

I. General information

These notes explain how to complete EPO Form 1004, which is available on the EPO website (epo.org).

The use of this form is recommended for issuing a general authorisation for representatives before the EPO: **professional representatives and legal practitioners** under Article 134(1) and (8) EPC, employees under Article 133(3), first sentence, EPC and **associations of representatives** under Rule 152(11) EPC.

If the person authorised (hereinafter: “**authorisee**”) is an employee who is not a professional representative or a legal practitioner, the party giving the authorisation (hereinafter: “**authoriser**”) must declare that the authorisee is their employee either on the general authorisation form itself (in the authorisee field) or in a covering letter. As to the case referred to in Article 133(3), second sentence, EPC, no implementing regulation has been adopted as yet.

Obligation to file an authorisation

Professional representatives and legal practitioners under Article 134(8) EPC and associations of representatives are required to file a signed authorisation only in the exceptional cases specified under Rule 152(1) EPC in conjunction with Article 1 of each of the decisions of the President of the EPO dated 7 July 2025 on the signing and filing of authorisations (OJ EPO 2025, A45 and A46 respectively).

By contrast, employees under Article 133(3), first sentence, EPC who are neither professional representatives nor legal practitioners must always file a signed authorisation or refer to the registration number of a registered general authorisation (Rule 152(1) EPC in conjunction with Article 2 of each of the above-mentioned decisions of the President of the EPO (OJ EPO 2025, A45 and A46)) when performing procedural acts in proceedings before the EPO.

Termination of authorisation

A general authorisation of one or more authorisees terminates as soon as the authoriser or the authorisee concerned – but not any other authorisee – has communicated the termination of its authorisation to the EPO. The communication must be clear and unambiguous. It is not sufficient to file a new authorisation which omits the names of the authorisees concerned (Rule 152(7) and (8) EPC).

An authorisation does not terminate vis-à-vis the EPO upon the death of an authoriser unless expressly provided otherwise (Rule 152(9) EPC).

Appointment vs authorisation

Please note that filing a general authorisation is distinct from appointing a representative vis-à-vis the EPO for a specific case and therefore does not automatically imply the appointment of the authorised representative. Please therefore always provide an explicit appointment in addition to filing a general authorisation.

In proceedings before the EPO, all decisions, summonses and communications are sent to the appointed representative (Rule 130 EPC). If an employee (under Article 133(3), first sentence, EPC) is authorised, these documents are sent to the party.

From 1 December 2025: registration of general authorisations for employees only

As from 1 December 2025, the EPO only registers general authorisations for employees. While parties may still submit a general authorisation (using EPO Form 1004, for example) to authorise professional representatives, legal practitioners and associations of representatives in proceedings before the EPO, the EPO will only attribute citable registration numbers to general authorisations for employees – see notice from the EPO dated 7 July 2025 concerning the registration of general authorisations and related new MyEPO features (OJ EPO 2025, A47).

II. Filling in the form

The numbering below corresponds to the sections of EPO Form 1004 “General Authorisation”.

1. Authoriser

Enter here the name and address of the **authoriser** and the state in which their residence or principal place of business is located, in the way specified in Rule 41(2)(c) EPC:

“Names of natural persons shall be indicated by the person’s family name, followed by their given names. Names of legal persons, as well as of bodies equivalent to legal persons under the law governing them, shall be indicated by their official designations. Addresses shall be indicated in accordance with applicable customary

requirements for prompt postal delivery and shall comprise all the relevant administrative units, including the house number, if any.”

Multiple authorisers

Where the authorisation is given by more than one party, the details for the additional authorisers must be indicated on a separate sheet. If there are several authorisers, a general authorisation can also be used where only one or some of them are to be represented. If one of several authorisers cancels a general authorisation, it remains valid for the others.

2. Authorisee(s)

Enter here the authorisee’s name and the address of their place of business in the same way as specified in note 1, and indicate the type of representative (professional representative, legal practitioner, employee, association of representatives).

If an association of representatives within the meaning of Rule 152(11) EPC is authorised, the name and the registration number of the association must be given.

Multiple authorisees

Enter the details (name, address, type of representative) for each additional authorisee on a separate sheet.

3. Scope of authorisation (PCT, UP, receipt of payment, sub-authorisation)

A general authorisation may cover more than one application or patent. It also entitles a representative to perform all procedural acts on behalf of the authoriser(s).

However, the powers mentioned separately on the form (to act in PCT proceedings, to act in proceedings relating to European patents with unitary effect, to receive payments and to issue a sub-authorisation) must be expressly granted by selecting the appropriate checkboxes. Acts other than those mentioned above cannot be excluded from a general authorisation. EPO Form 1004 can also be used to issue a general sub-authorisation. For authorisations to act in Unitary Patent (UP) proceedings only, use EPO Form 7004 instead.

The EPC provisions governing representation apply *mutatis mutandis* to any proceedings relating to European patents with unitary effect (Rule 20(1) and (2) (I) of the Rules relating to Unitary Patent Protection).

The EPC provisions on authorisations also apply to any sub-authorisation (Article 133(3), first sentence, and Rule 152 EPC), be it (a) a specific sub-authorisation (Rule 152(2), second sentence, EPC) or (b) a general sub-authorisation (Rule 152(4) EPC). EPO Form 1004 can also be used to issue a general sub-authorisation.

4. Signatures and entitlement of the authorisers

Authorisations may be authenticated by a handwritten signature, a facsimile signature, a text string signature or a digital signature under the conditions specified by the EPO – see Article 3 of the above-mentioned decisions of the President of the EPO (OJ EPO 2025, A45 and 46) and the notice from the EPO dated 7 July 2025 concerning the registration of general authorisations and related new MyEPO features (OJ EPO 2025, A47).

With their signature, the signatory confirms their authority to sign pursuant to national law, by a legal person’s articles of association or equivalent or by a special mandate. In all cases, an indication is to be given of the signatory’s position within the entity entitling them to sign (e.g. president, director, Geschäftsführer). It lies within the responsibility of the authoriser to ensure that the signatory is duly entitled to sign the authorisation according to the national law applicable. The EPO reserves the right to request documentary proof of the signatory’s authority to sign if the circumstances of a particular case necessitate this. An authorisation bearing the signature of a person not entitled to sign will be treated as an unsigned authorisation.

III. Information on registration of general authorisations – only for employees under Article 133(3) EPC

A general authorisation may be used to authorise all types of representatives entitled to act in proceedings before the EPO. However, as from 1 December 2025, only employees who are neither professional representatives nor legal practitioners may utilise the registration number of a general authorisation and the EPO will attribute new citable registration numbers to general authorisations only for such employees. In proceedings before the EPO, the employee may then refer to the registration number of the general authorisation instead of filing an authorisation.

Sub-authorisation may also be given. Where this derives from a registered general authorisation, it will be registered under the same number.

Since no communication regarding registration of the general authorisation is added to the files relating to the application for which the authorisee is or is to be appointed as representative, it is not permissible to revoke earlier specific authorisations in a general authorisation.

If a general authorisation is intended to supersede an earlier general authorisation, the number of the earlier one must be stated.

General authorisations authorising employees for all proceedings conducted before the EPO (i.e. EPC, PCT and UP proceedings) can be registered through MyEPO (see the MyEPO feature guide for details). Alternatively, or if it covers only certain proceedings, the general authorisation can be registered using EPO Form 1004, which should be sent to EPO customer services (epo.org/en/contact-us).

Disclaimer: Please note that any change or addition made to the standard text of EPO Form 1004 has no legal consequence before the EPO.