



# **European Patent Academy Report 2022**



## **Executive summary**

The European Patent Academy is the educational and training arm of the EPO. It provides high-quality education on patents, technology and innovation to stakeholders, in Europe and beyond. Since 2022, the Office reports "annually to the Administrative Council on the activities planned and implemented by the European Patent Academy and their expected impact" (CA/64/21).

This report highlights the activities of the European Patent Academy in 2022, which are centred around the four core pillars of digitalisation, co-operation, modularity, and certification. These pillars, along with the activities carried out under each of them, are presented in this report. Dedicated sections highlight notable achievements in patent granting, technology transfer, and patent litigation learning, and cover the complete lifecycle of a patented invention.

2022 saw a substantial increase in participation in learning activities. The use and downloading of learning materials also boomed in 2022, while appraisals from learners were not only positive, but even surpassed pre-pandemic ratings. The report also describes the achievement of gender parity insofar as learners are concerned and explores its possible link with digitalisation. It also introduces the new certificates, training modalities and tools launched in 2022, such as the European Patent Administration Certification, the expert IP clinics, the course builder, training in key areas such as the Unitary Patent Court (UPC) and common search tool, and maps the Academy's present global outreach, with participants from more countries than ever before.

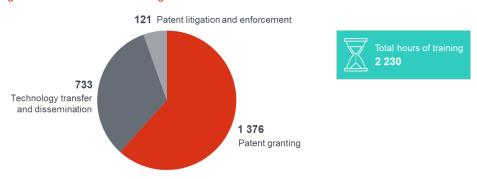
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### 1. Outreach

In 2022 the European Patent Academy set up and enabled 2 230 hours of patent training, or nearly 430 hours more than in 2020. Of the total hours offered, 62% pertained to the area of patent granting, 33% to the area of technology transfer and dissemination, and 5% to the area of patent litigation and enforcement. Almost all were implemented online, providing convenient access to participants from various locations.

Figure 1: Total hours of training

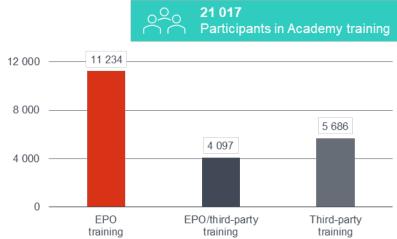


Source: EPO

The year saw a record-breaking number of participants attending EPO organised training sessions, EPO/third-party co-organised training sessions and supported third-party events, with a total of 21 017 participants; marking an increase of 14.7% versus 2021. A breakdown of these figures by area shows that 61% enrolled in training sessions related to patent granting, 36% to technology transfer and dissemination and 3% to patent litigation.

2022 figures: 2 230 hours of training, 21 017 participants in activities and 17 359 active e-Learning centre users

Figure 2: Actual participants according to training organiser



Source: EPO

The European Patent Academy e-Learning centre plays a crucial role in delivering its online educational activities to users globally. On 31 December 2022 the centre had 17 359 active users originating from 189 countries, of which 64% were from the EPO's member states.

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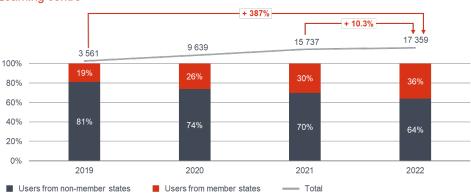
Figure 3 – Percentage of users from member states registered on e-Learning training platform

Source: EPO

In addition to the 21 017 participants in activities organised in 2022, 8 056 participants enrolled in self-paced online courses requiring registration.

Enrolments at the e-Learning centre in 2022 followed the annual trend observed since 2020 of over 6 000 new users per year, with 6 615 new users in 2022. Compared to 2019, the pre-pandemic year, user registrations increased by 387% in 2022.

Figure 4: Growth in user registration figures for the European Patent Academy's e-Learning centre



Source: EPO

In 2022, 8 056 people registered for e-Learning centre ad hoc training sessions, and 6 615 new users enrolled in the e-Learning centre The positive trend observed as of 2019 in usage of the e-learning centre continued, with an upturn in the number of users from non-member states. The high number of accesses was accompanied by a large volume of downloaded educational materials: 2022 recorded a 29% increase in downloads of educational materials versus 2021, with an almost equal number of visits. Compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019, this upturn is remarkable, with visitors to the learning centre increasing by 20%, while downloads of educational materials increased by 71%.

Visits to the e-Learning portal and downloads of training material increased by 20% and 71% respectively in 2019-2022

Figure 5: e-Learning portal: visits and downloads

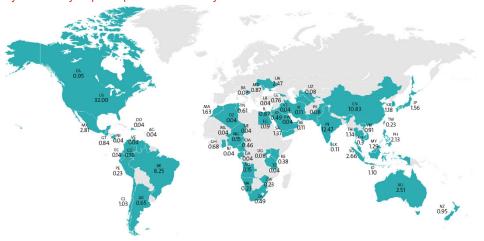


Source: EPO

One of the goals of the European Patent Academy is to expand its impact and outreach<sup>1</sup>. The EPO places a strong emphasis on international co-operation and works to support the development of effective patent systems around the world. Similarly, the Academy promotes learning activities beyond member states. As part of this effort, training is provided to the staff of the national offices of noncontracting states, in particular to EPC extension and validation states, as well as those involved in reinforced partnership co-operation. In 2022, representatives from as many as 61 non-contracting states attended live events held by the European Patent Academy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> CA/64/21 - Modernising the offer and framework of the European Patent Academy.

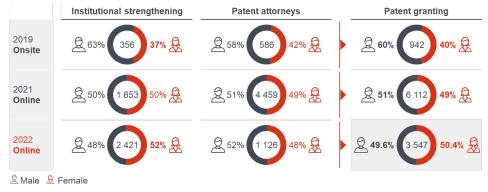
Figure 6: Increased impact and outreach of the European Patent Academy; breakdown by nationality of participants in Academy's live events



Source: EPO

Data on participation in training activities in the patent granting area shows that gender equality was achieved for the first time in 2021 and again in 2022. This data also allows us to analyse and draw conclusions about the operational aspects of our programmes. For example, through digitalisation, we have seen an increase of nearly 15% in women's participation in training activities. While this progress is encouraging, it is important to acknowledge that societal factors such as gender roles and responsibilities may still prevent some women from participating. However, it shows that digital learning can be a tool for promoting greater gender equality."

Figure 7: Comparison of participation by gender in the onsite and online training activities in the patent granting area



Source: EPO

# 2. Structures of the European Patent Academy

This report is part of the actions and changes implemented in 2021 as part of the European Patent Academy's (CA/64/21) structural reform. The reform included several measures such as (i) a comprehensive, special report on the Academy submitted by the President to the Council as an attachment to the Annual Report; (ii) paving the way for setting up working groups to discuss specific areas of training; (ii) creating patent education expert committees to connect with key

players and developments in patent education; (v) moving towards certification; (vi) referring the budget for the opinion of the Budget and Finance Committee.

All these actions were implemented for the first time in 2022. Specifically, a working group of member states was set up to design the programme for 2023, two reports (one documenting past activities and the other detailing plans for the year ahead) were presented to the TOSC, the special report on the Academy was submitted as an attachment to the Annual Review of the President to the Council, an expert group on certification was created (the EPAC Board) and the roster of experts for establishing expert committees was developed with nominations received from member states.

The Academy's training programme in 2022 was implemented in accordance with the modernisation plan, with education based on the four pillars and seven harmonised educational activities, as well as online training formats.

Working group for training programme design was set up; creation of EPAC Board; roster of experts for establishment of committees

# 3. The four pillars of the "Blueprint for the European Patent Academy"

The "Blueprint for the European Patent Academy" introduced a framework for designing and implementing patent education based on digitalisation, cooperation, modularity and certification. These pillars, along with seven harmonised educational activities, were incorporated into the Academy's 2022 training catalogue. The activities were developed using a matrix approach that combined thematic areas and stakeholder groups, resulting in a comprehensive, integrated approach to training. The activities focused on three thematic areas, patent granting, technology transfer and dissemination, and patent litigation and enforcement. This approach facilitated communication between target groups and enabled the development of training itineraries that appealed to a variety of audiences.

Figure 8: Three areas attracting a broad range of audiences

| Training areas                        | Audiences:<br>Professional                                 | Institutional  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Patent granting                       | patent examiners<br>formalities officers/paralegals        | national patent offices  |
|                                       | patent attorneys<br>formalities officers/paralegals        | patent attorneys' firms<br>professional associations of patent attorneys and<br>formalities officers |
| Technology transfer and dissemination | scholars IP managers students and PhD students researchers | universities research centres technology transfer associations public research institutions PATLIBs  |
|                                       | ■ IP managers<br>CEOs and managers                         | technology transfer associations<br>SMEs<br>business associations                                    |
| Patent enforcement and litigation     | judges     lawyers     prosecutors     patent attorneys    | ministries of justice<br>courts<br>IP associations<br>professional associations                      |

Source: EPO

### 3.1 Digitalisation

Digitalisation advanced in 2022 to increase opportunities to reach users and the Academy's global impact on the European patent system.

In 2022 the Academy consolidated its model of offering lecture-based events (such as standalone online lectures and conferences) in lighter formats, with simple registration and implementation using Zoom. The Moodle environment, on the other hand, was adopted to host medium- and long-term courses, seminars and workshops, where there is greater interaction with materials, participants and tutors.

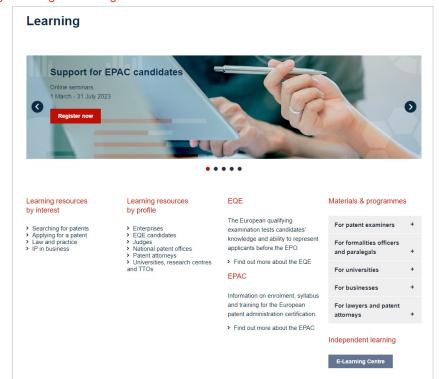
In 2022, almost all training was digital, with consolidation of training formats and introduction of new formats

A new e-knowledge portal focuses on the user journey: it makes all training events searchable and guides the user from authentication through to course participation. This represents a major effort to interconnect different IT systems. A central element is the revamp of the IP calendar, which will interface with the Single Access Portal to automatically read data from national offices' training catalogues.

During 2022 the Academy's training offer was almost entirely delivered digitally. By the end of 2022 there were over 100 e-courses open in the e-Academy centre and 280 recordings, including virtual sessions, dedicated videos and video post-productions of conference proceedings.

e-Academy centre offered 100 e-courses and 280 recordings by end of 2022

Figure 9: Digital learning environment



Source: EPO

Two training formats were introduced: the "Patenting seminar series" and the "IP business clinics". The "Patenting seminar series" extends over three months and offers one seminar each month. Each seminar addresses different aspects of the same topic, is thematically focused and addresses a homogeneous audience. For the first time, we also actively mixed patent attorneys and patent examiners.

A second new digital format is the "IP business clinic". With over 100 one-on-one mentoring sessions on IP-related business advice provided by 40 experts/mentors, the clinics achieved a satisfaction rate of over 90%, both from mentees and mentors.

In the area of patent litigation and enforcement, the development of online modules on EPO patentability and proceedings was completed in 2022. This will enable us to replace the week of onsite lectures in Munich at the beginning of judicial internships at the Boards of Appeal (BoA) with a tutored (Rx) course in a hybrid format in 2023.

### 3.2 Co-operation

Co-operation facilitates bespoke programmes to meet the needs of heterogenous audiences, makes training activities more attractive and offers a way of assisting third parties to implement learning programmes. The co-organisation of training sessions, as well as the exchange of experts and mutual information, ensure that the training provided by stakeholders is complementary.

In 2022, co-operation with member states was extended to encompass the drafting of the Academy's annual training plan for 2023. An ad-hoc working group of 37 experts in education from 19 national offices met in May and June 2022. The content of the course builder for patent examiners was shared with member states and used to select the topic, title, level and content of future courses. This was subsequently transformed into the most appropriate training format. Highly specific training requests were considered as possible topics for national bilateral training.

Education experts from member states involved in drafting annual training plan for 2023.

The Academy also continued to produce its monthly newsletter for the national patent offices of member states in 2022. The newsletter focuses on the training activities offered by the Academy for the staff of national offices in the upcoming three months. The newsletter also offers a short overview of the training organised for other audiences.

In 2022, five national exchange platforms took place. The duration of these exchange platforms ranged between three and six hours.

The training offer has supported various projects in the EPN, including eight online training courses for the PATLIB network plus a new "train the trainers" programme. In a different context, courses and tutorials on the new Search tool were conducted for the offices participating in the pilot. During 2022, the Academy offered training for the offices participating in the pilot for the new Search tool based on Ansera. This included a delta training for 2021 participants to upgrade their knowledge to v3.2, as well as a session and tutorial on the use of non-patent literature (NPL).

As a by-product, CPC training for national offices provided 16 new technical field-specific recordings. Tutorials on the central fee payment tool and the Front Office for national office developments were also provided.

Co-operation is a key factor for achieving success, which is particularly relevant for the area of technology transfer. Building on an integrated approach within the Office, approximately 90% of activities in this domain involved one external partner. Those partners included the Licensing Executives Society International

(LESI), PATLIB centres, the European IP Helpdesk, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the European Innovation Council, the Center for Intellectual Property, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), the Enterprise Europe Network, the Center for International Intellectual Property Studies (CEIPI) and the International Institute for IP Management. The focus of such co-operation rests upon nurturing structured long-term collaboration aimed at developing a demand-driven infrastructure in Europe that informs businesses about how to leverage the IP system effectively and trains students and researchers on IP.

Co-operation in the area of patent litigation and enforcement relies on a number of public and private sector partners. In 2022, the Academy co-operated closely with the Boards of Appeal (BoA) to organise the BoA key decisions conference and the patentability workshop with selected national judges. It also worked with the European Patent Lawyers Association and the IP Judges Association on the European Judges' Forum in Venice. It is also worth highlighting the Academy's co-operation with the Technical University of Munich for the Munich International Patent Law Conference, and with other educational establishments to develop online learning modules, including in relation to the anticipated launch of the Unified Patent Court.

Co-operation with the EUIPO was very fruitful during 2022: two joint online seminars were organised, attracting over 400 participants and a positive evaluation rate of 90%. December also saw the second edition of the joint EPO-EUIPO Academy contact and focal point meeting. This meeting covered the focal points for the member states of both the EPO and EUIPO Academies. In an event held over two mornings, participants discussed topics and experiences related to internal and external training. The meeting was deeply appreciated and served to strengthen the network of IP authorities in Europe.

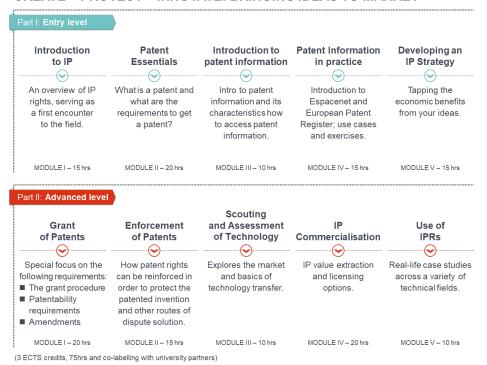
### 3.3 Modularity

In terms of modularity, three key initiatives stood out in 2022: the Modular Intellectual Property Education Framework (MIPEF), the course builder and the patentability and patent proceedings for patent litigation experts.

The MIPEF programme was completed in 2022. It aims to progressively introduce intellectual property education in university curricula, notably for science and technology faculties. Two high-quality 75-hour courses blending synchronous and asynchronous delivery will become the flagship product for working with universities.

Figure 10: Modular IP Education Framework (MIPEF)

### CREATE - PROTECT - INNOVATE: BRINGING IDEAS TO MARKET



Source: EPO

A first version of the course builder has been tested in the context of the training programme for examiners in member states. This database contains a taxonomy of learning units, ordered by topics and levels and systematically linked to the relevant legal basis. Courses can be built by combining the available learning units by topic and by level, depending on the learning objectives set for a given course. Missing learning units can be designed whenever needed and added to the course builder.

The database of learning units is supported by a systematic collection of training material in PDF format, which is published as self-learning resources in the form of learning paths (for patent examiners and for formalities officers and paralegals), and in a PowerPoint format, which is used by tutors as support for their live presentations. The PDF and PowerPoint documents strictly follow the database structure.

To date, the course builder comprises over 600 learning units suitable for examiner training and more than 240 learning units targeting formalities staff and patent administrators.

In the area of patent litigation and enforcement, the development of modular pedagogical materials on EPO patentability and patent proceedings was completed. The modules will be offered in 2023 as an independent tutored (Rx) course on patentability for judges, as well as a module of judiciary internships at the BoA. The Academy's sponsorship of the Munich International Patent Law Conference (MPLC) is also a bid to integrate the event into the judicial internship as one of its structural components (seats are reserved for the judges' interns).

Another case of modularity is the three online module courses to enable continuous learning for target audiences in the areas of IP strategy, IP evaluation

Course builder: ≥ 600 learning units for examiners ≥ 240 learning units for formalities officers and patent administrators and protection, IP valuation and commercialisation. All modules include quizzes, videos and reading content.

### 3.4 Certification

The first examination leading towards obtaining the European Patent Administration Certificate took place in December 2022. The EPAC certificate is designed to enable paralegals, patent administrators and formalities officers to demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with the procedures associated with the filing, prosecution, grant and maintenance of European and international patent applications before the European Patent Office, as well as post-grant administrative procedures.

A total of 509 candidates sat EPAC 2022, originating from 33 countries worldwide. With a female cohort of close to 85% and a similar percentage originating from private practice, the certificate fosters quality in patent procedures, gives recognition to a profession that de facto already exists, and expands the global outreach of the European patent system (candidates from 10 non-member states participated).

A second initiative building on the MIPEF programme and designed to cater for university needs was launched in 2022 with the set-up of a project to support content development. Covering a broad spectrum of topics and fields, the model is simple: renowned universities develop and introduce content of interest in the area of innovation and patents as part of their official programmes. Amounting to six ECTS credits, the co-developed and co-labelled educational content is subsequently made available worldwide free of charge by the European Patent Office.

The Academy has started developing EPO/university co-labelled certificates with selected universities. The aim of this initiative is to increase the impact, ease of diffusion and inclusion of developed content in official educational programmes. The first co-labelling initiated in 2022 was the EPO-CEIPI joint IP Management Diploma. This educational material will be available worldwide and free-of-charge for re-use in other universities. The material comprises about 60 hours of videos and 1 800 pages of learning materials, forming three certificates that will be part of the twelve certificates constituting the joint IP Management Diploma.

# 4. Innovation and learning together

The SP2023 commits to bringing innovation and learning together. The European Patent Academy puts this mandate into practice by modernising educational methodologies, course formats and educational resources, as well as by boosting research in the domain of intellectual property education. The European Patent Academy studies user needs and demands. Drawing on this information, it develops materials embedded in its courses, modules and learning paths, including videos, infographics and activities, which exemplify an innovative approach to making the learning experience more attractive and impactful.

In 2022, training material for self-learning was created for patent examiners, formalities officers and paralegals and published on the EPO website. The training material was developed using the course builder approach, which is

presented under "Modularity", and is available free of charge. In total, the collection comprises 48 courses for patent examiners and 21 courses for formalities officers and paralegals, the latter having been developed as a support for EPAC candidates. All this training material is systematically hyperlinked to the relevant legal sources (EPC and Regulations, Guidelines, Case Law books, Decisions, PCT and Regulations). A revision cycle of one year is envisaged to keep the training material up to date.

The research projects of the fifth call for research proposals for the Academic Research Programme (ARP) also started in 2022. Two streams were defined to broaden the scope of the topics covered by this programme, namely "The new frontiers of innovation" and "Digital technologies for IP". Thirty-two research scheme proposals were received covering these two streams. One of the projects aims to produce intelligent tutoring systems to be implemented in intellectual property education. The annual workshop took place in July 2022.



Source: EPO

"Patent enforcement in Europe", a comparison tool for national patent enforcement practices across Europe, was released in a new interactive digital format. The tool enables users to search and compare specific enforcement measures and procedures between different EPO contracting states.

### 5. Activities in the three areas

### 5.1 Patent granting

The training in the patent granting area focuses on the whole patent granting procedure, from formalities examination and prior art searching to substantive examination and post-grant procedures. It addresses two main target audiences: (i) staff of the national offices, government institutions and public-sector organisations, and (ii) professional representatives and paralegals.

In 2022, the patenting seminars series addressed very focused topics at an advanced level, which represents an enrichment of the Academy's training offer for the audience comprising staff of the NPOs.

The thematic conference in June addressed space technologies and was supported by speakers from the European Space Agency and from the Catholic University of Leuven. The end-of-year examiners' conference was used in 2022 to explain the functioning of the EPO's e-learning platform in detail to participants, and to present the principles used by the Academy to design its training offer.

The seminar on recent BoA decisions, reserved for the staff of national patent offices, was deeply appreciated in 2022 and will be repeated in coming years. This format facilitates exchanges between participants and speakers.

The Academy also offered thematic workshops for examiners from national patent offices. These workshops addressed specific questions in the fields of quantum technologies applications, green mobility technologies, as well as the present and future of batteries. However, while offering a pleasant platform for exchanges between a limited number of examiners (25 participants on average) from different offices on a highly specialised topic, these workshops have a limited learning impact, because not every technical field has patent granting specificities. The workshop on patentability exceptions and exclusions attracted a slightly higher number of participants (37) and created a better opportunity to discuss substantive issues than the other workshops.

A tutored programme on searching was introduced in 2022. Structured in three modules each lasting two weeks and ending with a self-evaluation test, the tutored programme is intended to deepen the knowledge of participants from one level to the next. Last year it comprised 84 learning and training hours. This programme addresses the systematisation of searches - from analysis of the application and defining and applying a search strategy, to analysis of the search results and preparing a search report and a preliminary opinion. The programme was supported using Espacenet, rather than a specific search tool. At the end of the programme, all 31 participants received a personalised certificate with the ranking they obtained at each self-evaluation and an anonymised average evaluation of the results obtained by the whole group.

Figure 12: Learning catalogue for national offices 2022

### NATIONAL OFFICES



Source: EPO

In terms of activities for professional representatives, 2022 was a year of consolidation for online training. "Examination matters" and "Opposition Matters" ran completely online and interaction with the audience was greatly appreciated. "Examination Matters" focused on procedural aspects related to examination proceedings.

"Opposition Matters", on the other hand, featured a presentation of the new Principal Directorate for Oppositions, "PD OPCF", with a focus on topics related to oral proceedings in oppositions by videoconference, as well as on procedural and legal aspects relating to opposition proceedings. There was continuous interaction between EPO staff and patent attorneys in plenary sessions, workshops and lectures. Both conferences addressed an average audience of 150 participants.

Courses and seminars organised included the "Guidelines2day" series of lectures, PCT seminars covering updates and advanced topics, and "Behind the scenes", which enabled patent attorneys to experience the work of EPO staff in relation to searching, examination, oppositions and appeals via exercises and Q&A sessions with EPO examiners and BoA members.

A new course entitled "Taking evidence" enabled participants to deepen their knowledge of this specific procedural aspect, which can take different forms ranging from hearing witnesses to inspecting objects. It was rounded off with a mock live oral hearing of a witness, which was warmly welcomed by all participants. In a similar context, the "Oral proceedings via videoconference" lectures prepared attendees to participate effectively in oral proceedings by videoconference and learn directly from patent examiners and attorneys, who shared their experience and provided practical tips.

Turning to new technologies, the Academy offered two four-week courses relating to computer-implemented inventions. From beginner to intermediate/advanced level, these courses focused on the definition of computer-implemented inventions and exclusions from patentability under Article 52(2) and (3) EPC. Moreover, a series of four 1.5-hour lectures was offered on

topics relating to disruptive computer-implemented invention technologies, which are more common in industry and hence also in patent applications.

The seminar "Adaptation of the description: harmonisation of practice" and the conference "Inventorship in patent law" covered several topical issues, providing a forum for discussing common ground and differences between the opinions issued by courts and patent offices.

The confirmation of oral proceedings as a default procedure in the EPO was presented in two lectures of 1.5 hours. A seminar related to online advocacy before the EPO and a workshop on oral proceedings completed the training on this specific procedure that was given by the Academy in 2022.

The partnership between the European Patent Academy and organisations such as CEIPI and the epi also continued in 2022. This co-operation resulted in many participants benefiting from training activities offered by the epi or CEIPI with the collaboration of EPO experts, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and the corresponding annual workplan.

Collaboration with users, patent attorneys, paralegals and formalities associations continued in 2022, with around 17 online lectures on different topics all around Europe.

Among the most successful courses of the Academy is the EQE pre-examination training course. This is a six-month course that offers a blended e-learning experience, including introductory videos, in-depth articles, mock questions based on the real examination and in-depth case studies. Course participants have access to experienced epi tutors, who are available via a discussion forum to answer exam-related queries. Informative sessions for EQE candidates were also followed by close to 2 000 participants, who could also test their skills and settings over a period of five months before the actual examination.

Figure 13 – Learning catalogue for patent attorneys 2022

# PATENT ATTORNEYS 8 994 participants training events lecturing self-study

Source: EPO

### 5.2 Technology transfer and dissemination

The area of technology transfer and dissemination focuses on Europe's universities and higher education institutions, other educational organisations, SMEs and start-ups. The objectives include raising awareness, fostering the development of future engineers, researchers, managers, entrepreneurs, and helping businesses to optimise the use of the intellectual property system.

Focusing on the activities targeting academia, the Academy supported 50 educational activities organised by universities and networks in 2022. A total of 27 were implemented in close co-operation with the Academy by developing the concept and the programme of the activity and/or providing EPO experts, while 23 were organised by the Academy. Special attention was paid to strengthening co-operation with the Pan-European Young Professionals Programme (YPP) universities, as well as science and technology universities. The targeted support resulted in numerous new technical universities joining the programme.

ACADEMIA

3 315
participants

training events

events

lecturing

self-study

Figure 14 – Learning catalogue for academia 2022

Source: EPO

A new series of live talks called "Inspiring inventors" featuring European Inventor Award winners was launched in co-operation with the communication department and four conversations were promoted and livestreamed throughout the year on the EPO's social media channels: LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. The four live talks were very well received, and there were 12 000 views of the streams. The live stream on the day of the talk was followed by 7 734 people. Furthermore, the recorded series reached over 72 000 people and gathered over 2 200 interactions (e.g. likes, shares, comments, reactions). The overall series recorded an engagement rate of 5.66%, which is considered above average (3%).

A new format for virtual study visits with SpatialChat ("EPO Together") was offered and will be further developed in 2023. The regular online study visit format combines a descriptive introduction to the European patent system with topical developments in technical or institutional areas. While students and the academic community are the main target, interest has extended beyond these audiences to reach member states.

The advanced lecture series was successfully continued and focused on smart agriculture and MedTech. The format prompted in-depth discussions on well-delimited subjects by diverse audiences. Over a period of one month, four hours of weekly discussion led by examiners, patent attorneys, IP managers and inventors attracted broad and heterogeneous audiences. All lectures were recorded and can be found as 24/7 courses in the Academy's e-Learning centre.

The Academy also offered self-paced courses to academic institutions in 2022. This was the case for the courses "From idea to patent" and "The art of reading patent documentation".

In collaboration with the European Schools, the EPO Academy launched a new programme entitled "IP education for kids and youngsters" to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with a view to fostering innovative solutions to problems of global concern. The programme aims to stimulate interest and knowledge around innovation and sustainability, developing competences in STEM among youngsters, while linking innovation and STEM via entrepreneurship.

In the framework of this collaboration with the European Schools, the Academy contributed to the syllabus of a new course on "Environmental sustainability and active citizenship" that will be offered in September 2023 to 16-18-year-old students at all European Schools. In particular, the Academy introduced topics relating to the role of science, technology, and innovation in sustainable development.

Another milestone in this project is the EPO's support and participation in the biannual science symposium organised by the European Schools. The Science Symposium is a biannual competition open to students from years S1 to S7 of European Schools and Accredited European Schools. Prizes will be awarded for the best projects. In December 2022, the EPO provided financial support, helped to promote the event and supplied one member of the award jury.

Newly launched digital training formats were well attended and positively evaluated, including the advanced lectures series on food and green technologies and virtual study visits. Self-paced courses were customised to better serve academic institutions. New lectures were produced to update the content and adjust the duration of courses so that they could be used as mandatory reference material for live training events.

Figure 15 - Learning catalogue for businesses 2022

### **SMEs AND BUSINESSES**



Source: EPO

With regard to business, 46 training activities were offered in 2022 focusing on SMEs, their decision-makers and advising IP professionals. IP strategy and IP management topics were covered in 32 events such as conferences, seminars, workshops and courses and 14 training-related projects.

"Search Matters 2022" focused on "Clean and green IP" and was attended by 184 participants, marking a notable increase versus 138 participants in 2021. Patent information professionals, IP authorities and applicants from industry were the most well-represented groups at an event offering a blend of online lectures and workshops.

Last year also saw further advances in the high-growth technology business (HTB) initiative. Four online HTB forums were held, covering a range of topics such as growth financing and open innovation and featuring both live case studies and international panel discussions. In response to COVID-19, the HTB conference was exceptionally switched to an online format. A total of 1 885 participants attended these events, with an overall satisfaction rate of around 90%.

The EPO-LESI HTB committee supported these activities with 35 meetings and workshops. In terms of visibility and dissemination, the HTB community on LinkedIn has developed into the top marketing channel for registrations for HTB forums and conferences, exceeding the milestone of 2 000 followers. Data analysis indicates that the HTB community successfully reaches its target audience of senior-level professionals with a legal and/or business development background.

The HTB conference 2022, held online from 21 to 22 November 2022, consisted of 12 sessions, involved 37 speakers and reached 757 registrants. Furthermore, the IP business clinics were upgraded as a conference supplement by virtue of their conversion to an online format. This is a successful example of digitalisation, where the digital format of the IP business clinics has resulted in high-quality learning and networking. With over 100 one-on-one pro bono mentoring sessions on IP-related business advice provided by 40 experts/mentors, a satisfaction rate of over 90% was achieved among both mentees and mentors. The IP business

clinics will continue to develop as a digital learning tool and become a regular part of the HTB initiative.

The 14 projects mentioned resulted in new or enhanced training products, such as new training formats, content and didactical and dissemination approaches. The content base increased by over 30 new or improved publications as a result, including eight case studies, 12 articles, four podcasts, 21 videos and a handbook, which support the training experience of the main target groups.

In addition to the widely-used case studies, the SME-focused online library is also expanding, with articles and podcasts freely available at epo.org. Content that is developed and tested during a specific project or event undergoes a post-event evaluation and further enhancement to facilitate its integration into subsequent training offered by the EPO and its partners.

The event "Software and patents in MedTech" deepened understanding among decision-makers in start-ups and SMEs of the value of digital patents and corresponding IP strategies for the growth of their businesses. The event, conducted online for the first time ever, illustrated and discussed the experiences of a spin-off in the field of medical imaging. The event was implemented by the EPO and attracted 386 registrants from more than 50 countries.

The online seminar series "From Lab to Market – Successful Technology Transfer Journeys", organised with the European IP Helpdesk, took the form of six online seminars on technology transfer case studies, including a kick-off and wrap-up event. Another three online seminars were held featuring EPO tools and strategies: "IP assessment – How to improve informed decision making", "Business use of patent information" and "Using EPO search tools to improve business decisions".

### 5.3 Patent litigation and enforcement

The area of patent litigation and enforcement focuses on creating and promoting legal expertise in the field amongst judges and legal professionals and coordinates training activities. In 2022 a total of 58 study and lecture hours were organised for 616 participants.

To accompany the launch of the Unitary Patent (UP) system and Unitary Patent Court (UPC), several of the training activities focused on UPC-related subjects: a workshop on selected topics concerning the future practice at the UPC, held in Munich on 9-10 June 2022; a European Judges' Forum with focus on UPC, held in Venice on 21-22 October 2022; completion of training materials for UPC Rules of Procedure training for legally and technically qualified UPC judges, including mock trial documents; several UPC-related lectures delivered at the request of third-party training providers; and UPC-related updates of the pedagogical module on patentability and publications (Patent enforcement in Europe, Jurisdiction of European courts in patent disputes, and Patent litigation in Europe).

Most activities were organised online. Two events, however, were organised on site: the European Judges' Forum (Venice, Italy) and the UPC workshop for judges and lawyers of participating member states (Munich, Germany). These two events were also specifically devoted to questions relating to the launch of

the UPC planned for 2023. All of the external lectures on topics requested by third parties were delivered online in 2022.

With members of the BoA conducting proceedings online, judicial internships were postponed to 2023 with a view to modifying and adjusting the format and duration of the event. The UPC Rules of Procedure training for appointed UPC judges in Budapest (Hungary), provided by the EPO under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2014 by the UPC Preparatory Committee, was rescheduled to 17-21 January 2023. The rescheduling and the location of the training were closely co-ordinated with the UPC and the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office, with the latter providing the logistics support for the event.

Figure 16 – Learning catalogue for patent litigation 2022

PATENT LITIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT

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Source: EPO

### 6. Future outlook

The record participation and interest in the educational products and activities of the European Patent Academy in 2022 confirms that users are striving to enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of patents, which is constantly evolving and adapting to new technologies, legal regulations and market trends.

Over the past few years, the Academy has undergone a digital transformation and shifted its focus to online training, in alignment with the Blueprint for the European Patent Academy launched in 2020. The pandemic further accelerated this shift, forcing the Academy to adapt quickly to the new reality. As a result, the Academy has been able to ramp up its training offerings and reach user levels that were previously unimaginable.

Prior to 2019, the majority of training was conducted onsite, but the shift to online training has opened up a wealth of new opportunities for the Academy to expand its reach and impact, as shown by this report, including the achievement of gender equality in the patent granting area.

Building on its four core pillars of digitalisation, co-operation, modularity and certification, the Academy will pursue its activities in 2023 with the EPO's reinforced commitment to sustainability. In line with the UN Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), this commitment will inform the choice of formats and topics for training activities.

Operational sustainability, together with the digital transformation of learning and professional practices, will be a crucial consideration for exploring synergies within existing EPO training offers and designing partnerships with third parties. Further pursuit of certification initiatives will support the professional recognition of patent knowledge and skills obtained by learners. During 2023, the Academy will also reinforce and restructure its co-operation with universities and schools to increase the long-term systemic impact of patent and innovation education in Europe.