MyEPO
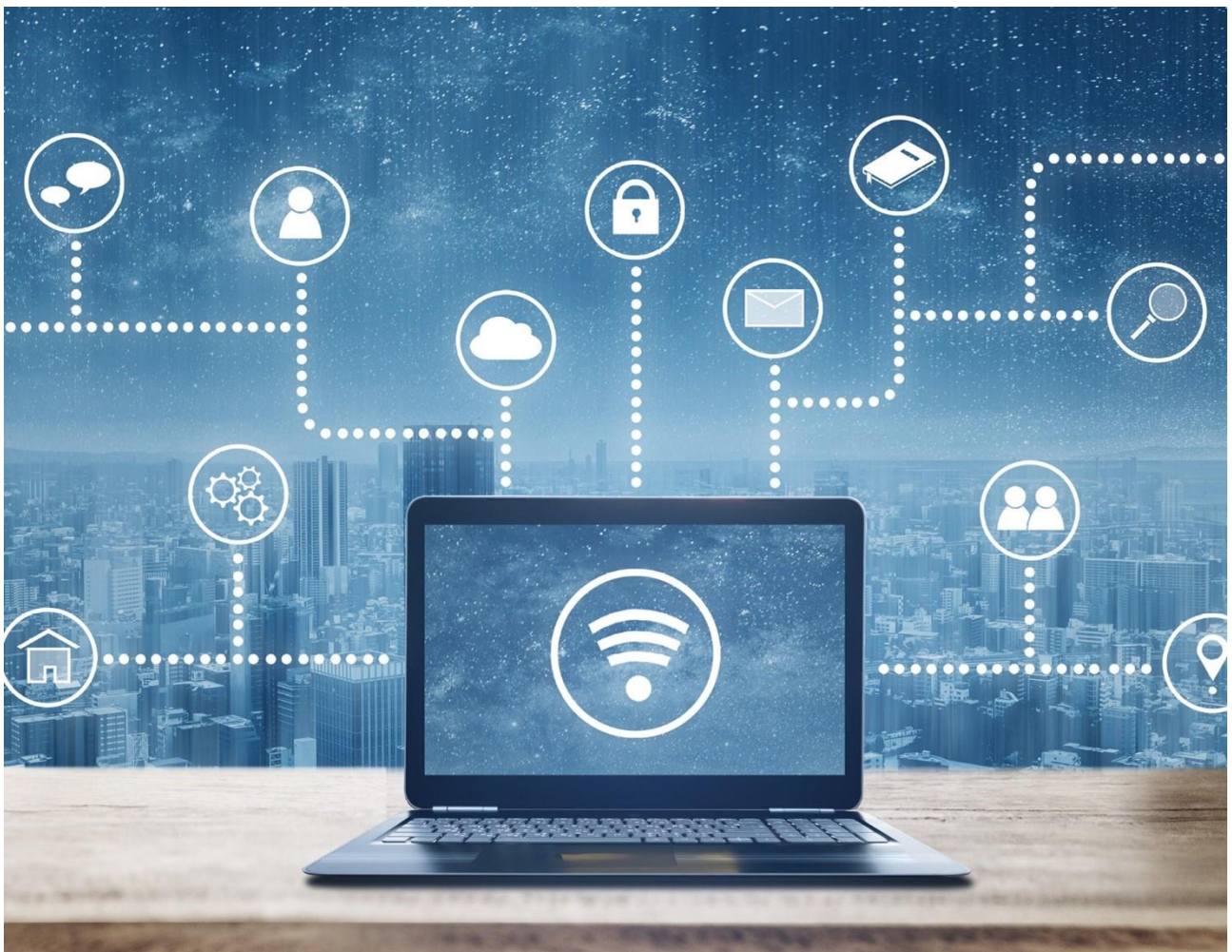
Feature guide: electronic priority documents

Last update: February 2025

Content

1.   Introduction

Priority documents are copies of patent applications that establish the earliest possible filing date for an invention.

The European Patent Office (EPO) offers digitally certified electronic priority documents, which can be requested online in MyEPO by the applicant/proprietor or their representative.

This feature guide describes how to request them electronically from the EPO and their format, as well as information for recipients (including offices of second filing) about checking authenticity and integrity. Updates will reflect any future changes to technical specifications or procedures.

To guide you further, we have also published some "frequently asked questions" (FAQs), and you can always contact us at epo.org/support or your key account manager if you still aren't sure about something.

For more information on electronic priority documents, see the decision of the President of the EPO dated 16 January 2025 concerning the issuing of electronic priority documents (OJ EPO 2025, A3), the accompanying notice (OJ EPO 2025, A7) and the technical specifications (OJ EPO 2025, A8).

For further information on priority and priority documents, please see the EPC Guidelines A-III, 6 and F-VI, and the European Patent Guide (see points 4.1.017 ff).

2.   Requesting an electronic priority document from the EPO

Who can request an electronic priority document

Priority documents can only be requested for EP applications or PCT applications filed with the EPO as the Receiving Office.

These documents are issued only to the applicant, proprietor or their representative. Users of MyEPO services can request an electronic document if the application forms part of a portfolio that belongs to their MyEPO company and if they have permission from their company administrator to access that portfolio.

If their MyEPO company doesn't own the portfolio that contains the application, the user will only have the option to request a paper copy and indicate who authorised them to request it.

A **digitally certified electronic** priority document can be requested only if the Mailbox for the portfolio is active in MyEPO. A **paper** priority document can be requested instead if the Mailbox isn't active or if you need it in paper form.

For guidance on becoming a user of MyEPO services, please see the Getting access page on the EPO website.

For instructions on granting user access and activating the Mailbox, refer to the MyEPO feature guides on managing user access in MyEPO and handling Mailbox communications.

How to request an electronic priority document

Sign in to MyEPO and go to the **Applications and patents** section.

Select the relevant application, then select the **Actions** drop-down menu at the top to find the **Request certified copies** option.

Alternatively, select the application number in your portfolio to open the application details screen, then use the **Actions** menu on the right to request a certified copy.

You can also enter an EP or PCT application number on the left-hand side to view public information and request a certified copy.

When you select **Request certified copies**, you'll see the corresponding screen.

Choose the Priority Document option, add the necessary indications, and confirm your authorisation by ticking the checkbox. Select "Next" to continue.

- If you need a paper priority document and your Mailbox is active for the portfolio, select "Other" instead of "Digitally signed Priority Document" and state your request.

If you choose not to submit the request immediately, your draft will be saved automatically in the Actions area of MyEPO, where you or your colleagues can continue, edit, submit, or delete it later if you no longer want to request the document.

Once your request has been processed by the EPO, the EPO will send the electronic priority document to your Mailbox in MyEPO. If there are any issues, they will contact you.

Note: Some older granted patents or withdrawn applications may not appear in MyEPO. In such cases, submit your request via Online Filing 2.0 using a 1038 form.

For more details on sending and signing requests in general, refer to the MyEPO feature guide on submitting procedural requests.

3. Format of EPO electronic priority documents
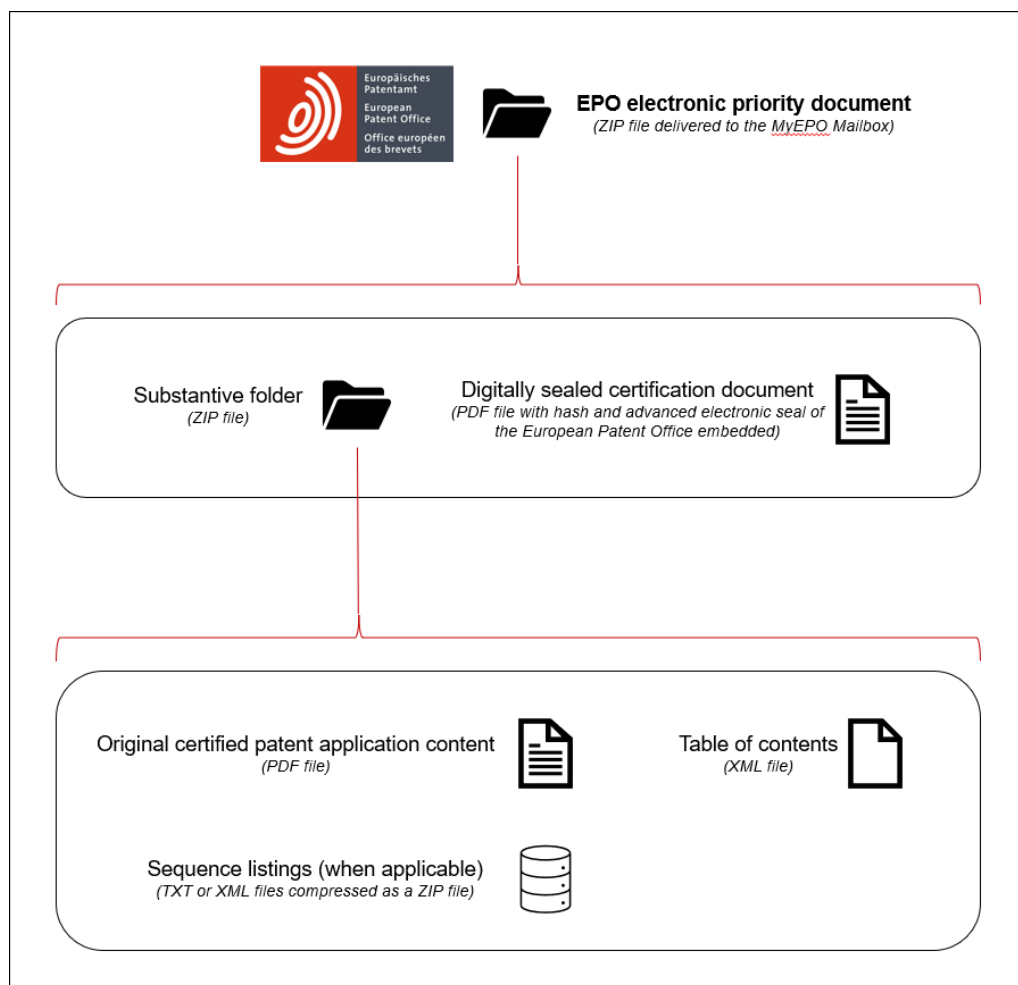
Electronic priority documents from the EPO are provided as a single ZIP file. This file contains the following items:

Substantive folder (ZIP file)

This folder contains:

- A PDF file with the original certified application content (description, claims, drawings if any, and abstract). It comes with a front page with a facsimile signature.
- When applicable, sequence listings in their original format (TXT for WIPO ST.25 or XML for WIPO ST.26), compressed into a ZIP file.
- A table of contents in XML format.

Digitally sealed certification document (PDF file)

- A front page with a facsimile signature, indicating the application number, filing date, the hash of the substantive folder (using SHA-256), and the nature and timestamp of the electronic seal.
- The advanced electronic seal of the European Patent Office is embedded in this PDF file.

You can download and explore this example of an EPO electronic priority document.

Here are key visual features of the certification document for printing. See section 4 of this guide to understand how the EPO's advanced electronic seal and hash ensure the authenticity and integrity of the priority document.

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

Bescheinigung	Certificate	Application number

Die angehefteten Unterlagen stimmen mit der als ursprünglich eingereicht geltenden Fassung der auf dem nächsten Blatt bezeichneten europäischen Patentanmeldung überein.

The attached documents are exact copies of the text in which the European patent application described on the following page is deemed to have been filed.

Les documents joints à la présente attestation sont conformes au texte, considéré comme initialement déposé, de la demande de brevet européen qui est spécifiée à la page suivante.

Patentanmeldung Nr.   **Patent application No.**

17208866.8 / EP17208866

The organisation code and number of your priority application, to be Convention, is EP17208866.

[Nature and timestamp of the electronic seal that is embedded in the PDF file. It proves the authenticity of this certificate document. See section 4 of this feature guide for more information.]

Fortgeschrittenes elektronisches Siegel des Europäischen Patentamts
Advanced electronic seal of the European Patent Office
Cachet électronique avancé de l'Office européen des brevets
Datum | Date |Date: 2024.12.20 14:09:04 +0200
SHA-256 Hash certified-copy.zip:
57C301CC96978CE7675CECC8276F43066E76D1B53121B121A276760C928E0D2E

[The hash code which can be used to check the integrity of the substantive folder and original patent application content. See section 4 of this feature guide for more information.]

Der Präsident des Europäischen Patentamts;
Im Auftrag
For the President of the European Patent Office
Le President de l'Office européen des brevets
p.o.

[Facsimile signature for the certificate. This isn't formally a digital signature proving the authenticity of this document. That proof is provided instead by the EPO's electronic seal.]

V. Joseph

SR50771

Priority application number

Anmeldung Nr:
Application no.:   17208866.8
Demande no :

Anmeldetag:
Date of filing: 20.12.17
Date de dépôt :

Filing date of the priority application

Anmelder / Applicant(s) / Demandeur(s):

FCA Italy S.p.A.
Corso Giovanni Agnelli, 200
10135 Torino/IT

Bezeichnung der Erfindung / Title of the invention / Titre de l'invention:
(Falls die Bezeichnung der Erfindung nicht angegeben ist, oder falls die Anmeldung in einer Nicht-Amtssprache des EPA eingereicht
wurde, siehe Beschreibung bezüglich ursprünglicher Bezeichnung.
If no title is shown, or if the application has been filed in a non-EPO language, please refer to the description for the original title.
Si aucun titre n'est indiqué, ou si la demande a été déposée dans une langue autre qu'une langue officielle de l'OEB, se référer à la
description pour le titre original.)

MODULAR CONTROL DEVICE FOR A VEHICLE GEARBOX

The applicant

In Anspruch genommene Priorität(en) / Priority(Priorities) claimed / Priorité(s) revendiquée(s)
Staat/Tag/Aktenzeichen / State/Date/File no. / Pays/Date/Numéro de dépôt:

Am Anmeldetag benannte Vertragstaaten / Contracting States designated at date of filing / Etats contractants désignés lors du dépôt:

AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL
PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR

4. Authenticity and integrity of EPO electronic priority documents

Electronic priority documents issued by the EPO are secured using an **advanced electronic seal** embedded in the certification document PDF to ensure **authenticity**, i.e. that the document was genuinely issued by the EPO. This PDF also includes a **cryptographic hash** created from the substantive ZIP file which contains the original patent application content. The cryptographic hash ensures **integrity**, i.e. that the content about the priority patent application hasn't been changed since it was issued by the EPO.

- The advanced electronic seal of the European Patent Office is created using qualified certificates from a Trusted Certificate Authority (CA) recognized under the European Union's eIDAS Regulation (EU) 010/2014. The CA we use is on the European Union Trusted List (EUTL). It is also on the Adobe Approved Trust List (AATL).

- The cryptographic hash is generated using the SHA-256 secure hash algorithm, an industry standard.

Step-by-step guide to validating the advanced electronic seal of the European Patent Office

To validate that the electronic priority document was issued by the European Patent Office, view the advanced electronic seal as follows:

1. Prepare the digitally sealed certification document PDF file

   – Ensure the file is saved in an easily accessible location on your computer.

2. View the file using a standard PDF viewing tool of your choice

   You can choose any standard tool that allows you to open a PDF and view information about the digital signature or seal embedded in the file.

   Here is how to do it using Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is a commonly used PDF viewing tool:

   – Open Adobe Acrobat Reader and check that preferences are set to verify signatures when a document is opened. You can typically do this using the menu option "Preferences" and selecting "Signatures" and "Verification" (depending on the version of Adobe Acrobat Reader you are using).

   – Also check that the Adobe Approved Trust List (AATL) and European Union Trusted List (EUTL) has been enabled. You typically do this using the menu option "Preferences" and selecting "Trust Manager" and check both "Load trusted certificates from an Adobe AATL server" and "Load trusted certificates from an Adobe EUTL server".

   – Open the certification document PDF file in Adobe Acrobat Reader.

   Provided you have set the preference to verify signatures when opening documents, a bar appears at the top with a green tick confirming that the document is signed and all signatures are valid.

- Click on the seal symbol in the document, or select the signature panel option, to view details of the certificate used by the electronic seal.

  Adobe Acrobat confirms that the document has been signed by the European Patent Organisation and that the source of trust is obtained from the European Union Trust Lists (EUTL). It confirms that the document has not been modified since it was certified, that the signer's identity is valid, and that the signature was validated at the timestamp time.

  If Adobe Acrobat has been set up correctly and you do not see this information about the signature, then the document has not been issued by the European Patent Office.
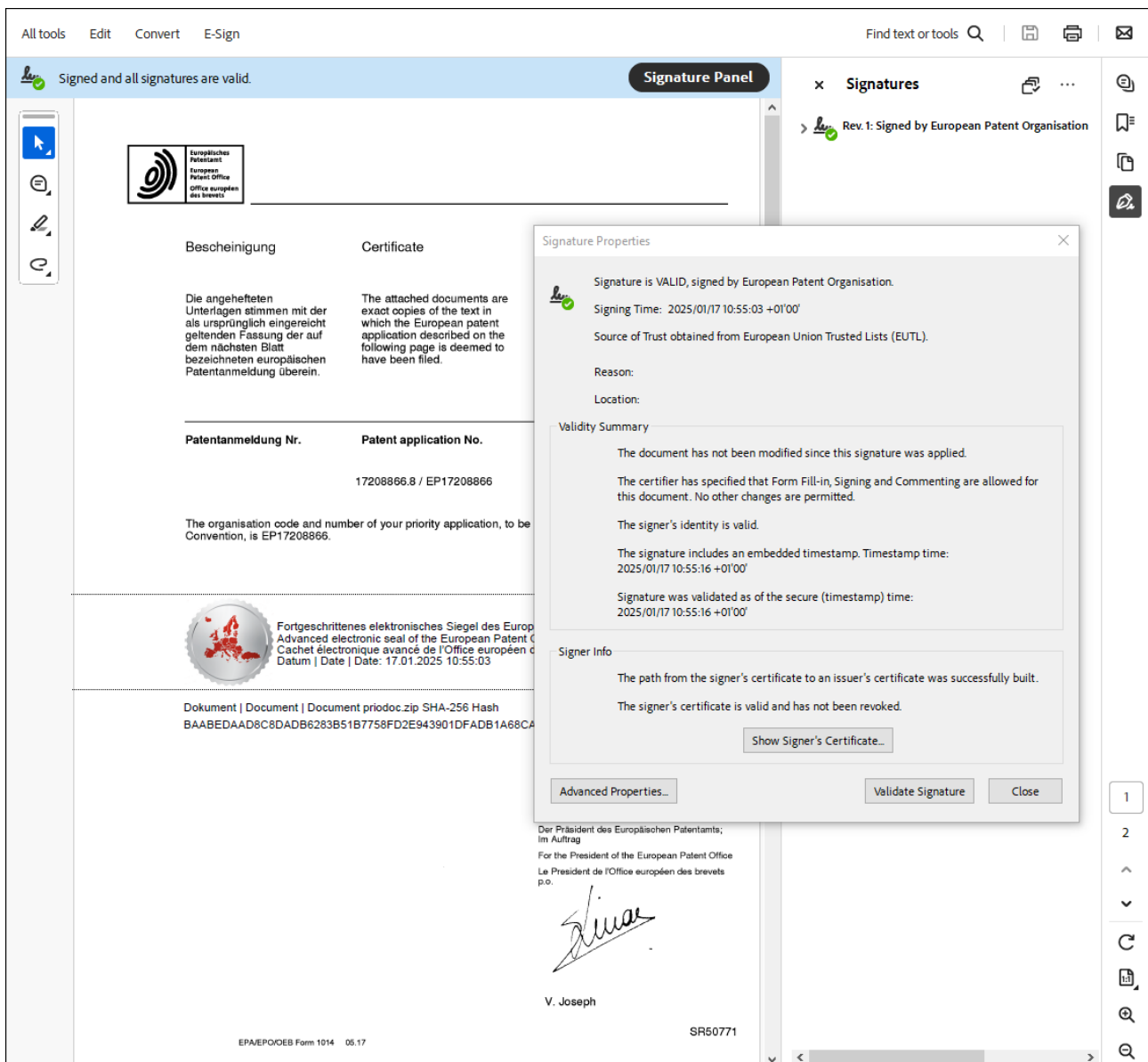
Step-by-step guide to verifying the cryptographic hash

To verify that the substantive ZIP file content hasn't been altered since the priority document was issued by the EPO, perform the following steps:

1. Prepare the substantive ZIP file

   – Ensure the substantive ZIP file is saved in an easily accessible location on your computer.
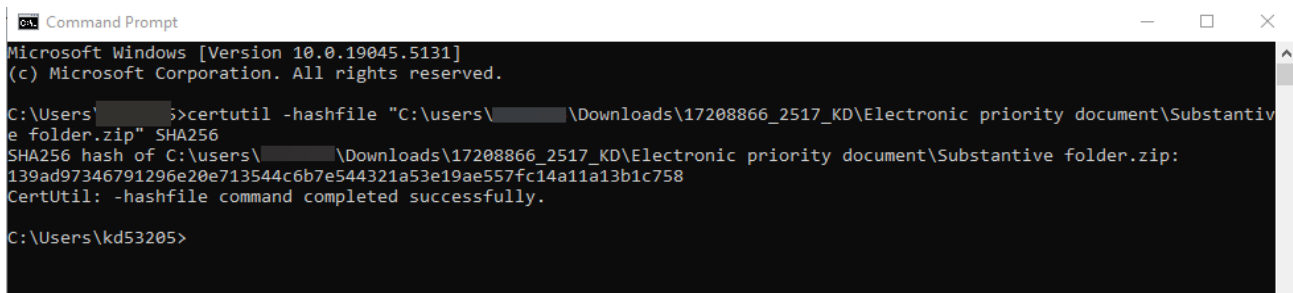
2. Generate the hash code using SHA-256

   You can do this using the Microsoft Windows command prompt or using the hash-generation tool of your choice. The hash-generation tool should support SHA-256. We recommend using tools that don't require the ZIP file to be uploaded onto a server.

   Here is how to do it using the Microsoft Windows command prompt:

   – Open **Command Prompt** (type **cmd** in the Windows search bar and hit Enter).

   – Type the command: **certutil -hashfile "C:\path\to\yourfile.zip" SHA256**

   Replace "C:\path\to\yourfile.zip" with the actual file path to your ZIP file.

3. Compare the hash code you generated with the one you can see on the certification document.

   If the hash codes match, then the content of the substantive ZIP file hasn't been altered since the priority document was issued by the EPO.