



Institut der beim Europäischen Patentamt zugelassenen Vertreter  
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Mr António Campinos  
President  
European Patent Office  
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(by email to [president@epo.org](mailto:president@epo.org))

24 March 2020

Dear Mr Campinos,

Concerns: the 2020 European Qualifying Examination (EQE)

The Supervisory Board took the decision to cancel the 2020 EQE as planned on 16 to 19 March. Indeed, the decision of the EPO and of numerous firms to prohibit any duty travel had already shown that organising the EQE would have been impossible for many reasons. The later developments have confirmed that taking this decision was entirely justified.

Although scientific evidence is still lacking that the epidemic will be seasonal, everyone hopes that it will be, and that the 2020 EQE will be postponed and not just cancelled. Our Institute realises that no firm plans can be made until it is sufficiently certain that the epidemic will be under control, and trusts that every possible option is being explored.

However, in order to organise a postponed 2020 EQE, the normal resources will not be sufficient, and the purpose of our letter is to request your support so that every possible resource available in the EPO can be used to make this possible. We have in mind the finding of suitable locations at suitable dates, the registration of candidates, the invigilation, and above all the marking process.

The ideal situation would be one where the postponed 2020 EQE is organised in such a way that the results are available by end October 2020, in time for the candidates to catch up with the normal timeline. Candidates who failed one or more papers of the main EQE could still register for the 2021 EQE and follow the special trainings for re-sitters. We trust that the Supervisory Board will take all necessary decisions to implement exceptions in order to make that happen. Exceptions one might consider encompass abbreviated registration periods for re-sitters. Another possible exception is to skip the pre-examination. In view of Article 11(7) REE, it would not be necessary to organise a pre-examination, but if one is organised, the candidates who passed the pre-examination would still have time to register for the 2021 EQE and follow the usual trainings.

We realise that carrying out a postponed EQE in the autumn 2020 with shortened timelines for the marking process would require extra work, in particular from the Examination Committees and from the EQE Secretariat, and from additional resources. At the same time, the EQE 2021 should be prepared in parallel and should not be put at risk. We understand that it will be difficult for the EPO to free up extra resources, due to all the work time lost by the epidemic. Also **epi** faces difficulties,

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but we will do our best to meet the increased needs, although we understand that availability of additional marking capacity among our members may be limited when the time line is shifted. But despite the difficult situation we hope that both EPO and **epi** together will strive towards making a postponed EQE possible.

We trust we can count on your personal support to ensure that the 2020 EQE can be successfully postponed and we would offer to discuss between EPO and **epi** how to make best use of each organisation's resources to minimize the impact of the unfortunate COVID19 situation on the EQE and its candidates.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Francis Leyder  
President