



Institut der beim Europäischen Patentamt zugelassenen Vertreter  
Institute of Professional Representatives before the European Patent Office  
Institut des mandataires agréés près l'Office européen des brevets

**Ausschuss für Europäische Patentpraxis**  
**European Patent Practice Committee**  
**Commission pour la Pratique du Brevet Européen**

# Key information

for

European Patent Practice  
Committee (EPPC)

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## European Patent Practice Committee

This document provides guidance to the [Terms of Reference](#), the structure and the roles and functions within the European Patent Practice Committee (EPPC).

The document also reflects some relevant articles of the **epi** By-Laws relating in general to Committees.

The work of EPPC is supported by the **epi** Secretariat with its legal advisors.

## I Terms of Reference of EPPC

EPPC monitors and acts on almost anything to do with day-to-day work in prosecuting patent applications via the EPO or the PCT, national validations or UP processing and dealing with EPO oppositions and appeals. It monitors the EPC and PCT Articles and Rules, the EPO's Guidelines, the Rules of Procedure of the Boards of Appeal and the Enlarged Board, the UP Rules, referrals to the Enlarged Board and Decisions and Notices from the EPO President. EPPC has many joint Working Groups with the EPO, such as those on Rules, Guidelines, Quality, Patent Documentation and Information and e-Patent-Process, and has regular meetings with DG1 and the Boards of Appeal. EPPC responds to consultations, for instance on the Rules of Procedure, writes amicus curiae briefs for the Enlarged Board, corresponds with various parts of the EPO and attends many EPO meetings. EPPC has Technological Groups which look more closely at practice in Chemistry, Pharma, Mechanics and ICT. EPPC also has Working Groups dealing with Rules, Guidelines, Appeal Boards, UP, PCT, Quality and Documentation. EPPC often sets up Working Groups, for instance to prepare amicus briefs for referrals to the Enlarged Board. EPPC is involved in looking after users' interest in having a fair and efficient system operating in the EPO.

## II Roles and Functions within EPPC

### II.A Members

All EPPC members are required to participate in all EPPC meetings and to provide expertise on all the matters for which EPPC is responsible. EPPC does not have substitute members but does allow associate members. Anyone with an interest in the topics covered by EPPC and interested in participating in developing EPPC's position on the topics it covers are welcome to apply to the Chair of EPPC. Associate members have been instrumental, for instance, in developing amicus curiae briefs on recent referrals to the Enlarged Board. Members of the Working Groups should have expertise in the topics covered by that Working Group. Members of the Technological Groups should in particular have expertise in the prosecution of applications and dealing with granted patents in their specific technical field. All full members and associate members of the full EPPC, the Working



Groups and the Technological Groups are expected actively and constructively to engage in the work of the Committee.

Adapted from By-Laws, Art. 18B.4

Full members:

- shall actively contribute to the work of EPPC and in particular take part in EPPC meetings;
- have the right to file motions concerning subject matter relevant to EPPC;
- shall take part in votes and elections in EPPC;
- shall be eligible for election as Chair or as other Coordinator of EPPC.

Adapted from By-Laws, Art. 18B.6

Associate members of EPPC:

- shall receive the same documents as the full members;
- have the right to submit relevant proposals and remarks to EPPC. However, they shall not have the right to attend EPPC meetings even at their own cost, except if invited according to Art. 18B.3b).

In the 2026-2029 term, the EPO will be continuing its drive to make the patent granting process completely paperless. In order to do this, there will be many changes to the Rules, Guidelines and Presidential Notifications and Decisions. These will need to be carefully monitored by EPPC. The EU has in train a number of proposals relating to patents and some of these could have adverse consequences for some users of the EPC system. EPPC will have to prepare documentation on many of these EU proposals. The topic of divisional applications is still in the air and, if any proposals for changing the rules on divisional applications arise, EPPC will be required to develop a position on them. The EU also needs to produce a report on the UP (and the UPC) and this may result in developments of the UP system on which EPPC will be required to prepare recommendations. The EPO will continue its meetings under the SACEPO banner and EPPC will be required to react to topics which arise in this context. AI is becoming an important factor not only in back office matters but also in how inventions are developed and prosecuted. This could affect all aspects of EPPC's work and so will require constant monitoring.

## **II.B Committee Coordinators**

EPPC has a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary and a Communications Coordinator. Each Working Group and Technological Group has a Chair. The EPPC Chair and Vice-Chair deal with organising EPPC as a whole and one is invited to all Board and Council meetings. The Secretary is responsible



for keeping records of EPPC meetings. The Communications Coordinator liaises with the Secretariat and the Editorial Committee to ensure that matters of interest arising within EPPC and its related meetings are communicated to **epi** members and the outside world. Each Working Group or Technological Group Chair is responsible for organising its activities. The Chair of EPPC is often also an **epi** member of SACEPO.

Adapted from By-Laws Art. 18.3 and Art. 18.4.

The outgoing EPPC Chair shall organize an online meeting of EPPC to elect its Coordinators. The meeting shall take place as soon as possible after the validation of the election of EPPC by the Council during the Autumn Council meeting of the election year.

At least two weeks before said meeting the Secretariat shall issue to the elected EPPC members a call for candidates for the Coordinators of EPPC.

At said meeting, EPPC shall elect its Chair and may elect or appoint additional Coordinators, such as a Secretary and deputies, from among its members.

EPPC shall inform the Secretary General of the names of the members elected or appointed as Coordinators.

No member of the Institute shall be the Chair of EPPC for more than a total of three consecutive terms, unless at said meeting there is no candidate to become the Chair. If this is the case the outgoing Chair continues as Chair until the next meeting of Council. The outgoing Chair shall inform the Secretary General of this fact. At the next meeting of Council, the Board shall present a proposal for electing a Chair of EPPC, which may be to allow the outgoing Chair to be the Chair of EPPC for the remainder of the term of EPPC.

The latest report and presentation templates, **epi** background for videoconference meetings and PowerPoint template for presentations (**to be used while representing the Committee**), are available on the **epi** website within the [Coordinators Area](#).

## **II.B.1 Chair**

Adapted from By-Laws, Art.18.6, Art.18B.3 and Art.18.1

The Chair has the overall responsibility for EPPC and its work. Furthermore, the Chair:

- represents EPPC in the Institute;
- chairs EPPC's meetings; attends any Council meeting when invited;
- calls meetings of EPPC;
- draws up the provisional agenda for each EPPC meeting and ensures that the necessary documents are made available to all members of EPPC;



- ensures that reports of the activity of EPPC are submitted regularly to Council (at least twice a year) and to all members of the Institute (via the website and in particular **epi** Information and the annual report);
- proposes delegates from among the members of EPPC for nomination by the President to represent the Institute at meetings where questions related to EPPC's terms of reference are expected to be discussed;
- may delegate their competences in the interest of the Institute and EPPC to a member of EPPC and shall ensure that such a delegation is in place in the event of being unable to carry out their duties.

Further the Chair shall:

- decide on the number of associate members within EPPC. They shall inform the Secretary General of their decision;
- invite associates or third parties to meetings of EPPC, its Technological Groups and its Working Groups, without the invitee having a vote. In this case, the Chair shall contact the Treasurer and seek reimbursement of expenses when they deem it necessary to ensure the attendance of associates or third parties which they believe are useful for the work of EPPC;
- ensure that the proposals and remarks submitted by the associate members are taken into account by EPPC;

Additionally, the Chair provides the Treasurer with the following information:

- the estimated number of meetings in the next accounting year;
- the date, duration and place of intended meetings;
- the names of the meeting attendees and the duration of their attendance at the meetings.

## **II.B.2 Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair supports the Chair in their tasks and steps in for the Chair when needed or when the latter is unavailable.

## **II.B.3 Secretary**

The Secretary supports the Chair and the Vice-Chair. Further, the Secretary prepares meeting agendas in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Secretary is also responsible for

- taking minutes, recording action and decision items of meetings, and
- managing EPPC internal communications and scheduling.



#### **II.B.4 Chair of the Technological Group / Working Group**

The Chair of each the Technological Group or Working Group has the overall responsibility for it and its work. Furthermore, the Chair:

- coordinates the work of the Technological Group / Working Group, organizes and chairs its meetings and prepares agendas,
- coordinates with the Chair of EPPC the work of the Technological Group / Working Group and preparation of any papers or reports.

For the information to be provided to the Treasurer see above II.B.1

#### **II.B.5 Communication Coordinator**

The Communication Coordinator liaises for communication purposes with the **epi** Secretariat and the Editorial Committee. Responsibilities include (but are not limited to) receiving reminders from **epi** Secretariat and coordinating EPPC's contribution to the Newsflash and the bi-weekly **epi** Newsletter, especially when significant topics related to EPPC's work need to be promptly and efficiently communicated to **epi** members.

Additionally, the Coordinator oversees the preparation and delivery to the **epi** Secretariat of reports for the quarterly **epi** Information and annual contribution to the **epi** Annual Report, which provides a yearly overview of EPPC's activities.

While content creation is not the direct responsibility of the Communication Coordinator, they are required to coordinate submissions and ensure that all contributions are approved by EPPC's Chair.

Furthermore, the Communication Coordinator is tasked to actively raise the awareness of EPPC's work via channels available on the various platforms, e.g. the bi-weekly **epi** Podcast, **epi** Newsletter or **epi** Information. The publication of content provided by the Communication Coordinators is managed by the members of the **epi** Secretariat.

#### **II.B.6. Annual overview of the Committee's communication activities**

An up-to-date overview of Committee-relevant deadlines for communication and information purposes is available on the [epi website](#).

### **II.C Technological Groups and Working Groups**

EPPC organises itself and has set up Technological Groups and Working Groups.

The Technological Groups and Working Groups are established to facilitate the work of the main EPPC.



The Technological Groups and Working Groups support EPPC by helping to deliver the work required on specific topics under the Terms of Reference.

The Technological Groups and Working Groups will be set up and given a remit, tasks, objectives and deliverables based on those given to the Technological Groups and Working Groups under the EPPC in the 2023-2026 term. When setting up a meeting or communicating with its members, the Chairs of the Technological Groups and Working Groups liaise with the **epi** Committees Support.

The members of each Working Group shall be elected by the members of EPPC.

Each Working Group shall elect its Chair and may elect or appoint additional Coordinators, such as a Secretary and deputies, from among its members.

Each Working Group shall inform the Secretary General of the names of the members elected or appointed as Coordinators. Each Working Group shall organise itself.

(By-Laws, Art. 18.3 f) and g))

### **II.C.1 Working Group on Rules**

The Rules Working Group deals with any proposed changes to the EPC Rules, the decisions and notices of the President of the EPO and any ancillary provisions, mainly through the workings of the SACEPO Working Party on Rules.

### **II.C.2. Working Group on Guidelines**

The Guidelines Working Group deals with the annual revision of the EPO's Guidelines. This involves studying in detail the proposed amendments to the Guidelines, discussing these in Committee, preparing comments on the proposed Guidelines, further discussing the proposed Guidelines at the SACEPO Working Party on Guidelines and following up on all these meetings.

### **II.C.3 Working Group on Members of SACEPO and Appeal Boards**

The Appeal Board Working Group monitors the decisions and practices of the Boards of Appeal and the Enlarged Board of Appeal at the EPO and provides input where necessary. There is usually one meeting a year with the President of the Boards of Appeal, the senior Chairs of the Boards and the President's advisers, at which any topics of concern are discussed.

### **II.C.4 Working Group on PCT**

The PCT Working Group monitors any developments in the PCT and associated rules and Guidelines which affect daily practice or can influence daily practice at the EPO. Members of the Working Group attend, as appropriate, meetings with WIPO.



### **II.C.5 Working Group on UP**

The UP Working Group monitors any developments in the UP regime and associated rules and Guidelines which affect daily practice. Members of the Working Group attend, as appropriate, meetings of the Select Committee which governs the operation of the UP.

### **II.C.6 Working Group on Quality**

The Quality Working Group monitors all the efforts of the EPO to monitor and improve the quality of the patent granting process and studies in detail the many reports on quality issued by the EPO. The Working Group also is involved with the EPO's SQAP process and attends meetings of the EPO's SACEPO Working Party on Quality.

### **II.C.7 Working Group on Patent Documentation and Information**

All of patent prosecution is based on documents and information and this Working Group monitors all the work the EPO and others are doing in order to ensure that the EPO's documentation is in good order and easily accessible for searching for any purpose. The Working Group attends meeting of the SACEPO Working Party on PDI.

### **II.C.8 Ad-hoc Working Groups on Position Papers**

Dependent on the need, Working Group are formed primarily with members of the EPPC, but occasionally also with the support of members from other committees, to draft position papers.

### **II.C.9 Technological Group on Pharma**

The Technological Group on Pharma concentrates on matters of EPO prosecution as it relates to inventions in the pharmaceutical field. Its work overlaps with that of the Biotech Committee. Topics of particular interest at the moment include clinical trials as prior art and divisionals.

### **II.C.10 Technological Group on Chemistry**

The Technological Group on Chemistry concentrates on matters of EPO prosecution as it relates to inventions in the many fields covered by chemistry from alloys to plastics. Topics of particular interest at the moment include selection inventions and oppositions.

### **II.C.11 Technological Group on Mechanics**

The Technological Group on Mechanics concentrates on matters of EPO prosecution as it relates to inventions in the many fields covered by mechanics, from wheelbarrows to nuclear power plants. Topics of particular interest at the moment include intermediate generalisations.

### **II.C.12 Technological Group on ICT**

The Technological Group on ICT concentrates on matters of EPO prosecution as it relates to inventions in the ICT field, although this now overlaps with many other fields where computer control



becomes more and more common. Topics of particular interest at the moment include AI inventions, exclusions from patentability and inventive step.

## II.D Meetings

EPPC normally has one in-person meeting per year (as foreseen in the budget). Recently, this has been combined with a meeting of the Biotech Committee so that matters of common interest can be discussed only once. In addition to the in-person meeting, EPPC arranges one or more virtual meetings depending on the needs. There is usually at least one hybrid meeting a year with DG1 (EPO) and one with the Boards of Appeal (EPO). Meetings of the Technological Groups and Working Groups are arranged virtually, in hybrid format or as face-to-face meetings, depending on the subject matter of the meeting. Particularly important meetings are the meetings of the Guidelines Working Group.

Full members have the right to participate at in-person meetings with costs reimbursed as outlined in **epi** Guidelines for Reimbursement.

As mentioned above, associate members do not have the right to attend meetings, even at their own costs, except if invited by the Chair.

Further detailed information on reimbursement may be found in **epi** Guidelines for Reimbursement available in the Council Decisions (CoD) 5.4.1 and 5.4.3. In case of questions or doubts please contact **epi** Secretariat prior incurring the expenses.

## II.E Legal advisors

The Legal Advisors at the **epi** Secretariat (contact: [legaladvisor@patentepi.org](mailto:legaladvisor@patentepi.org)) provide legal advice to EPPC, conduct legal research on matters related to EPPC's remit and inform EPPC of relevant developments in patent law and related regulations as appropriate. In addition, Legal Advisors support EPPC by ensuring legal consistency and coherence of draft documents, reports and proposals, and by identifying potential legal implications arising from EPPC's activities.

Legal Advisors may also provide assistance in the preparation of reports and other written outputs, such as position papers and amicus curiae briefs, including by advising on structure, legal references and alignment with existing **epi** positions, but do not influence substantive decisions or views.

## II.F Committees Support

The **epi** Committees Support ([committees-support@patentepi.org](mailto:committees-support@patentepi.org)) provides comprehensive administrative assistance to EPPC.

The **epi** Committees Support takes care of meeting organisation (e.g. doodle polls, invitations, registration, accommodation, reimbursement forms, Zoom-meetings, support during meetings, etc.).

Communications, including email distribution to external recipients, are conducted through the Committees Support in accordance with the applicable data protection policies.



**epi** Committees Support also sets up and administrates any **epi** website Forum channels both within EPPC and across committees in case cross committee cooperation is desired.

Important information for Committee members, is available on the [welcome page](#) which summarises helpful information about features and benefits of the Institute and provides guidance how to use the tools on **epi** website.

To facilitate the work of the Committees Support, EPPC members are strongly encouraged that deadlines be maintained, e.g. including registration for meetings, submission of claims for reimbursement after meetings, and follow-up on actions assigned to the members. **Cooperation and timely information are highly appreciated.**

The Committee Support team remains available to provide further assistance upon request.

### III Nomination and Elections

Any **epi** member can nominate themselves to be elected for other Committees under the conditions outlined in the Rules for Committee elections (CoD 3.3.4) and respective Terms of Reference.

Election of EPPC according to Art. 18B By-Laws at the end of the term of EPPC (General Committee elections) is carried out by an internet-based election procedure and is subject to validation by the Council at the autumn Council meeting of each election year.

Nominations for General elections and By-elections are also carried out by an internet-based nomination procedure via the **epi** website.

Further information concerning the nomination and elections can be found in the Collection of Decision. (CoD 3.3.4).

The **epi** Council elects the members of EPPC and the members of the corresponding four Technological Groups for a three-year term.

By-elections for vacant seats are conducted at the next available Council meeting during a running term. The nomination phase is open at the latest six weeks before the Council meeting.

### IV Cooperation with other epi Committees

EPPC coordinates with the Biotechnology Committee for matters relating to general prosecution and opposition, with Litigation Committee regarding the UP and the effect of the UPC and Online Communications Committee in relation to the overlap between digital systems for working with the EPO and rule changes and associated documents to the same effect.



## V epi online appearance

The [epi website](#) contains a wealth of relevant information as well as useful features for collaboration and communication with the membership and the various bodies of the Institute.

As a member of our organisation – the Institute of Professional Representatives before the European Patent Office, **epi** offers you many advantages.

A summary of helpful features can be found on the [welcome guide](#) website.

The [forum](#) on the **epi** website offers the possibility to communicate in a restricted area for the **epi** members.

Individual channels for specific groups (within EPPC) can be created upon request of the Chair. Members of assigned channels get automatic notifications which guarantee smooth communication. An overview of all current subscriptions can be found under [My Account](#) after login. These notifications can be deactivated at any time.

This section shows in addition all personal information such as the member data as stored in our system, the overview of all events in which the member has taken part and all invoices for the annual subscription which have been issued to the member.

The [library](#) provides a range of documents relevant to the respective committee, which can only be accessed via the website in accordance with the assigned access rights.

In addition, members can send [private messages](#) via the **epi** website after login to contact other **epi** members directly by using the name search feature without knowing their personal contact details such as email addresses or phone numbers.

**epi** publishes a quarterly journal "[epi Information](#)". Its primary objective is to inform members of **epi**'s current activities. Reports of Council meetings and major reports from Committees are included. In addition, the journal encourages members to use its pages for an exchange of information and professional experience. The electronic version of the journal is available in a designated section of the website. In addition to the online version, a pdf version for download is available.

The [epi learning platform](#) provides **epi** members and **epi** Students with access to online training courses, educational resources, and selected materials from **epi** events.

In case you have any questions or need support please do not hesitate to contact **epi** Secretariat via [info@patentepi.org](mailto:info@patentepi.org) we will be happy to help you.

## VII Commitment to confidentiality and data protection

In the performance of their duties during their term of office, a Committee member shall not process personal data in an unauthorised or unlawful manner, nor intentionally or unintentionally breach the



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security of processing in a way that results in the destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or unauthorised access to, such data.

A Committee member shall take all necessary care to protect personal data within the scope of the tasks assigned.