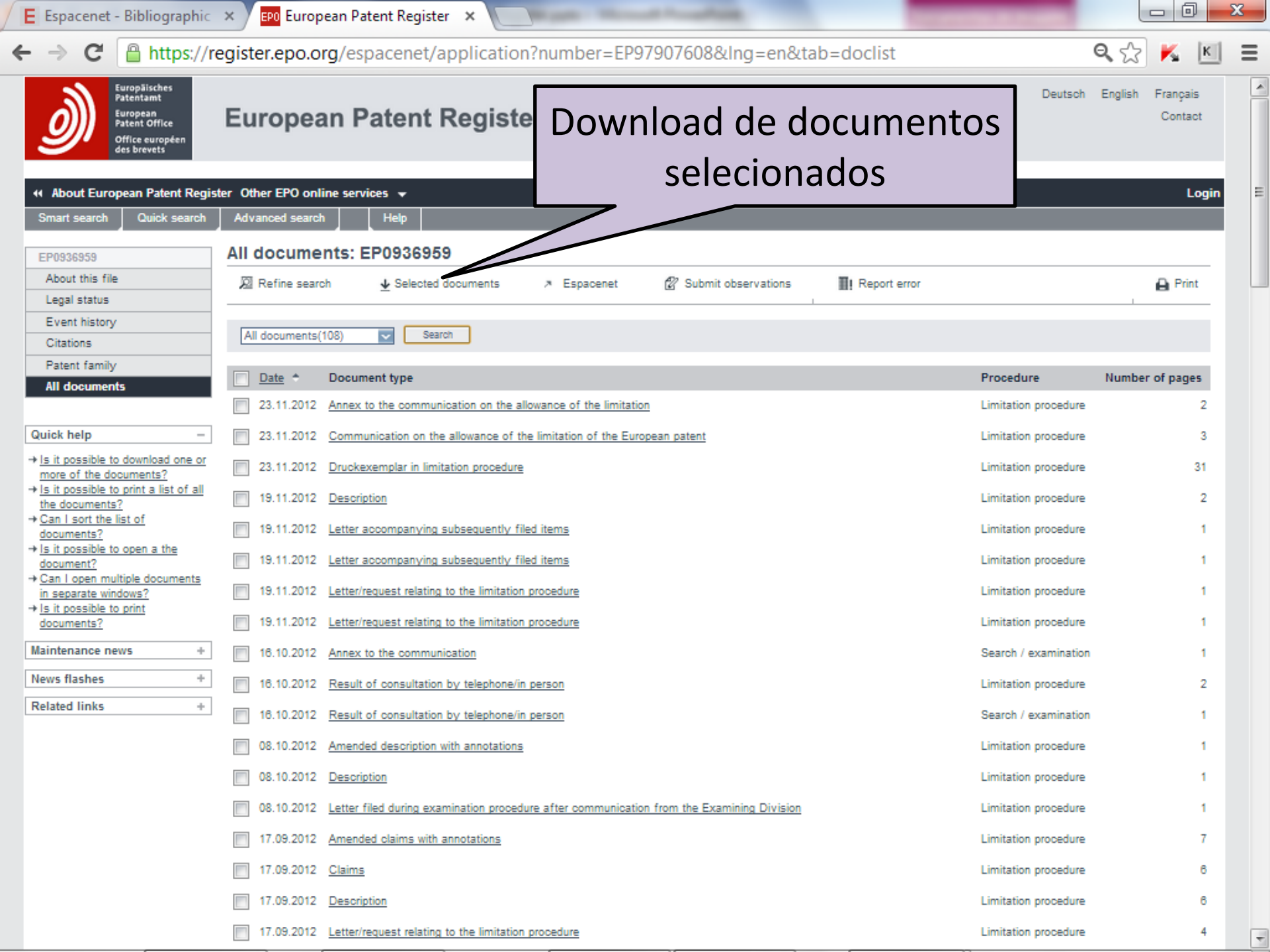
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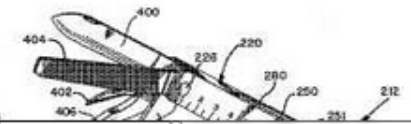

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Legal status of EP0936959 (A1) 1999-08-25; EP0936959 (A4) 2001-11-14; EP0936959 (B1) 2003-12-10; EP0936959 (B3) 2008-10-15:

EP	F	**97907608 A** (Patent of invention)
	PRS Date :	1999/08/25
	PRS Code :	AK
	Code Expl.:	+ DESIGNATED CONTRACTING STATES:
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	DESIGNATED COUNTR. :	CH DE ES FR GB IT LI
	PRS Date :	1999/08/25
	PRS Code :	17P
	Code Expl.:	+ REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION FILED
	EFFECTIVE DATE :	19990331
	PRS Date :	2001/11/14
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Inventor(s): HARRISON MARC [US]; ELSENER CARL S [CH]; ELSENER EDUARD A [CH]; ROHRER ALBERT F [CH]; ROHRER WALTER X [CH]; GIARRITTA FRANCO [CH]; ROPER RIDDELL [US] +

Applicant(s): VICTORINOX AG [CH] +

Classification: - international: ***B25B7/22; B25F1/00; B25F1/02; B25F1/04; B25H3/00;*** (IPC1-7): B25B7/22

- Euro: B25F1/00B; B25F1/02; B25H3/00C

Application number: EP19970907608 19970204

Priority number(s): WO1997US02185 19970204; US19960739707 19961029

Also published as: → EP0936959 (A4) | EP0936959 (B1) | EP0936959 (B3) | US6009582 (A) | US2001005913 (A1)
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Abstract not available for EP0936959 (A1)
Abstract of corresponding document: US6009582 (A)

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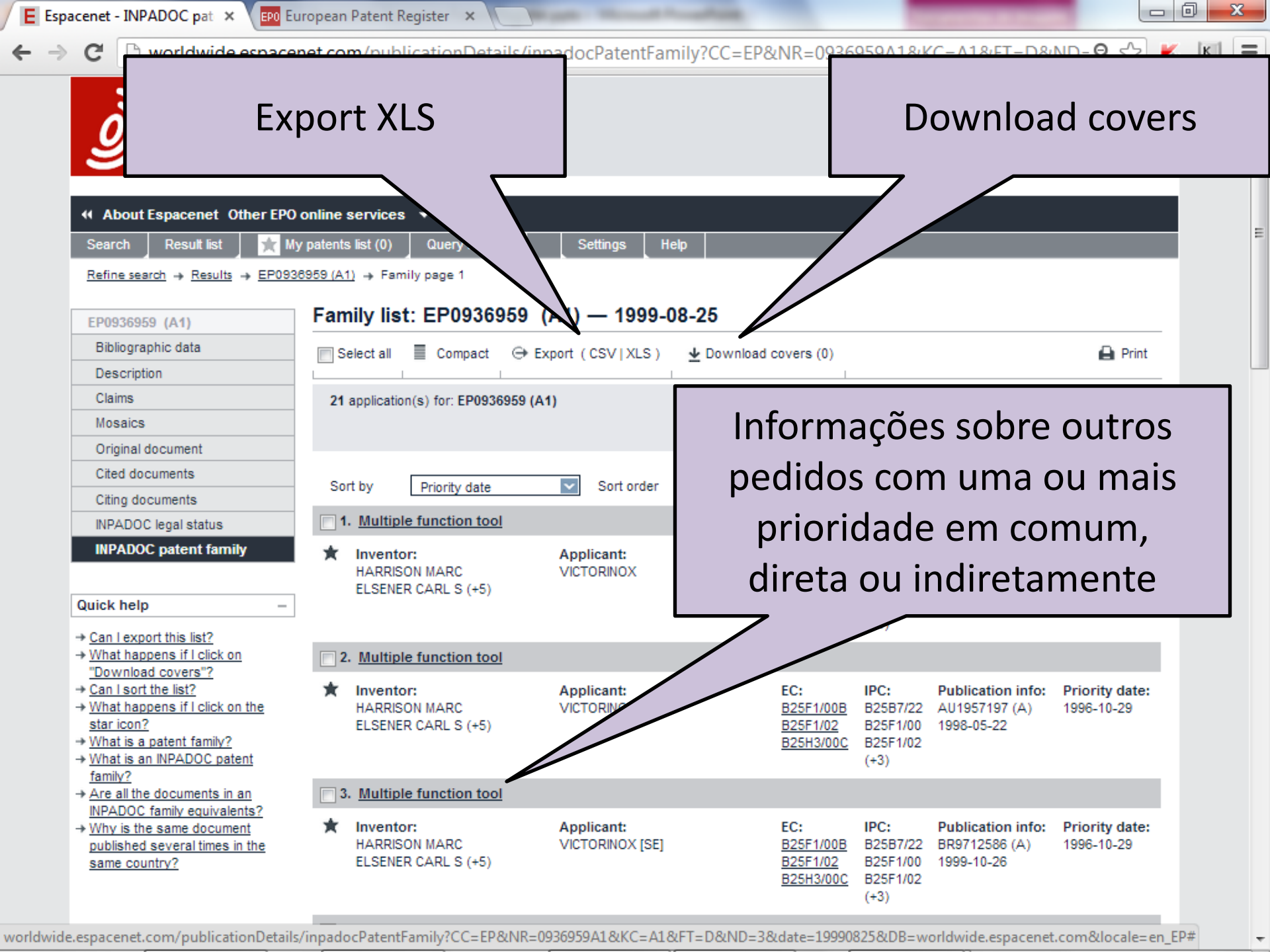

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21 application(s) for: EP0936959 (A1)

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1. Multiple function tool

Inventor: HARRISON MARC; ELSENER CARL S (+5)
Applicant: VICTORINOX

2. Multiple function tool

Inventor: HARRISON MARC; ELSENER CARL S (+5)
Applicant: VICTORINOX
EC: B25F1/00B; B25F1/02; B25H3/00C
IPC: B25B7/22; B25F1/00; B25F1/02 (+3)
Publication info: AU1957197 (A) 1998-05-22
Priority date: 1996-10-29

3. Multiple function tool

Inventor: HARRISON MARC; ELSENER CARL S (+5)
Applicant: VICTORINOX [SE]
EC: B25F1/00B; B25F1/02; B25H3/00C
IPC: B25B7/22; B25F1/00; B25F1/02 (+3)
Publication info: BR9712586 (A) 1999-10-26
Priority date: 1996-10-29

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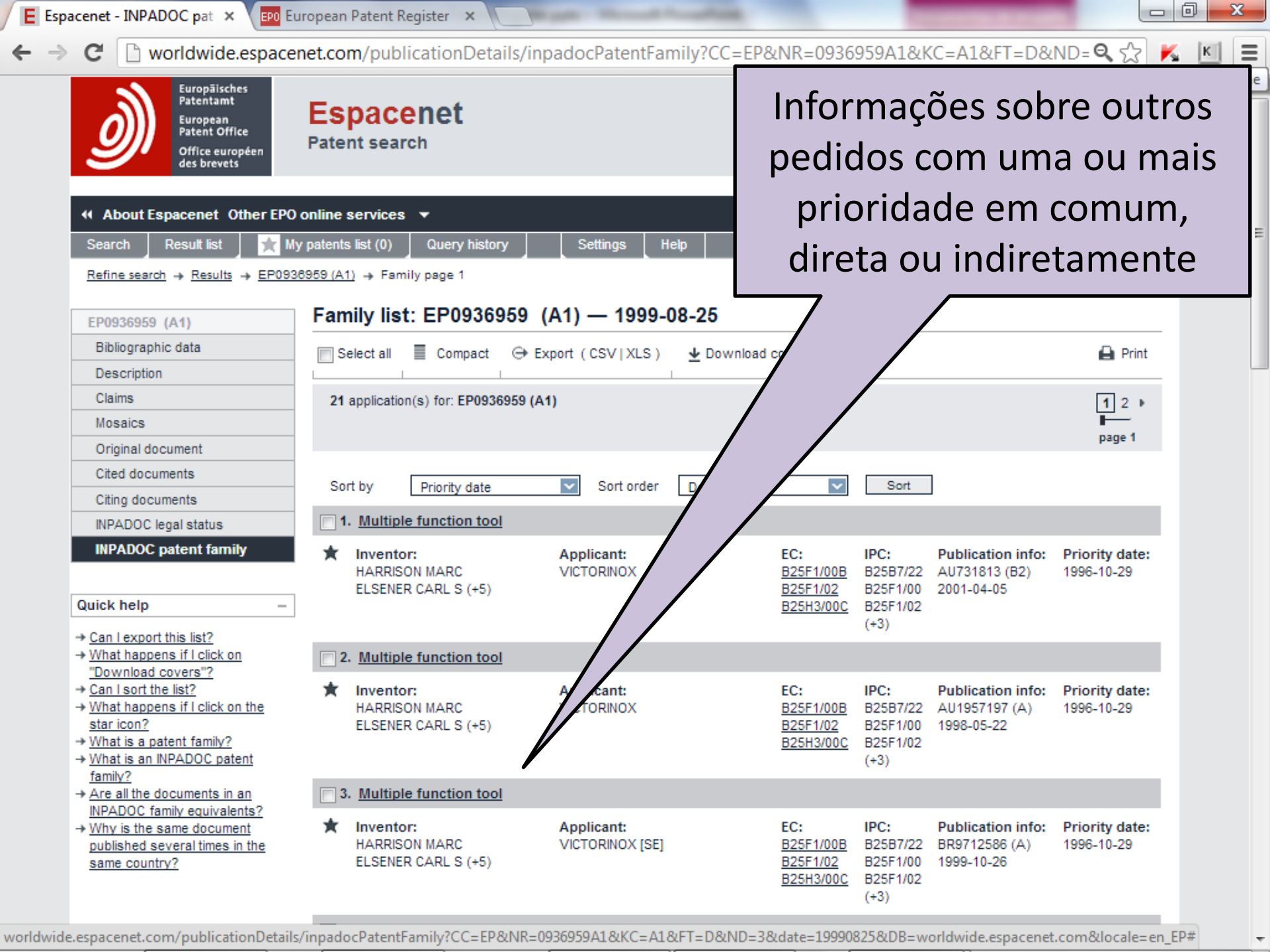

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Inventor:	Applicant:	EC:	IPC:	Publication info:	Priority date:
HARRISON MARC ELSENER CARL S (+5)	VICTORINOX	B25F1/00B B25F1/02 B25H3/00C	B25B7/22 B25F1/00 B25F1/02 (+3)	AU731813 (B2) 2001-04-05	1996-10-29

2. Multiple function tool

Inventor:	Applicant:	EC:	IPC:	Publication info:	Priority date:
HARRISON MARC ELSENER CARL S (+5)	VICTORINOX	B25F1/00B B25F1/02 B25H3/00C	B25B7/22 B25F1/00 B25F1/02 (+3)	AU1957197 (A) 1998-05-22	1996-10-29

3. Multiple function tool

Inventor:	Applicant:	EC:	IPC:	Publication info:	Priority date:
HARRISON MARC ELSENER CARL S (+5)	VICTORINOX [SE]	B25F1/00B B25F1/02 B25H3/00C	B25B7/22 B25F1/00 B25F1/02 (+3)	BR9712586 (A) 1999-10-26	1996-10-29

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Legal status of BR9712586 (A) 1999-10-26:

BR F **9712586 A** (Patent of invention)

PRS Date : 2001/11/27

PRS Code : FF

Code Expl.: + DECISION: GRANTING

PRS Date : 2002/05/14

PRS Code : FG9A

Code Expl.: + PATENT OR CERTIFICATE OF ADDITION GRANTED

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