European Patent Office’s User Satisfaction Surveys

Key findings
Rating main user journey steps at the EPO

- **Filing**: 75% (very) good, 6% (very) poor, 19% neither good nor poor. Scores for 2020/2021 are 76% (very) good, 8% (very) poor.
- **Search**: 80% (very) good, 6% (very) poor, 4% neither good nor poor. Scores for 2020/2021 are 77% (very) good, 4% (very) poor.
- **Examination**: 78% (very) good, 7% (very) poor, 5% neither good nor poor. Scores for 2020/2021 are 74% (very) good, 8% (very) poor.
- **Final actions & publication**: 85% (very) good, 4% (very) poor, 1% neither good nor poor. Scores for 2020/2021 are 88% (very) good, 2% (very) poor.
- **Opposition**: 70% (very) good, 13% (very) poor, 17% neither good nor poor. Scores for 2020/2021 are 76% (very) good, 8% (very) poor.

Remaining percentage is ‘neither good nor poor’, e.g. for Filing: 75% (very) good, 6% (very) poor, 19% neither good nor poor.

Score calculation methodology in Annex III.
EPO filing services
April 2023: 520 interviews

Filing tools
- (Very) good
- Neither good nor poor
- (Very) poor

Online Filing (eOLF):
- 2023: 75 responses
- 2020: 76 responses

Online Filing 2.0:
- 2023: 84 responses
- 2020: 81 responses

CMS:
- 2023: 2 responses
- 2020: 15 responses

MyEPO Portfolio (for filing subsequent documents):
- 2023: 18 responses

2023:
- Online Filing: 294 responses
- Online Filing 2.0: 361 responses
- MyEPO Portfolio: 102 responses
**EPO search services**

November 2022 - January 2023: 1 302 interviews

Search services (file-specific rating)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Very) good</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither good nor poor</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Very) poor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time taken to issue search report and written opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1270 responses.</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistency (similar applications searched in similar way, WO drafted in similar way)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>687 responses.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding of the core of the invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 232 responses.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2022**

Timeliness: 1 270 responses.

Consistency: 687 responses.

Understanding of the core of the invention: 1 232 responses.
## EPO search services: rating file-specific aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>Improvement/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPO as PCT receiving Office</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the categories X Y A</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of the independent claims in the SR</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of the dependent claims in the SR</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of Asian documentation</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of the prior art found by the EPO compared to priority search</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence between the citations in the SR and WO</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensibility of the reasoning of the WO</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completeness of the reasoning of the WO</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of the independent claims in the WO</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of the dependent claims in the WO</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanations about how to overcome the objections</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of the WO</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indication and relevancy of passages within the Asian documentation</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(very) poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the translation of the Asian documentation</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(very) good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level. Remaining percentage is ‘neither good nor poor’.
EPO examination services
February – April 2023: 1306 interviews

Examination services
(file-specific rating)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>(Very) good</th>
<th>Neither good nor poor</th>
<th>(Very) poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time taken to complete examination procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistency
(similar applications examined in a similar way)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding of the core of the invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level.
EPO examination services: rating file-specific aspects

- Assessment of novelty: 76 (2023) vs. 75 (2021)
- Assessment of inventive step: 65 (2023) vs. 63 (2021)
- Assessment of clarity: 74 (2023) vs. 73 (2021)
- Assessment of added subject-matter: 79 (2023) vs. 73 (2021)
- Identification of all substantive objections at the earliest possible stage: 77 (2023) vs. 73 (2021)
- Correctness of all substantive objections raised: 63 (2023) vs. 65 (2021)
- Coverage of the independent claims: 83 (2023) vs. 79 (2021)
- Coverage of the dependent claims: 71 (2023) vs. 70 (2021)
- Usefulness of the reasoning given for the objections raised: 73 (2023) vs. 74 (2021)
- Justification of adding new citations: 66 (2023) vs. 52 (2021)
- Proposal(s) for amendment: 83 (2023) vs. 74 (2021)
- Oral proceedings: 71 (2023) vs. 70 (2021)
- Videoconference: 81 (2023) vs. 73 (2021)

Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level. Remaining percentage is ‘neither good nor poor’.
EPO final actions & publication
February – April 2023: 1 306 interviews

Final actions & publication (file-specific rating)

- (Very) good
- Neither good nor poor
- (Very) poor

- 2023
- 2021

- (Very) good
- 85
- 88

- (Very) poor
- 11
- 10

Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level.

Grant: 1 004 responses.
Withdrawals: 139 responses.
Refusals: 35 responses.
Publication: 544 responses.
EPO opposition services
September – October 2022: 537 interviews

Opposition procedure (case-specific rating)
- (Very) good
- Neither good nor poor
- (Very) poor

Duration of the procedure
- 2021: 501 response.

Technical competence
- 2021: 354 responses.

Oral proceedings (by VICO)
- 2021: 24 responses.

Fair treatment
- 2022: 504 responses.
- 2021: 514 responses.

Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level.
## EPO opposition services: rating file-specific aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2022 (%)</th>
<th>2021 (%)</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Statistically Significant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary non-binding opinion</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time taken to issue minutes and decision</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written decision</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence in substantive matters</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence in procedural matters</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent VICOs compared to past</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling public to attend oral proceedings by VICO</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level. Remaining percentage is ‘neither good nor poor’.
EPO information resources and online services
September 2022: 300 interviews

**INFORMATION RESOURCES**
Overall score: 85% (85% in 2020)

- Espacenet: 84 (2022) vs 83 (2020)
- Website epo.org: 76 (2022) vs 87 (2020)
- EP Register: 95 (2022) vs 91 (2020)

**ONLINE SERVICES**
Overall score: 91% (88% in 2020)

- My Files: 84 (2022) vs 87 (2020)
- Online fee payment: 88 (2022) vs 81 (2020)
- Mailbox: 89 (2022) vs 88 (2020)
- Register Alert: 91 (2022) vs 94 (2020)

(Very) good
Neither good nor poor
(Very) poor

Espacenet: 205 responses.
Website: 300 responses.
EP Register: 221 responses.

My files: 32 responses.
Online Fee Payment: 56 responses.
Mailbox: 46 responses.
Register Alert: 79 responses.

Arrows mark statistically significant changes at 95% confidence level.
EPO customer services and key account management

Key account management: January 2023, 207 interviews. Customer services: March 2023, 932 interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>Overall score: 96% (90% in 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service provided by KAM</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactiveness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness of the reply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUSTOMER SERVICES</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>Overall satisfaction: 86% (86% in 2021)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSM ticketing system</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling of enquiries (general satisfaction)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call transfer service</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>NEW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key account management: 198 responses.  
CSM ticketing system: 854 responses.  
Handling enquiries: 916 responses.  
Call transfer: 174 responses.
Key takeaways

**MAIN USER JOURNEY STEPS**
Ratings for all five main user journey steps remain very high. The main changes in 2022/2023 are an increased score for Examination and a decreased score for Opposition, while evaluations for the remaining user journey steps (namely Filings, Search and Final actions & Publication) remain stable.

While some ratings have risen for various detailed aspects of the services and some have fallen, the overall trends are stable.

Duration of the procedures at the EPO is an important aspect for the large share of users, as can be seen from the development of scores for Examination and Opposition.

Fairness of the Opposition procedure remains highly rated by users, regardless of the increased duration of proceedings and the shift to oral proceedings being conducted by videoconference only.

Amongst users, there is very high acceptance of oral proceedings by videoconference both in Opposition and Examination procedures. Improvements to the quality of videoconference are highly appreciated.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**
Recent findings from surveys on key account management and customer support demonstrate that the EPO offers users outstanding support.

Information resources and Online services are all rated very high. Continued dialogue with the user community via user satisfaction surveys delivers valuable insight on how to further improve EPO tools.
Annex I. EPO User Satisfaction Surveys

September 2022 - April 2023: 5,100 interviews conducted by BERENT
2023 Q1: 1,900 Customer Sentiment feedback forms collected by the EPO

Search
- EPC member states: 1,302 interviews
- North-America: 27
- Japan: 8
- China: 5
- Other non-EPC countries: 6

Examination, final actions & publication
- EPC member states: 1,306 interviews
- North-America: 23
- Japan: 7
- China: 6
- Other non-EPC countries: 6

Opposition
- EPC member states: 537 interviews
- North-America: 12
- Japan: 4

Search and Examination data weighted to represent regional proportions of the user population. Opposition follows the principle "take-them-as-they-fall", no regional weighting applied.

Filing services: 520 interviews
Customer services: 932 interviews
Key account management: 207 interviews
Website epo.org: 300 interviews
Customer Sentiment feedback (by EPO): 1,889 interviews
Annex III. Definition of EPO satisfaction scores

**Filing**
Aggregated score (very good and good) for the Online Filing and Online Filing 2.0 weighted by usage of the filing tools.

**Search**
Aggregated score (very good and good) for the specific search report and written opinion.

**Examination**
Aggregated score (very good and good) for the substantive examination of the specific application.

**Final actions & publication**
Computed average of aggregated scores (very good and good) including final outcomes weighted by their share:
- consistency of the decision to refuse the specific application;
- formal steps to withdraw the specific application;
- specific granted patent.

**Opposition**
Aggregated score (very good and good) for the specific opposition procedure.

**Information resources**
Computed average of aggregated scores (very good and good) including:
- Website epo.org
- Espacenet
- EP Register

**Online services**
Computed average of aggregated scores (very good and good) including:
- Register Alert
- Mailbox
- My Files
- Online Fee payment

**User support (by EPO)**
Computed average of aggregated scores (very good and good) including:
- handling of specific enquiry cases, weighted share 50%.
- resolution of enquiry cases by formalities officers, weighted share 50%.

**Key account management**
Aggregated score (very good and good) for the key account management.