

European Patent Academy Report 2023

Annex to the Annual Review



Executive summary

The European Patent Academy provides education and training to stakeholders in Europe and beyond, through a range of activities and online resources. Building on the pillars of digitalisation, co-operation, modularity and certification, the Academy's activities in 2023 targeted three areas: patent granting, technology transfer and patent litigation. Together, these areas cover the complete lifecycle of a patented invention and form the basis of the Academy's educational activities and products.

2023 brought several achievements. Following the launch of the first European Patent Administration Certification (EPAC) examination in December 2022, the learning materials and courses designed by the Academy to support EPAC candidates have become a key learning activity, followed by the former EQE pre-examination preparation course.

In addition to the organisation of the three Matters conferences (Search, Examination and Opposition), 2023 saw the first Litigation Matters conference, organised online, in partnership with the main players in the field. 2023 also brought the consolidation of the Modular Intellectual Property Education Framework (MIPEF), which aims to meet the increasing demand from universities and support the development of modern IP education, notably in science and engineering university programmes. Two courses were designed to be integrated into university curricula each with three European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits.

Having identified the need to foster the values of innovation and entrepreneurship among younger audiences, the EPO started several initiatives, combining learning modules, awards and science fairs. These were organised in partnership with the European Schools and in the context of the 50th anniversary of the EPC.

Training in the area of **Patent granting** covers the entire patent granting procedure – from formalities examination and prior art searches to substantive examination and post-grant procedures. Accordingly, this area is aimed at both the staff of national patent offices (NPOs) and patent professionals. Over 8 656 participants attended 63 activities and 917 hours of learning in this area in 2023. Nine national exchange platforms with a total audience of 592 participants took place in 2023.

To increase the reach and impact of the European patent system, the Academy also makes some of its training activities available to NPOs in non-contracting states as part of the EPO's international co-operation activities. In 2023, representatives from 51 non-contracting states participated in the Academy's activities and registered on its digital learning portal.

The area of **Technology transfer and dissemination** is targeted at universities and SMEs. In 2023, 28 training activities with 193 hours of training aimed at universities, students and researchers were followed by 5 379 participants. In addition to launching the MIPEF, in 2023 the Academy continued the "From lab to market" series of training modules based on the experience of finalists and winners of the European Inventor Award. The Pan-European Seal Young Professionals Programme (PES YPP), jointly managed with the EUIPO, reached 136 participating universities in 2023. In the area of business support, the Academy organised 39 events, with 307 hours of training. These targeted SMEs,

entrepreneurs and IP management professionals, and were followed by 6 327 participants.

Training in the area of **Patent litigation** is aimed at judges and litigators, including members of the Boards of Appeal and pleading patent attorneys. In 2023, 14 training activities, with 330 hours of training, attracted 4 361 participants. Supporting the launch of the Unified Patent Court (UPC), the Academy contributed to the training of UPC judges and staff.

The well-established network of the European patent information centres (**PATLIB**) has amplified the outreach of IP education. As of January 2024, the PATLIB network includes 320 information centres in 37 countries (36 EPO member states and one extension state). The EPO supports the PATLIB centres by providing training, funding, certification support and networking events such as the PATLIB annual conference.

The Knowledge Transfer to Africa (**KT2A**) initiative also had a significant impact on the outreach of EPO training activities. Launched in April 2022 with the aim of strengthening technology transfer capacity in Africa by promoting co-operation between the PATLIB network and African universities, the KT2A initiative reached 26 African countries and 64 universities by the end of 2023.

Overall, in 2023 the Academy organised 190 activities consisting of a total of 1 638 hours of learning: 917 in patent granting, 391 in technology transfer and 330 in patent litigation in addition to 46 hours within the PATLIB network. The total number of participants in live training activities reached 26 480 (a 20% increase since 2022). The main growth came in the areas of technology transfer and dissemination (up 35%) and patent litigation and enforcement (up 86%). Additionally, the e-learning centre had 18 748 registered active users in 2023.

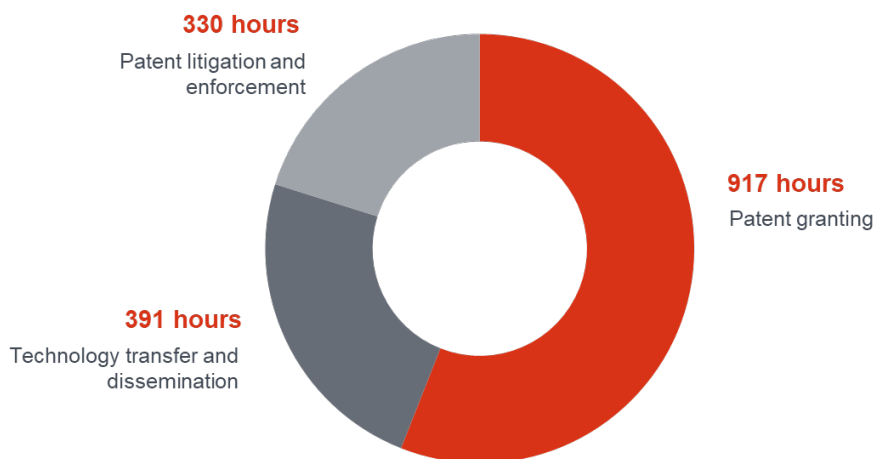
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1. Outreach

In 2023 the European Patent Academy organised 190 activities consisting of 1 638 hours of learning: 917 (56%) in patent granting, 391 (24%) in technology transfer and dissemination and 330 (20%) in patent litigation and enforcement. As in previous years, training activities were mostly delivered online.

Figure 1 – Total hours of training per area



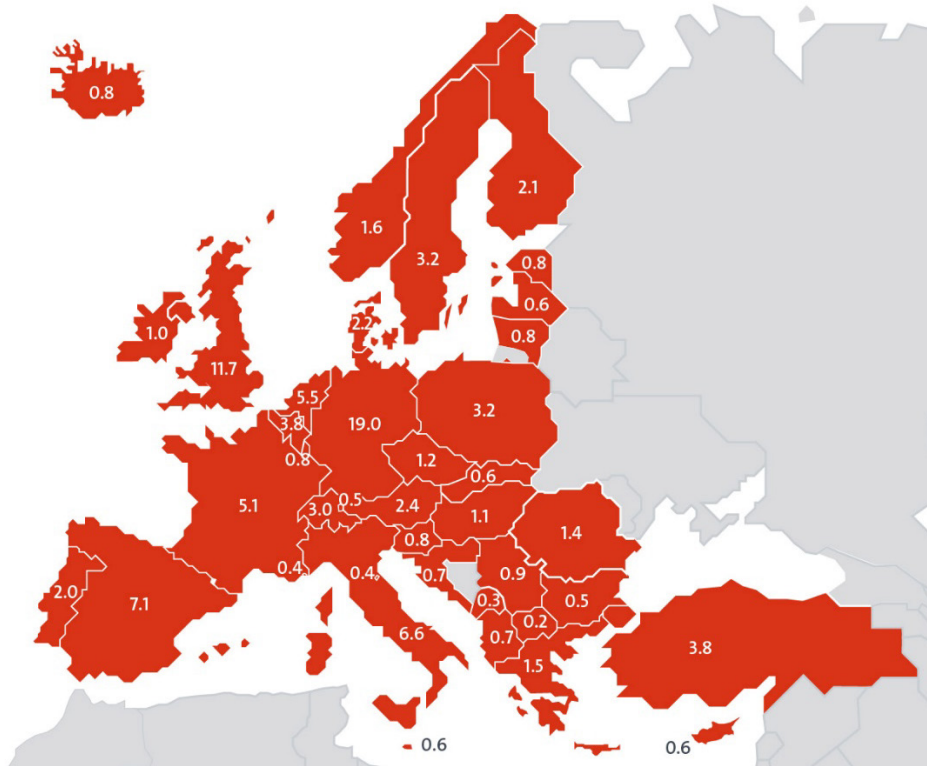
Source: EPO

The total number of participants in live training activities reached 26 480. This is a 20% increase in comparison to 2022 (21 017 participants), making it the third year in a row with the highest participation on record. Of all the participants, 8 656 took part in patent granting (NPOs and patent attorneys), 11 706 in technology transfer (business and academia), 4 361 in patent litigation and enforcement and 1 757 in the PATLIB network. In technology transfer and dissemination, there was a 35% increase from 2022. Participation in litigation and enforcement training activities increased by 86%, partly because the audience was extended to include litigators as well as judges, but also due to the high demand for UPC-related training.

Additionally, the e-learning centre offers courses and learning resources. Most are accessible for free by self-enrolment; a few courses are subject to prior registration and, in a few cases, a fee.

In 2023, the Academy offered 1 638 hours of training, to 26 480 of participants, and 18 748 active users registered at the e-learning centre.

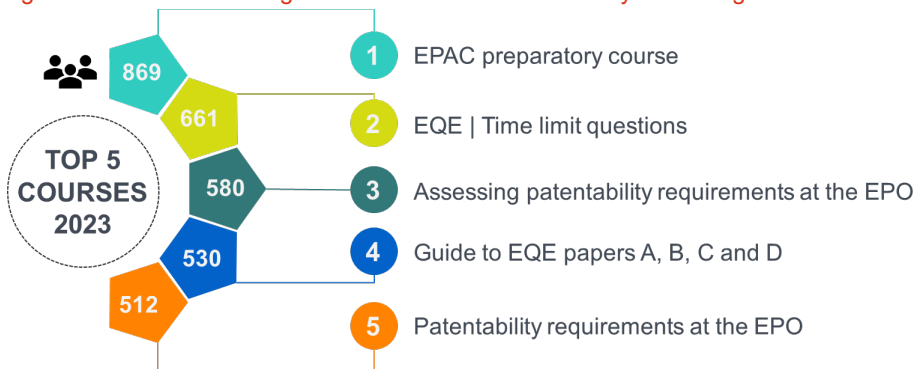
Figure 2 – Percentage of registered users on e-learning centre



Source: EPO

The e-learning centre received more than 200 000 visits in 2023, and around 1.3 million pages were viewed on the Academy website. Visitors to the e-learning centre looked for training on trending IP topics. The most popular courses in 2023 were those supporting EPAC or EQE certifications. These training activities contributed to the successful second edition of the EPAC and the continuation of digital EQE.

Figure 3 – Courses with highest enrolment on the Academy e-learning centre



Source: EPO

Courses with the highest enrolment in 2023 were those supporting EPAC and EQE certifications.

One of the objectives of the EPO, as set out in document CA/64/21¹ is to broaden the impact and reach of the Academy. To achieve this objective, the Academy promotes its activities and seeks to attract participants beyond member states. The EPO is committed to international co-operation and to supporting the development of effective patent systems around the world.

¹ CA/64/21 - Modernising the offer and framework of the European Patent Academy.

As part of this effort, training is provided to staff in national offices of non-contracting states, in particular to EPC extension and validation states as well as those participating in reinforced co-operation. In 2023, representatives from 51 non-contracting states attended Academy live events.

In patent granting, the vast majority of participants in the Academy training activities are from member states (89%).

The e-learning centre has 18 748 registered active users (active in the last two years), of whom 60% are from member states. The steady increase in participation from both member and, in particular, non-member states is due to digitalisation. It also proves the growing interest among users from non-European countries in innovation-related learning and the European patent system as well as the impact of the EPO's co-operation efforts with validation states and reinforced partnership states and specific co-operation initiatives such as KT2A.

Figure 4 – Geographical distribution of active users in the e-learning centre



Active users at the e-learning centre continue growing, especially from non-member states, showing a growing global interest in the EPO Academy training.

Source: EPO

Table 1 – Geographical distribution of number of visits and actions at the e-learning centre

	Europe	Asia	North America	Africa	South America	Oceania
Visits	167 126	18 991	8 506	4 072	1 673	756
Actions	1 154 320	90 123	29 739	29 511	7 753	4 000

Source: EPO

In 2023, participants at the Academy training were 53% women and 47% men.

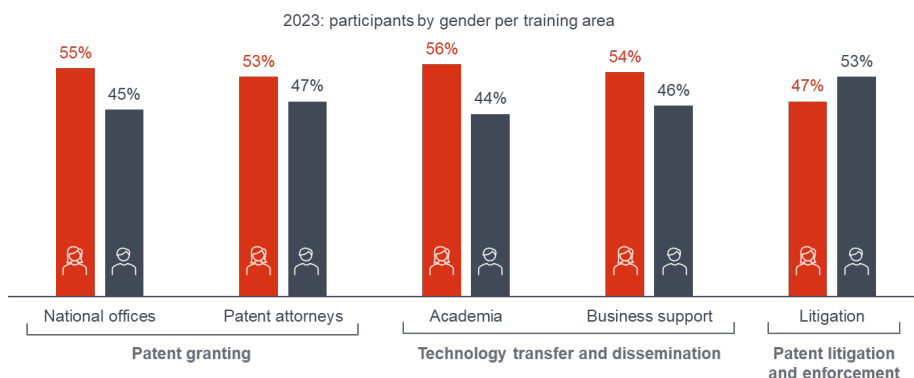
In terms of gender parity, 2023 confirms the positive impact of the transition to a digital format: in 2023, the proportion of women exceeded that of men in all training areas except patent litigation and enforcement. This continues the positive trend that began in 2021 and 2022.

Figure 5 – Gender balance in Academy activities 2023



Source: EPO

Figure 6 – Gender distribution in the three training areas in 2023

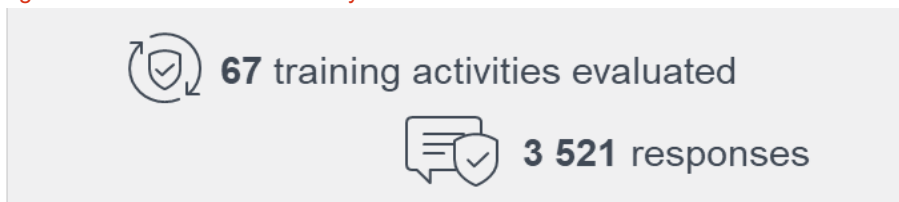


Source: EPO

The evaluation and assessment of Academy activities has followed the same methodology since 2009, focusing on participants' satisfaction with the Academy's training. Training activities are rated by participants from 1 (poorest) to 5 (excellent), on three topics: content, delivery and technology. Qualitative feedback has also been systematically collected in the free-text part of the evaluation form and has been used to continuously improve the Academy's training.

In 2023, 67 training activities were evaluated using the above methodology and the total number of responses received from participants was 3 521. The average rating was 4.35, comparable to the ratings received in previous years.

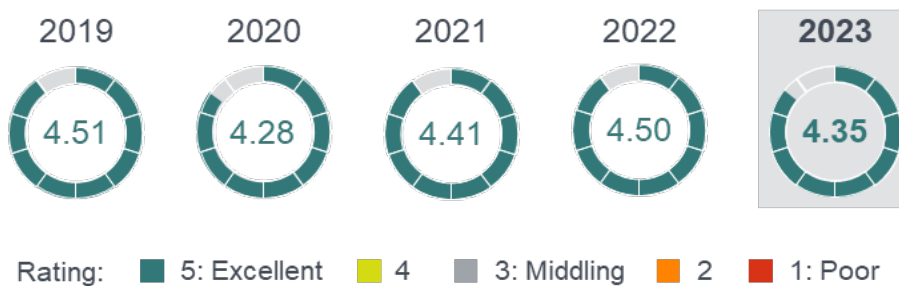
Figure 7 – Evaluation of Academy activities in 2023



Satisfaction rate

	Patent granting	Technology transfer and dissemination	Patent litigation and enforcement
2022	4.51	4.53	4.43
2023	4.34	4.39	4.38

Overall Academy rating



Source: EPO

2. The four pillars of the European Patent Academy

The Academy implements its training activity based on four pillars – digitalisation, modularity, co-operation and certification – and a set of harmonised educational activities and formats.

The Academy 2023 training catalogue focused on three thematic areas: patent granting, technology transfer and dissemination, and patent litigation and enforcement. These areas facilitate communication between target groups and enable the development of training itineraries that appeal to various audiences.

Quality IP education delivered in digital format, in a modular way to better fit users' needs, leading to certifications, and in collaboration with relevant partners and institutions.

Figure 8 – Three training areas, a broad range of audiences

Training areas	Audiences: Professional	Institutional
Patent granting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> patent examiners formalities officers/paralegals 	national patent offices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> patent attorneys formalities officers/paralegals 	patent attorneys' firms professional associations of patent attorneys and formalities officers / paralegals
Technology transfer and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scholars IP managers students and PhD students researchers 	universities research centres technology transfer associations public research institutions PATLIBs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP managers CEOs and managers 	technology transfer associations SMEs business associations
Patent enforcement and litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> judges lawyers prosecutors patent attorneys 	ministries of justice courts IP associations professional associations

Source: EPO

In addition to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, the Academy training also contributes to multiple other UN SDGs.

The UN SDGs are a collection of 17 interlinked goals, targeting public goods, aiming at a better and more sustainable future for all.

Figure 9 – Academy content linked to UN SDGs

UN SDG	Title	UN SDG	Title
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantum technologies Biotechnology (focus on vaccines) Green technologies Artificial Intelligence 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastics recycling and alternative plastics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable development and the patent system 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patenting seminar series 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring inventors talk series: Green hydrogen from sunlight and air
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green water technologies 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patenting computer-implemented inventions 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling the future 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutored programme on the specificities of patenting in the chemical field
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create – Protect – Innovate: Bringing ideas to market 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring inventors talk series: Unique fasteners that combine magnets with mechanical locking 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccines and therapeutics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccines and therapeutics 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software and patents in medtech: boosting your growth as SME
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-growth technology business (HTB) conference 2023 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From lab to market – innovation case studies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green water technologies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software and patents in medtech: boosting your growth as SME 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI technologies, regulatory framework and inventorship 		

Source: EPO

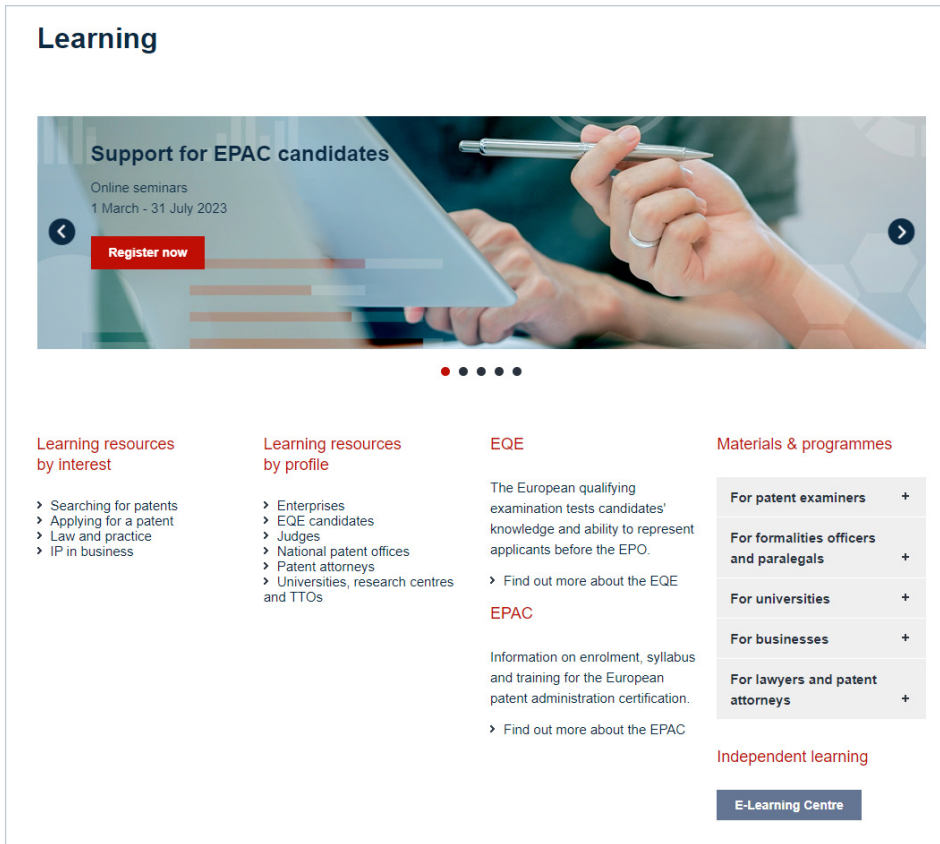
2.1 Digitalisation

Most of the Academy's training catalogue is delivered online, ranging from live training activities in Zoom format to Moodle-supported training activities. Most are offered free of charge.

The Academy offers conferences, lectures and courses (including self-paced courses); seminars (with a practical component); and workshops (for interactive participation by trainers and participants). These provide a varying degree of interaction between tutors and participants. Some include quizzes and surveys to obtain a certificate. Many are recorded and later made available on the e-learning centre as learning resources.

A new e-learning website makes all training activities easily searchable by topic and target audience.

Figure 10 – Digital learning environment



Source: EPO

2.2 Modularity

The Academy delivers modular training that can be combined and reused as necessary to suit users' needs. A good example is the Modular Intellectual Property Education Framework (MIPEF).

Modularity facilitates reuse and adjustment to the users' needs.

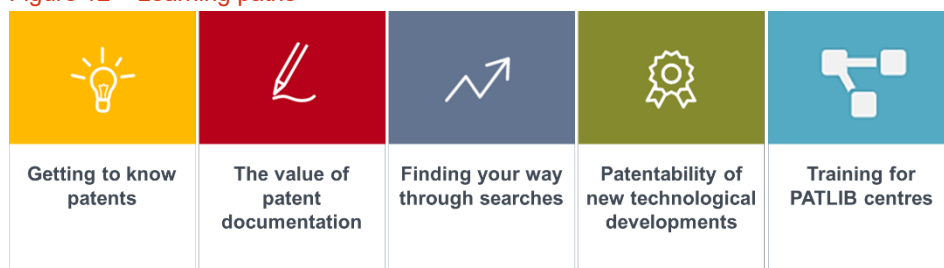
Figure 11 – Modular IP Education Framework (MIPEF)



Source: EPO

Modularity allows different training activities to be combined into learning paths tailored to specific target groups.

Figure 12 – Learning paths



Source: EPO

2.3 Certification

The Academy provides training leading to European certifications. The EQE pre-examination tutored course (with experienced epi tutors) and the preparatory course for the EPAC are among the courses with the highest enrolment on the e-learning centre, with 661 and 869 participants respectively in 2023.

The first examination leading to obtaining the EPAC took place in December 2022. The EPAC has been 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 EPO, as well as post-grant administrative procedures. To support candidates for the second EPAC edition in 2023, the Academy supported

Leading to certifications, the EQE pre-examination tutored course and the EPAC preparatory course are the most attended self-paced courses at the Academy.

869 candidates by offering a free-of-charge preparatory course as well as self-paced training materials. For each of the five modules, two online sessions were organised monthly, and monthly study groups were also set up, allowing candidates to benefit from collaborative learning.

The EQE pre-examination training course is a six-month course that offers a blended e-learning experience. This includes 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. In addition, informative sessions for EQE candidates were followed by 368 participants (a 16% increase from 2022), who could also test their skills and settings over a period of five months before the actual examination.

The above-mentioned MIPEF also aims to respond to university credit granting needs. Universities may grant six credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to students who successfully complete the two MIPEF courses.

2.4 Co-operation

Co-operation with member states in 2023 took the form of reports and exchanges in the context of the TOSC and the Council, as well as operational meetings to shape the training catalogue for 2024. An ad hoc working group of 33 experts and stakeholders from 15 NPOs met in May 2023 to identify their training preferences for the following year. Three main topics emerged as priorities: searching non-patent literature (NPL) and the ANSERA-based SEARCH tool (ABS); drafting written opinions; and examination in the fields of chemistry and computer-implemented inventions. NPOs also expressed the wish to train their staff in specific advanced patenting topics, such as AI for non-specialised audiences.

Co-operation with the EUIPO Academy continued in 2023 through the Pan-European Seal network and joint training activities to promote IP education to universities. Together with the EUIPO, the Academy organised two joint online seminars, which attracted over 400 participants and had an evaluation rating of 90%. December saw the second edition of the joint meeting of EPO-EUIPO Academies and member states' focal points to discuss topics and experiences around internal and external training. The meeting also served to strengthen the network of IP authorities in Europe.

In the area of patent attorneys, the Academy partners with organisations such as the epi and CEIPI to organise conferences and training activities, as agreed in the relevant MoUs and annual work plans.

Co-operation in technology transfer is also a high priority. Approximately 90% of activities in this area involved external partners, such as the European IP Helpdesk, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the European Innovation Council (EIC), Licensing Executives Society International (LESI), the Center for Intellectual Property, the EUIPO, the Enterprise Europe Network, the CEIPI, and the International Institute for IP Management.

Co-operation at various levels is critical to the success of the training offered by the Academy.

Table 2 – Examples of co-operation in technology transfer training

Title	Number of participants	Third party organising with EPO
IP strategy	590	I3PM, CEIPI
ip4inno – IP strategy for business	495	ip4inno consortium
IP management: evaluation and protection	291	I3PM, CEIPI
High-growth technology business forum 2023: IP strategy and management	260	LESI
IP assessment: how to improve informed decision making	241	European IP Helpdesk
IP management: value extraction and commercialisation	241	I3PM, CEIPI

Source: EPO

In patent litigation, co-operation takes place with a number of public- and private-sector partners. In 2023 the Academy supported several dedicated training sessions for UPC judges and staff in co-operation with the UPC. To support the entry into force of the Unitary Patent system on 1 June 2023, the Academy offered several seminars on the Unitary Patent.

The Academy co-operates closely with the Boards of Appeal (BoA) on organising the BoA key decisions conference and the patentability workshop with selected national judges. Collaboration with the European Patent Lawyers Association (EPLAW), the European Patent Litigators Association (EPLIT), the IP Judges Association (IPJA) and the Technical University of Munich was also crucial in organising several training activities.

3. Activities in the training areas

3.1 Patent granting

Training in patent granting focuses on the entire patent granting process, from formalities examination and prior art searches to substantive examination and post-grant procedures such as opposition. It is aimed at two main audiences: (i) staff of NPOs, government institutions and public-sector organisations, and (ii) professional representatives and paralegals.

3.1.1 National offices

In 2023, 36 training activities with 569 hours of training, including nine exchange platforms and one CPC-specific technical field seminar, were organised for NPO staff. These attracted 3 404 registrations. Nine national exchange platforms with a total audience of 592 participants took place in 2023, four events more than in 2022.

**National offices:
3 404 participants,
36 training activities,
and 569 hours of
training.**

Table 3 – National exchange platforms in 2023

Member state	Title	Date	Number of participants
Sweden	Markush claims	February 2023	11
France	Fusion froide	February 2023	10
Czech Republic	Smart technologies in the health and agriculture sectors	May 2023	15
Norway	Geophysics, drilling technology and CII	September 2023	103
Poland	Convergence	October 2023	64
Denmark	Wind turbines and CII	November 2023	21
Italy	Patenting in the field of pharmaceutical chemistry	November 2023	120
Türkiye	Artificial intelligence and metaverse inventions	November 2023	224
Spain	Packaging	December 2023	24

Source: EPO

The first edition of the iLearn Day Together conference took place on 11 October 2023. EPO and national examiners learned about and discussed substantive themes of common interest to promote best practices and increase understanding and predictability.

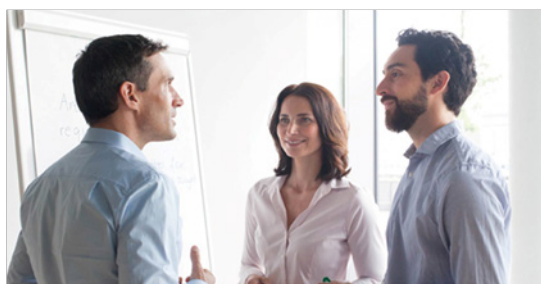
Other training offerings include the patenting seminar series, self-paced courses on computer-implemented inventions and business methods and on structured searches, and thematic workshops. At the request of member states, a workshop for formalities officers and several tutored programmes on amendments dealing with the specificities of patenting in the chemical field were organised.

The patenting seminar series continued in 2023 with three seminars on: Clarity and sufficiency of disclosure; Business methods, computer aided design and programs for computers; and Structured search (for patent examiners only). Extending over three months, each seminar addresses different aspects of the same topic and is thematically focused. A first session is offered to patent examiners and patent attorneys and a second session to examiners only.

A monthly newsletter highlighting the upcoming training activities offered by the Academy is distributed to all member states' NPOs through 42 contacts, who are encouraged to disseminate it within their organisation.

Figure 13 – National offices 2023

NATIONAL OFFICES



Source: EPO

3.1.2 Patent attorneys

In 2023, 5 252 participants attended a total of 27 training activities with 348 hours of training addressed to professional representatives and paralegals. Training in this area has traditionally been marked by three regular Matters conferences, examining the lifecycle of a patent from search to opposition.

Patent attorneys:
5 252 participants,
27 training activities,
and 348 hours of
training.

The 35th edition of the Search Matters conference took place in May. Based around sustainability, it showcased the EPO's patent search strategies and techniques and various publicly accessible databases and search programmes, enabling businesses and research organisations to improve their patent searches.

The Examination Matters conference was held in a multi-site hybrid format in Munich and Rijswijk in October. The event focused on several procedural and substantive aspects of examination proceedings. This conference, like Opposition Matters, was organised in close collaboration with the epi.

The Opposition Matters conference was held in November and became the most widely attended edition of this event. 22 speakers shared their insights regarding the most significant developments in procedural and substantive aspects of opposition proceedings.

In terms of attendance, these results confirm the success of the online format for the Matters conferences.

The Guidelines2day lecture series provided an overview of the 2023 Guidelines for Examination (in force as of March 2023) and the updates relevant for patent granting procedures. The demand for this topic was confirmed by the attendance of almost 1 600 participants (a 10% increase from 2022).

A series of PCT update lectures was organised in the three official languages, showing audiences' appreciation for training in different languages as well as the outreach of the English session, which attracted participants from non-European countries.

The Academy also continued to offer a four-week course on patenting computer-implemented inventions and a series of four lectures on patenting cross-field inventions called "Tackling the Future".

Figure 14 – Patent attorneys 2023

PATENT ATTORNEYS



Source: EPO

3.2 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 and entrepreneurs; and helping businesses to optimise the use of the IP system. Multiple training activities were organised in co-operation with the EUIPO Academy, the European IP Helpdesk, and various universities and academic associations.

With 11 706 participants, the area of technology transfer and dissemination grew a 35% compared to 2022.

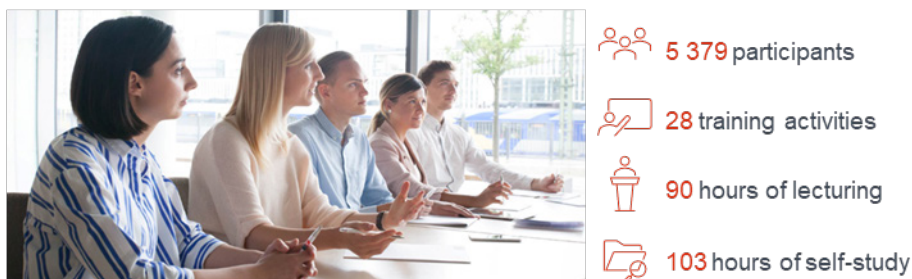
3.2.1 Academia

In 2023, 5 379 participants followed 28 training activities with 193 hours of training aimed at universities, students and researchers.

Academia: 5 379 participants, 28 training activities, 193 hours of training.

Figure 15 – Academia 2023

ACADEMIA



Source: EPO

To meet the increasing demand from universities and support the development of modern IP education in science and engineering university programmes, the Academy launched the MIPEF in 2023. The MIPEF consists of two courses, which are designed to be integrated into university curricula with three ECTS each.

The MIPEF is designed to be integrated in university curricula.

Figure 16 – The Modular IP Education Framework (MIPEF)

Modular IP Education Framework (MIPEF)

Goals and format

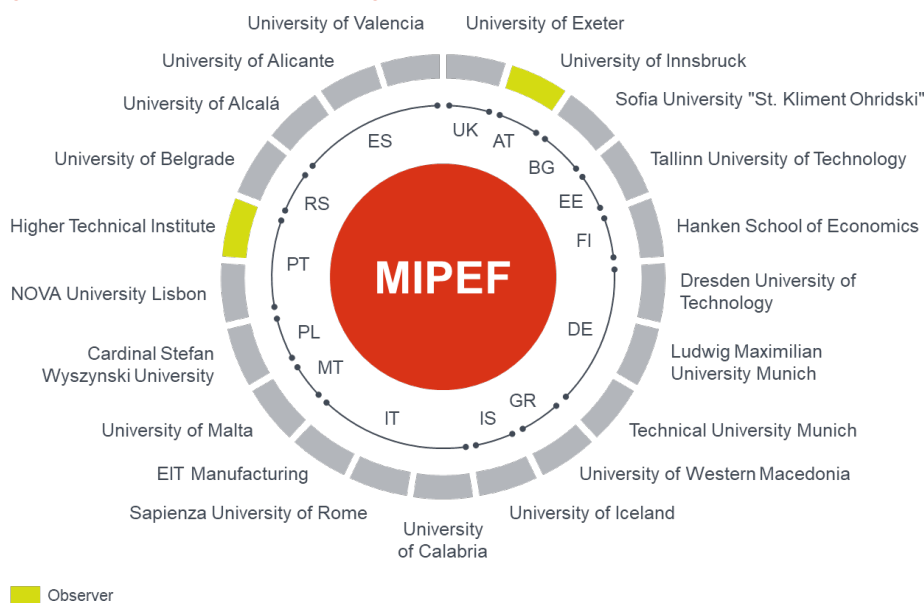
- Expand the academic curriculum with a free of charge IP course co-labelled with the EPO
- Customisable offer for Master's and PhD students
- Obtain EPO certificate and earn 6 ECTS
- Complement existing IP education with hands-on practitioners' perspective based on case studies
- Variety of teaching and assessment methodologies, including live sessions, interactive tutored fora and marked exercise



Source: EPO

In spring 2023, three universities (TUM Munich, Alicante University and Politecnico di Torino) started a pilot phase with the first entry-level course. In autumn 2023, the official launch of the MIPEF included 21 universities from 13 member states with 580 students registered.

Figure 17 – The MIPEF: participating universities in 2023

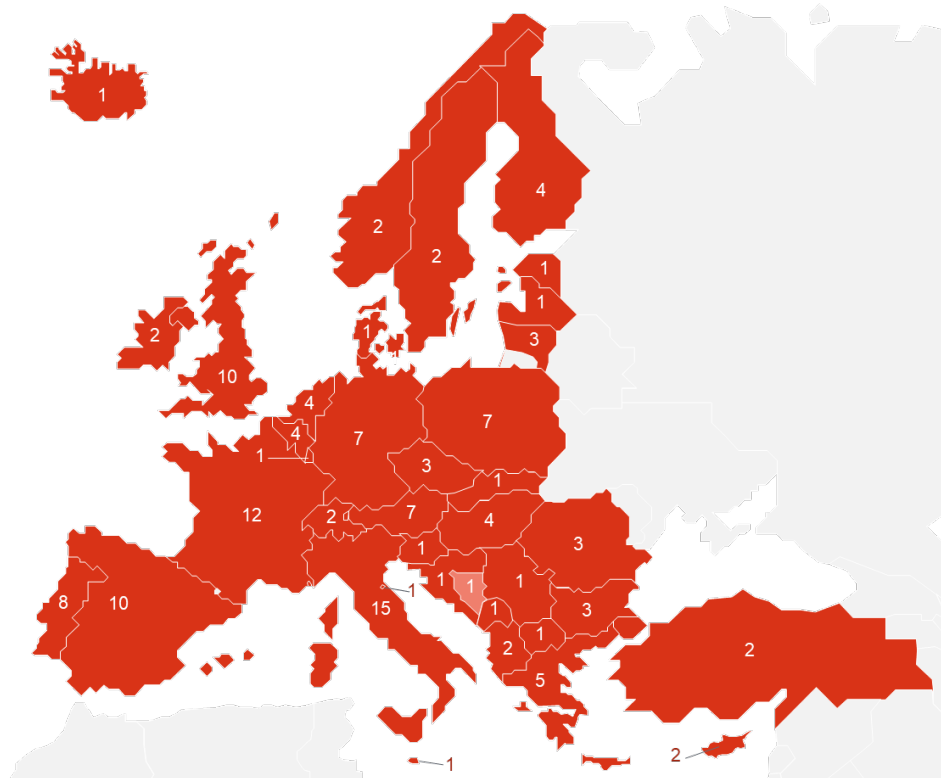


■ Observer

Source: EPO

The MIPEF has also served to strengthen the co-operation with PES YPP universities, resulting in more technical universities joining the programme. The PES YPP is co-managed with the EUIPO and offers graduates from EPO member states an opportunity to learn, develop their skills and increase future employability through challenging assignments in a range of EPO departments. In 2023, 11 universities from 10 member states joined the PES YPP by signing trilateral MoUs with the EPO and the EUIPO. The total number of participating universities reached 136 in 2023.

Figure 18 – The Pan-European Seal network: participating universities per country



February 2024
Source: EPO

The Academy also co-operated with the EUIPO Academy on the second edition of the online IP Intensive Programme for PES YPP universities and provided a course ranging from patent essentials to patent information and the Unitary Patent package.

Further training activities in this area included the advanced lecture series focusing on fibre-reinforced plastics recycling and alternative plastics, and vaccines and therapeutics. All lectures were recorded and can be found on the Academy's e-learning centre.

The series of live talks called Inspiring Inventors featuring European Inventor Award winners was continued, in co-operation with the EPO Communication department.

Three virtual study visits for students and the academic community were offered in 2023, combining a general introduction to the European patent system with topical developments in technical and institutional areas.

The well-established series on Patent protection for EU funding beneficiaries organised in co-operation with the European IPR Helpdesk focused on various topics ranging from AI in medtech, biotechnology and green technologies, to quantum technology and digital communication.

The Advanced lecture series continued with six new lectures focusing on fibre-reinforced plastics, recycling and alternative plastics, and vaccines and therapeutics. Over one month, four hours of weekly discussion led by examiners, patent attorneys, IP managers and inventors attracted diverse audiences.

Looking at new generations and having identified the need to foster the values of innovation and entrepreneurship among younger audiences, the EPO has started several initiatives in this area. The EPO supported the 18th edition of the European School Science Symposium held from 26 to 29 March 2023 in Varese, Italy. Also in collaboration with the European Schools, the Academy designed a complementary course on sustainability and active citizenship. In the framework of the EPC 50th anniversary, an e-learning module was developed to support educators at high school level to present IP to their pupils.

The EPO has started several initiatives addressed to kids and youngsters.

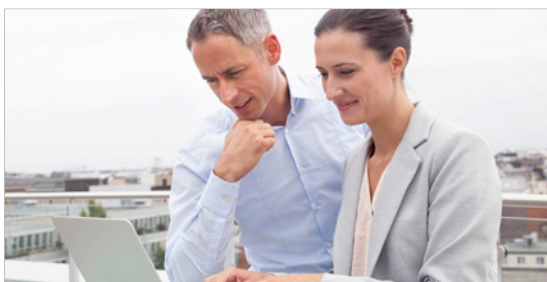
3.2.2 Business support

We offered 39 training activities for businesses in 2023, focusing on SMEs, their decision-makers and advising IP professionals. The events resulted in nearly 198 hours of training, including 109 hours of lectures, and were attended by 6 327 participants.

Business support: 6 327 participants, 39 activities, 198 hours of training.

Figure 19 – Business support 2023

BUSINESS SUPPORT



Source: EPO

The high-growth technology business (HTB) initiative made further progress in 2023, in collaboration with LESI. Three online forums and one on-site HTB conference were held, covering topics such as growth financing, build to sell and IP strategy and management. A total of 1 495 participants attended these events.

A variety of activities covered topics across several fields, such as software and patents in medtech, video games, green mobility and cancer fighting. They attracted entrepreneurs from over 50 countries.

Regular seminars were also organised regarding IP strategy and 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. The online seminar series, From Lab to Market – Successful Technology Transfer Journeys, organised with the European IPR Helpdesk, continued with four online seminars on SMEs and technology transfer case studies.

3.3 Patent litigation and enforcement

Training in this area is aimed at judges and litigators, including to a lesser extent members of the BoA and pleading patent attorneys. In 2023, 14 training activities with 330 hours of training attracted 4 361 participants. Participants in this area grew by 86% compared to 2022. This is explained by the extension of its

Patent litigation: 4 361 participants, 14 training activities, 330 hours of training.

audience from judges to cover litigators too, and by the high demand for UPC-related training.

2023 saw the first Litigation Matters conference, organised online in partnership with the UPC, EPLAW and EPLIT. With a line-up of 21 speakers, including leading practitioners across Europe and UPC judges, the conference was devoted to sharing initial experiences and cases of implementing the Unitary Patent package, and the latest practice in patent litigation in Europe. With a total of 1 443 registrations, the conference completes the annual cycle of EPO Matters conferences.

The annual Boards of Appeal and Key Decisions Conference presented the highlights of the BoA's case law, the most recent decisions of the Enlarged Board and a full panel of judges on claim construction. This event attracted 1 200 participants.

In co-operation with the Intellectual Property Judges' Association (IPJA) and EPLAW, the annual European Judges' Forum, looking at the first few months since the UPC entered into operation on 1 June, was held in October in Venice, Italy.

The judicial internship programme was held for the first time in hybrid format, combining training on patentability, a mock trial inspired by a BoA case and a stay at the BoA including attending the annual Munich International Patent Law Conference (MPLC).

The conference on AI technologies, regulation and inventorship held in May dealt with topical legal issues on the use of AI in inventorship, recent EPO cases regarding AI patent applications and the evolving AI regulatory environment. It attracted 658 participants. The Academy also supported the annual MPLC on the topic of (Anti-)anti-suit injunctions in patent infringement cases, organised by the Technical University of Munich, and two UPC mock trials organised by CEIPI and AIPPI Finland together with the Finnish Market Court.

In 2023 the Academy supported the successful launch of the UPC by contributing to the training of UPC judges and staff. The first training activity, addressed to all legally and technically qualified judges, took place in January 2023 in Budapest, Hungary. Between January and March, the Academy also contributed to two other UPC training activities, on internal rules and practice for UPC administrative staff and on the Case Management System (CMS); in November it provided overall organisational support for UPC training for legally qualified judges and staff in Milan, Italy.

Figure 20 – Patent litigation 2023

PATENT LITIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT



-  4 361 participants
-  14 training activities
-  268 hours of lecturing
-  62 hours of self-study

Source: EPO

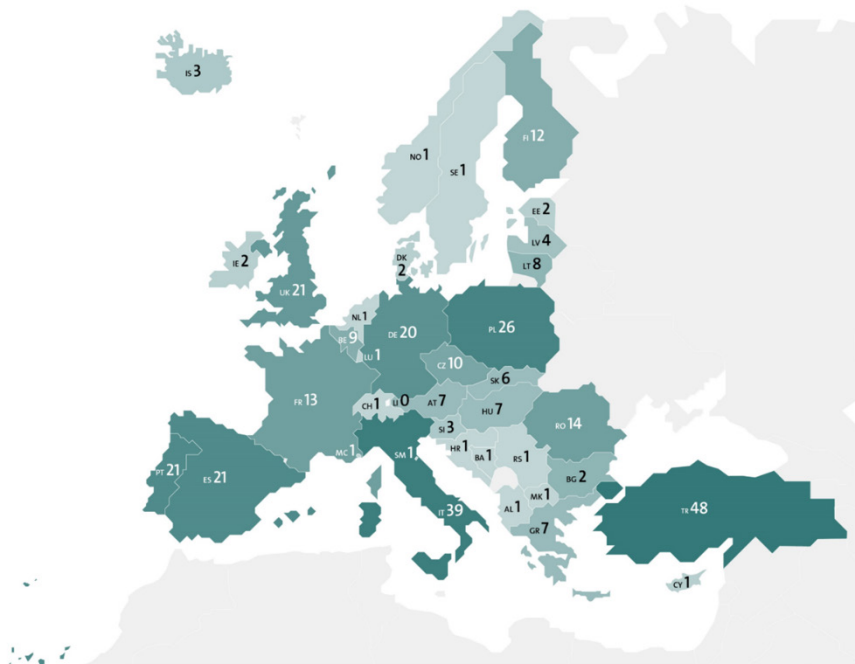
4. PATLIB network

The well-established network of the European patent information centres (PATLIB) and its Knowledge Transfer to Africa (KT2A) initiative have also had a significant impact on the outreach of EPO training activities in 2023.

PATLIB is a network spread over 37 countries (36 EPO member states and one extension state) and comprises 320 centres as of January 2024. The centres offer advice and services on IP, patent information and technology transfer to local industries, SMEs, researchers and innovators.

In 2023, the PATLIB network gathered 320 centres from 37 countries.

Figure 21 – The PATLIB network: number of centres per country



January 2024
Source: EPO

4.1 Support for the PATLIB network

To contribute to the provision of IP services at national level, the EPO supports the PATLIB centres by providing training and certifications, as well as exchange sessions to update the network on specific relevant topics, such as improving patent management by measuring inventions' technological quality.

In May 2023, the PATLIB conference was held in Tallinn, Estonia in close co-operation with the NPO.

The 2023 PATLIB conference was held in Tallinn, Estonia, in hybrid form, allowing an all-time record of 3 757 participants.

Figure 22 – Training activities for the PATLIB network staff

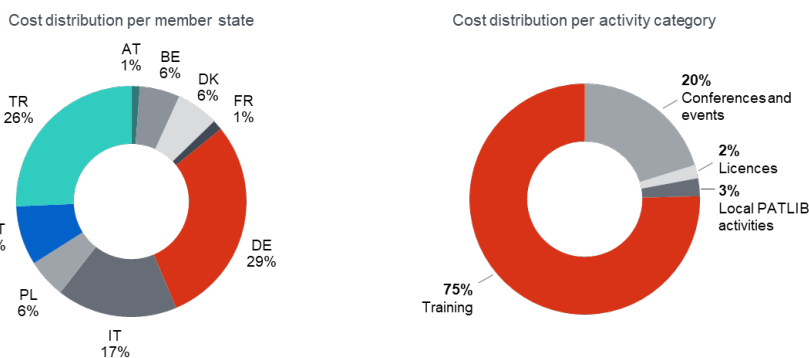
PATLIB CENTRES



Source: EPO

Additionally, the digital services package allows PATLIB centres to receive funding from the EPO to reimburse various costs. In 2023, 64 activities from nine member states were reimbursed, mostly for attendance at training activities on technology transfer, for the organisation of one local PATLIB event and for software licences. Figure 23 shows the kind of activities reimbursed and the amounts reimbursed per country.

Figure 23 – Distribution of the digital service package per member state and per activity



Source: EPO

4.2 Knowledge Transfer to Africa

The KT2A programme was launched in April 2022 with the goal of strengthening technology transfer capacity and facilitating IP awareness and IP know-how in Africa by promoting co-operation between the PATLIB network and African universities.

The universities are selected in collaboration with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO), the Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle (OAPI) and NPOs, and in synergy with organisations already active in the area such as WIPO's Technology and Innovation Support Centres (TISC) network.

The KT2A initiative includes three types of activities: training open to university staff and students; mentoring offered by PATLIB experts; and concrete twinning partnerships between specific universities and PATLIB centres.

In 2023 two major events took place as part of KT2A: one in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), from 24 to 26 July; and one in Abuja (Nigeria), from 5 to 6 September, in hybrid format.

At the end of 2023, 64 universities and 26 African countries have joined the KT2A initiative.

Participating universities report positive results, and not just in terms of the training available. They also highlight the collaboration with PATLIB experts and strengthened exchange with other universities. The initiative is expanding the outreach of the EPO's services and training offer, in addition to promoting IP awareness and valorisation in Africa.

5. Conclusion

By focusing on the areas of patent granting, technology transfer and dissemination, and patent litigation, the Academy addresses the training needs of a diverse IP community. This ensures that its training activities remain relevant, impactful and conducive to inclusiveness and sustainability.

Key developments where the Academy's high-quality IP training has contributed in 2023 include the launching of the Unitary Patent and supporting the UPC, the deployment of the new ANSERA-based SEARCH tool, and the co-operation initiatives with validation and reinforced partnership countries. New areas of training and target audiences have been added to a portfolio fundamentally devoted to the patent granting process, while paying more attention to the needs of universities, SMEs and professional groups such as judges, paralegals and attorneys. This has been possible through systematic and continuous collaboration with stakeholders, notably member states.

The successful launch and implementation of the MIPEF underscores the Academy's commitment to modularity, digitalization, co-operation and certification. The KT2A initiative further illustrates the EPO's dedication to develop a global IP ecosystem, which is interconnected and innovative, and ultimately benefits our member states.

The training provided by the Academy in 2023 has been key to support broader EPO goals. Thanks to the learning and actions of 2023, the Academy is better prepared to meet the goals of 2024 and contribute to the Strategic Plan 2028.

Through its comprehensive educational programmes, strategic partnerships and pioneering initiatives, the EPO's commitment to deliver high-quality IP education through the Academy not only serves the immediate training needs of the European IP community, securing the knowledge and skills to operate effectively and thereby contributing to Europe's innovation capacity, but also lays the ground for a future where IP education and awareness are integral to foster innovation, economic growth and co-operation across borders.