



EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE

Annual Review

2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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During 2025, the EPO made significant progress on many of the key performance indicators (KPIs) across all five drivers that underpin the EPO Strategic Plan 2028 (SP2028). Several KPI targets have been met early and others have been made more challenging due to progress made.

Under **Driver 1 – People**, the EPO focused on fostering staff engagement, attracting the best talent from across Europe, emphasising learning and development, and supporting mobility and flexibility. Overall staff engagement rose to 75%, achieving the overall target and showing improvements in several areas. The New Ways of Working Scheme continues to be widely valued, with 60% of staff expressing a preference for remote or hybrid working.

In 2025, the EPO received over 11 700 job applications, an all-time high. Gender diversity continued to be a priority, with 35.5% of all staff and 30.5% of new examiner recruits being women.

In 2025, the EPO received over 11 700 job applications, an all-time high. Gender diversity continued to be a priority, with 35.5% of all staff and 30.5% of new examiner recruits being women. This was partly thanks to the rollout of the empowering women campaign which included a series of communication measures showcasing women patent examiners and targeting potential women candidates on LinkedIn. Of the 97 Young Professionals who joined the Office, 63% were women. The Young Professionals Programme was expanded in 2025, with 20 new STEM universities; their students will be eligible to apply from 2026 onwards.

During the year, the EPO enhanced the quality, coverage and impact of its learning offer. Initiatives included the introduction of a targeted re-skilling programme for examiners, with a pilot project in batteries and fuel cells; lectures from university and industry experts and visits to conferences and fairs; a comprehensive AI learning programme; a peer-to-peer management support programme for women team managers; and a new process to strengthen knowledge transfer activities during the offboarding of staff.

We continue to value internal mobility, allocating resources where they are most needed. We also took steps to support staff health, such as the May edition of Campus Days with a broad programme focused on sports, safety and preventative care, attended by over 4 000 colleagues. Awareness promotion on health continued, with 88% of managers now having completed the mandatory training on psychosocial wellbeing.

In social dialogue, the EPO held a number of meetings and made progress on many topics such as a more inclusive parenthood scheme and enhancing confidential counselling services for staff, by introducing external Workplace Solutions counsellors, who offer support with professional challenges. We continued to promote a culture of dialogue, resulting in a significant decrease in litigation: internal appeals fell by 27% and ILOAT complaints were down by 35% compared to 2024.

In 2025, we strengthened the effectiveness and maturity of the Integrated Management System and advanced sustainability reporting in line with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards. As part of the Building Investment Programme, all staff in Berlin were moved to the new office by the end of February 2025; the Shell building in The Hague was fully decoupled in preparation for deconstruction; and new solar panels were installed in Munich.

The EPO continued its digital transformation in line with **Driver 2 – Technologies**, focusing on simpler processes and modern platforms, while safeguarding security, availability and user services.

The digitalisation of the patent granting process (PGP) has been advanced with improvements to task management in the Patent Workbench, support for workload management via the Digital File Allocation, the integration of the ANSERA search tool with examination tools such as Trimaran, and support for communication drafting. AI tools have been implemented to assist examiners in areas including minute writing

for Oral Proceedings, search, classification and the Digital File Repository.

Under the online user engagement delivery pipeline, initiatives included: opening the Legal Interactive Platform (LIP) to all MyEPO users; improving the MyEPO interface and increasing self-service and digital actions; launching a searchable database of professional representatives; enhancements to the shared area; the introduction of colour filings; preparation for end-to-end DocX filing; and decommissioning of the legacy online filing software (eOLF).

The EPO also modernised and simplified corporate-support systems. During 2025, we created a talent intelligence hub for mapping employees' skills, digitalised several HR processes, such as the registration of partners as well as parenthood declarations, and enhanced the offboarding process by introducing structured checklists for staff. We also made several efficiency improvements in finance and procurement, for example in the financial closing process, and provided new online services for the Administrative Council secretariat. A number of initiatives helped modernise the IT

landscape, including an upgrade to the new cloud-based SAP technology, faster WiFi 6 in Berlin and the decommissioning of several legacy technologies.

With regard to **Driver 3 – High-quality, timely products and services**, in addition to strengthening quality at source by enhancing digital tools that support applicants in filing and communication with the EPO, we also expanded self-service features to improve access to patent and non-patent literature (including multimedia). Transparency and interaction were improved through enhancements to the Shared Area.

In 2025, 130 user meetings were organised. We held 42 meetings with user associations where we discussed overall quality and timeliness objectives and performance and topics of interest such as the developments in the Unitary Patent and Unified Patent Court (UPC). Where the user associations represented a particular geographic region, we compared the usage of EPO's acceleration schemes and the UP and UPC from one region to another.

During 2025, we created a talent intelligence hub for mapping employees' skills, digitalised several HR processes, such as the registration of partners as well as parenthood declarations, and enhanced the offboarding process by introducing structured checklists for staff.

As part of our work to build on the accuracy and completeness of searches and written opinions and to improve examination by ensuring that the EPC is applied in a consistent way across our examining teams, we further integrated the Active Search Divisions (ASD). Overall, 93% of respondents to the User Satisfaction Survey 2024/2025 (USS) expressed satisfaction with our search products and the audit outcomes by Directorate Quality Audit (DQA) for search and written opinion reached 94% with no findings related to validity.

We have taken several steps to improve assessment of added subject-matter and by the end of the year our quality audits on grants showed fewer findings on added subject-matter (4.6% of audited grants) - achieving our KPI. We also implemented several actions to strengthen clarity in the Patent Granting Process (PGP). Following an in-depth analysis of Boards of Appeal (BoA) decisions, five new KPIs were added to the Quality Dashboard for examination and opposition and to improve the application of the problem-solution approach in the assessment of inventive step, a workshop for all opposition examiners took place in June. At grant stage, overall audit outcomes as measured by DQA improved, with the proportion of files with no findings related to validity reaching 88.8% in 2025.

Last year, three Stakeholder Quality Assessment Panels (SQAPs) sessions were held: one on search reports and written opinions, one on grants and the first-ever session dedicated to oppositions. In total, 66 attorneys and EPO experts assessed 108 cases, organised into 18 panels across different technical fields. This was welcomed by users and the outcome was fed into our Quality Action Plan. The SQAPs were also changed to allow more observers, both external and internal, almost doubling the number of observers who attended the sessions.

On timeliness, 82.6% of search, examination and opposition standard files were produced on time in 2025. Search timeliness (standard cases) further improved to 86.8% at the end of 2025, with a mean duration of 5.1 months, while 75.8% of standard cases were finalised within the 36-month target starting from the valid examination request, with a mean duration of examination of 24.2 months. Overall, our processing time from filing to grant in 2025 was 36.5 months for standard cases, with 74.8% of such cases being completed end-to-end within 48 months (78.5% within 48 months for divisional applications).

In 2025, we managed to reduce further the opposition stock down to a low level of 3 335 pending files, significantly less than the pre-pandemic number of 5 000. As a result of our efforts in this area the overall mean duration is now at 19.1 months, and 51.6% of standard cases were completed within 18 months, a clear improvement compared to 38.4% in 2024 with a commitment to achieving our target of 70% on time by the end of 2026.

Demand for our products remained high in 2025, with a total incoming workload of 443 352 patent products (searches/written opinions, examinations and oppositions) during the year.

Under Driver 4 – Partnerships in 2025 the EPO deepened collaboration with European and international partners to reinforce Europe’s innovation ecosystem, support users and enhance competitiveness, legal certainty and skills development.

The 19th Annual Meeting on Co-operation was held in Reykjavik in June and for the first time, it featured a standalone Young Inventors Prize ceremony.

Preparations for the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova progressed steadily, marking an important step towards extending the European Patent Convention (EPC) community to 41 contracting states. Towards the end of 2025, Georgia also formally expressed interest in acceding to the EPC. During the year, new Bilateral Co-operation Agreements were concluded with all 39 member states.

In December, the second cycle of the convergence of practices programme concluded, representing progress towards greater alignment of practices and enhanced legal certainty for users across Europe. The EPO also continued to drive substantive patent law harmonisation with a European case law study on prior user rights.

In IT cooperation, 2025 saw further consolidation of services, decommissioning of legacy systems and the launch of the Digital Toolkit. Deliveries included upgraded Front Office services such as improved security, accessibility for users with disabilities, as well as interoperability with back office systems in member states, full deployment of ANSERA-based SEARCH to over 40 national patent offices in both member and non-member states, and AI-enabled solutions supporting classification, translation and access to legal information.

The European Commission adopted the Adequacy Decision for the EPO, recognising its data protection framework as providing an equivalent level of protection to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This makes the EPO the first international organisation to receive such a recognition, while bringing our data exchange with member states under a more solid framework.

The validation agreement with the Lao People’s Democratic Republic entered into force and Burundi, El Salvador and São Tomé and Príncipe signalled their intention to initiate validation negotiations.

Multilateral co-operation advanced through engagement in meetings of the IP5, which focused on topics including advancing digital transformation and strengthening the application of AI in patent office operations, and the Trilateral with the JPO and USPTO, which highlighted improving patent quality and operational efficiency through advanced IT and AI-driven tools, as well as on aligning approaches to emerging technologies.

In 2025, the EPO and CNIPA agreed to extend the pilot whereby the EPO acts as an International Searching Authority (ISA) for nationals and residents of the People's Republic of China filing PCT applications in English with CNIPA for a further five years, until 30 November 2031.

A new version of the EPC and PCT-EPO Guidelines was pre-published on 1 February ahead of entry into force on 1 April including, for the first time, a set of Unitary Patent Guidelines. On 1 April 2025, amendments introducing gender-neutral language into the EPC Implementing Regulations and associated texts entered into force.

By the end of 2025, almost 79 000 Unitary Patents had been registered by the EPO. In 2025, more than one in four European patents granted resulted in a request for unitary effect. In EPC member states, uptake was even higher at 40%, reflecting strong interest from European industry with particular interest from SMEs, individual inventors, universities and public research organisations (PROs). In June 2025, the EPO launched an upgraded and expanded version of the Unitary Patent Dashboard. The Office published its contribution to the European Commission's report on the operation of the Unitary Patent Regulation.

During the year, the European Patent Academy delivered 136 training activities, totalling 1 532 learning hours and attracting almost 30 000 registrations. Engagement with digital learning also continued to grow, with the e-learning centre reaching over 23 000 active users and recording close to 300 000 visits. Important projects include the Modular Intellectual Property Education Framework (MIPEF), the Children & Youth initiative and conferences such as Opposition Matters, Litigation Matters, the BoA Case Law Conference and the European Judges' Forum.

The PATLIB Conference 2025 in Vienna attracted a record of almost 4 000 online viewers. The Knowledge Transfer to Africa (KT2A) initiative extended its reach, engaging 80 universities in 29 African countries through tailored training, mentoring and twinning partnerships.

The Observatory expanded its output, with 14 publications which were downloaded almost 100 000 times during the year. It also launched the Scenarios for the Future 2025–2045 initiative to be delivered in 2027.

Under Driver 5 – Financial Sustainability, the Office implemented different actions. To enhance monitoring, the EPO developed the Financial Study KPI dashboard, while the insourcing of EPOTIF asset management will improve cost efficiency. To mitigate the risk from exposure to capital market fluctuations and inflation we implemented a funding level of 105% for all benefit liability plans and applied the new risk tolerance policy to the funding of pension and social security schemes. During the December Council, the Office also presented a review of the salary adjustment method, which has completed its six-year cycle.

By delivering on all drivers under SP2028, the EPO is making progress on its goal of building a more sustainable patent office that is high-quality, accessible and future proof. The EPO is in a strong position as it looks forward to marking its 50th anniversary in 2027.

| Top key performance indicators (KPIs) | End 2024 value | End 2025 value |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Staff engagement | 73% | 75% |
| Gender diversity | 35.3% | 35.5% |
| Women recruited as examiners | 27% | 31% |
| Geographic diversity | 35 | 36 EPC countries represented |
| Women in top management | 33.3% | 38.1% |
| Environmental sustainability | 2 984 | 3 010 t CO2e |
| Availability of IT systems (internal) | 99.7% | 99.7% |
| Availability of IT systems (external) | 99.7% | 99.9% |
| Digitalisation and modernisation of Patent Administration processes | 22.6% | 32.1% |
| Corporate processes digitalised | 70.7% | 78.1% |
| Leverage AI | 46.7% | 45.8%¹ |
| End-to-end timeliness | 75.2% | 74.8%² |
| Search and Written Opinion: Incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step | 6.2% | 5% |
| Search: Closer prior art found | 3% | 2.8% |
| Grants: Incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step | 6.8% | 6.6% |
| Grants: Finding on added subject-matter | 5.9% | 4.6% |
| IT co-operation | 141 | 184 IT projects implemented |
| Convergence of practice | 77.9% | 79.1% member states |
| Validation agreements | 16 | 16 validation agreements³ |
| Modular IP education framework in university curricula | 40 | 90 universities |
| Observatory on Patents and Technology | 139 000 | 234 000 views |
| Productivity | 111.5 | 115.6 products per FTE |
| Plan production | 0.0% | 1.3% |
| Funding level | 80.1% | 88.0% |

1 - "Leverage AI" KPI decreased to 45.8% in Q4 2025, due to an exceptional closure of a backlog of 3 382 manual classification tasks during this period.

2 - "End-to-end timeliness" KPI showed a 0.5% lower end-year result compared to 2024 influenced by a decrease in "Timeliness of divisional applications" and "Timeliness of examination".

3 - Seven with signed agreements and nine under formal negotiation.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

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DRIVER 01

PEOPLE

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In 2025, the EPO continued to invest in its people, with a focus on fostering staff engagement, attracting the best talent from across Europe, emphasising learning and development, and supporting mobility and flexibility.

Foster staff engagement

Staff engagement continued the positive trend of recent years, with the results of the **2025 Staff Engagement Survey** stable or improving in most categories compared to 2024. Overall engagement has increased further and now reached the SP2028 target of 75%, up from 73% in the 2024 survey and 63% in 2022, reflecting sustained progress since 2019. Improvements are particularly evident in areas linked to respect⁴ (+2%), commitment to quality⁵ (+12%) and confidence in managers⁶ (+6%), indicating that a gradual cultural shift is taking hold.

Staff opinion remains strong in several enabling areas, including clarity of goals (86%), use of digital tools (80%), wellbeing support (81%) and line management (84%). The survey highlights the central role of line managers in maintaining engagement, with regular team meetings and one-to-one exchanges consistently associated with more positive staff views and stronger team performance.

4 - Survey question: "We treat each other with dignity and respect at work."

5 - Survey question: "Our daily work reflects our commitment to delivering quality products and services."

6 - Survey question: "I have confidence in the decisions made by senior management (PD and above)."

The EPO's flexible working arrangements (the **New Ways of Working scheme**) continue to be widely valued and are most frequently cited by staff as the most important organisational change of recent years. This flexibility shows a positive impact on productivity, engagement and wellbeing, with 60% of staff expressing a preference for remote or hybrid working. Newcomers increasingly report the flexibility offered by the EPO as a determining factor in joining the organisation (from 75% in 2024 to 85% in 2025). Staff feedback underlines the importance of actively supporting team cohesion and social connection, particularly in a more flexible working environment.

The 2025 examiner recruitment campaigns generated an all-time high number of applications, exceeding 11 700 overall and reflecting the impact of improved employer branding and targeted sourcing measures.

While overall results are positive, the survey highlights ongoing challenges in communication around management decisions, internal processes and access to learning and development opportunities. Staff feedback points to the need for clearer communication, simpler processes and continued attention to team cohesion and the sense of belonging.

Overall, the Office is moving in the right direction, with engagement strengthening and scores improving across most categories. Sustaining this progress will require building on the strengths of flexibility and effective line management by reinforcing the central role of line managers to connect with their staff, communicate clearly and transparently, and promote learning and development. In 2026, the EPO will define targeted follow-up actions Office-wide for these key priorities.

Attract talent

In 2025, the EPO further strengthened its ability to attract and recruit the talent required to deliver on SP2028. In a competitive STEM labour market, the Office consolidated its position as an employer of choice while maintaining an efficient recruitment process and sustained progress towards its diversity objectives.

The 2025 examiner recruitment campaigns generated an **all-time high number of applications**, exceeding 11 700 overall and reflecting the impact of improved employer branding and targeted sourcing measures. Recruitment planning remained agile during the year to reinforce specialist capacity in key technology fields. The Office maintained an end-to-end recruitment cycle below four months and achieved 30.5% women among new examiner recruits, meeting the SP2028 KPI target despite continued structural gender imbalances across several technical domains.

■ **Roll out of “empowering women campaign”:** The campaign comprised a series of communication measures showcasing women patent examiners, including targeted posts on LinkedIn to reach out to potential women candidates. These efforts had a strong market response, reaching more than 200 000 users, and supported progress towards our gender diversity goals.

■ **Enhanced learning journey for pipeline candidates:** Following a successful pilot, the enhanced learning journey, now including PGP-related courses, was implemented to support early orientation to the PGP and the work of the EPO. This helps to give new recruits a smooth start to their careers in the organisation.

■ **Enhanced university liaison concept:** The Young Professionals Programme (YPP) was expanded to include more than 20 new universities specialising in STEM subjects to attract more STEM candidates to the EPO. Students from these universities will be able to apply from 2026 onwards, contributing to the EPO’s core business, namely the PGP.

■ **Young Professionals Programme (YPP):** The YPP continued to attract early-career talent to the Office. In 2025, 97 Young Professionals joined the programme, bringing the total cohort to 224 participants across all three years, distributed across business areas and sites. The group represents 28 nationalities and 63% are women. In the PGP, 58% of the 77 young professionals are

female. In addition, 11 Young Professionals were recruited to budget posts, securing their talent and fresh perspective for the EPO for years to come.

■ **Collaboration with member states through the Young Professional secondment scheme:** Secondment opportunities for Young Professionals continued to generate strong engagement from both host organisations and participants. A total of 27 Young Professionals will complete their secondment to 12 NPOs and 2 PATLIBS in 14 member states between October 2025 and May 2026.

Develop talent

In 2025, maintaining the commitment to continuous learning and supported by the skills-based approach and the 70/20/10 learning model, the EPO enhanced the quality, coverage and impact of its learning offer across all roles.

■ **Technical training development plans:** The EPO takes a comprehensive approach to developing and maintaining technical skills among its examiners to ensure they remain abreast of evolving technologies. To support examiners transitioning between technical fields, a targeted re-skilling programme was introduced in 2025, with a pilot project in the area of batteries and fuel cells. Specific learning activities were identified and mapped to each skill, offering tailored training and development activities to bridge possible gaps.

■ **Industry lectures and external expertise:** Lectures were delivered by technical experts from universities and industry to provide examiners with insights into the latest advances and

trends, fostering a deeper understanding of real-world applications and emerging technologies. Additionally, over 350 examiners visited 82 conferences and fairs in 2025 to stay up to date with the latest developments in their technical fields.

■ **AI awareness campaign:** In September 2025, the EPO launched a comprehensive AI learning programme, starting with an “AI Explorer Pass” that offers short elearning modules, practical examples and guidance to build foundational AI understanding. A continuous learning stream ran in parallel, providing varied training sessions, expert exchanges and access to materials on the AI learning hub, while AI tools – such as expanded Microsoft Copilot licences and new internal solutions – were deployed. To help all staff confidently, responsibly and practically adopt AI, these initiatives will be complemented by a network of AI change agents that will translate AI potential into practical applications in each business area.

■ **Enhanced support measures for EQE and EPAC:** The EPO continued to support examiners who wanted to sit the European Qualifying Exam (EQE) to complement their expertise and professional skills as well as paralegals, patent administrators and formalities officers to prepare for European Patent Administration Certificate (EPAC), with a view to validating the skills and knowledge needed to handle European and international patent procedures before the EPO with confidence. In 2025, 14 staff members obtained the EPAC, bringing the number of EPO staff certified since 2022 to 37.

■ **Peer-to-peer learning:** Peer learning remained a key component of the EPO’s learning approach in 2025, with 190 Continuous Knowledge Transfer (CKT) events organised Office-wide and almost 16 000 hours invested. Topics covered ranged from ANSERA, Patent Workbench and AI applications to data protection and communication. Campus Days also provided great opportunities for connection and growth (see below for more details).

■ **Peer-to-peer management support programme:** The initiative was piloted in 2025 and is designed to support the career growth and development of management skills for women team managers, especially in the PGP. The programme combines collaborative peer learning sessions with tailored one-to-one sessions led by senior managers, complemented by networking, shadowing and regular exchanges.

■ **Offboarding and knowledge retention:** To improve the retention of critical knowledge when staff leave the organisation, a process was set up in 2025 to strengthen knowledge transfer activities during the offboarding of staff. A guide and a series of templates were developed to support line managers and teams to ensure more effective succession planning and knowledge sharing.

Supporting mobility and flexibility

The EPO strengthened internal mobility through a wide range of initiatives. Internal job mobility supported the rebalancing of staff towards areas of higher demand and expanded career opportunities for colleagues. Also in 2025, staff benefited from established flexible working arrangements, while team development initiatives have been actively fostered to reinforce a sense of belonging.

■ **Internal mobility:** A total of 56 staff members took up new positions within the Office. In September 2025, the Office launched an initiative to support formalities officers in exploring new career opportunities as part of the ongoing simplification and digital transformation of processes. Following this initiative, around 30 formalities officers were appointed to new roles in corporate areas, including human resources, business information technology, communication, international relations, legal affairs and patent law and procedures. Overall, internal moves helped to allocate resources where they were needed most.

- **Flexible work arrangements:** In 2025, the large majority of staff (84.5%) teleworked on a regular basis, and almost all staff (98%) continued to use the flexibility offered by the scheme in some way.
- **Campus Days:** In 2025, Campus Days brought colleagues together across all sites to learn and connect through two editions. The May edition engaged over 4 000 colleagues in a programme dedicated to health and wellbeing, offering opportunities to reconnect with their teams and the wider EPO community. The October edition focused on team building and interactive learning, with more than 400 teams coming together to strengthen collaboration.
- **Compliance with occupational health standards:** The Office's commitment to staff health and wellbeing was reaffirmed through the successful renewal of the ISO 45001 certification. This recognises the robustness of the EPO's occupational health and safety management system.

- **Health prevention measures:** Preventive health actions remained a central element of the EPO's occupational health approach. Activities covered a wide range of areas including vision tests, skin screening, vaccination campaigns, preventive medical examinations, ergonomics support and health awareness webinars, and lunch lectures. Ergonomic support continued to expand, with 23% of staff benefiting from ergonomic advice, while all newcomers received onboarding guidance on healthy ergonomic practices.
- **Staff well-being:** Managers continued to play a key role in supporting staff wellbeing. In 2025, 88% of managers completed the mandatory training on psychosocial wellbeing. Additional services were introduced to strengthen support for staff wellbeing, including new workplace mental health support services and enhanced preventive screening programmes.

Figure 1 – SP2028 People pipeline



Source: EPO

Strengthen social dialogue

In 2025 the EPO continued its engagement in social dialogue matters. Eight meetings of the **General Consultative Committee** (GCC) and four meetings of the **Central Occupational Health and Safety Committee** (COHSEC) took place. Additionally, 40 technical and working group meetings were convened with staff representatives to ensure thorough consultation before topics were presented to the GCC.

The Office made progress on more than 27 topics. These included introducing a more inclusive parenthood scheme, and modernising the governance framework of Amicale. The Office also enhanced the confidential counselling services for staff by introducing external Workplace Solutions counsellors that offer targeted support for a range of professional challenges.

The EPO continued to pursue constructive dialogue in the resolution of conflicts, leading to 47 settlements covering all stages of dispute resolution. Most importantly, litigation decreased significantly: internal appeals fell by 27% and ILOAT complaints were down by 35% compared to 2024.

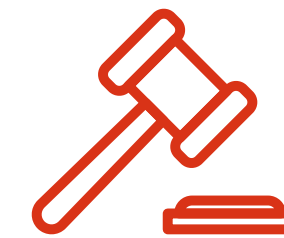
Figure 2 – Conflict resolution



94 management reviews registered compared to 83 management reviews in 2024, with 21% of 2025 management review request being withdrawn



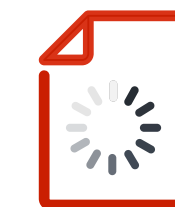
52 new ILOAT complaints down from 80 in 2024



48 appeal cases registered concerning 50 individual appellants compared to 66 individual appellants in 2024, marking the lowest number on new appeals in decades



47 cases de-escalated covering all all stages of dispute resolution, through joint efforts across the Office



Number of **pending appeal cases: 91** down from 138 at the end on 2024

Source: EPO

Manage our homes

In 2025, the EPO further strengthened the effectiveness and maturity of its **Integrated Management System** (IMS), ensuring strong alignment of processes, performance monitoring and governance across the Office. The robustness of the integrated approach was confirmed by the successful recertification of the ISO standards in the areas of quality management, occupational health and safety, information security and environmental management.

In parallel, the EPO further advanced its **sustainability reporting** in line with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards. Building on an internal materiality assessment aligned with SP2028 and informed by stakeholder consultation, the Office upgraded its reporting to “in accordance with the GRI Standards” for the 2024 reporting period, implying a higher level of alignment with the transparency standards set by GRI. The enhanced GRI Content Index strengthens transparency, comparability and alignment with

international best practices in environmental, social and governance reporting.

In 2025 the Data Protection Office (DPO) played a key role in the Office’s governance and digital transformation, contributing to the responsible adoption of trustworthy AI, in compliance with data protection principles and full respect of the fundamental rights of individuals. The DPO also focussed on strengthening the Office’s data protection culture, through high-level legal and technical guidance and targeted awareness-raising initiatives.

Create an engaging physical home

The EPO continued to implement the **Building Investment Programme** for 2024–2028 as endorsed by the Administrative Council. The Programme aims to safeguard health and safety, contribute to environmental sustainability, support sustainable staff engagement and maintain the value of the EPO’s patrimony while contributing to financial sustainability.

After the re-opening of the refurbished **Vienna** building in 2024, all staff in **Berlin** were moved to the new offices at Alexanderplatz by the end of February 2025.

In 2025, most projects of the Building Investment Programme were in the planning and design phases. The tendering phase for the renovation of PschorrHöfe PH5-6 was launched as scheduled, and construction activities commenced in Q3 2025. Other milestones in 2025 included:

- **Decoupling of the Shell building in The Hague:** The Shell building was fully decoupled from the Hinge building, preparing the site for its future deconstruction while ensuring that ongoing operations in the surrounding area remain unaffected. The deconstruction of the Shell building is expected to reduce annual energy consumption by about 7 400 MWh of electricity and 4 100 MWh of biomethane. Using 2025 energy prices as a reference, this corresponds to estimated annual cost savings of EUR 1.75 million.

- **Installation of solar panels at PschorrHöfe PH7-8 in Munich:** Following the full installation of the rooftop solar panels on PH7-8 in 2025, the PH7 and PH8 photovoltaic systems now comprise 586 installed modules. This will reduce external electricity consumption by around 281 MWh per year while lowering CO₂ emissions by approximately 115 tonnes annually and reducing costs by EUR 65 000, based on 2025 prices.

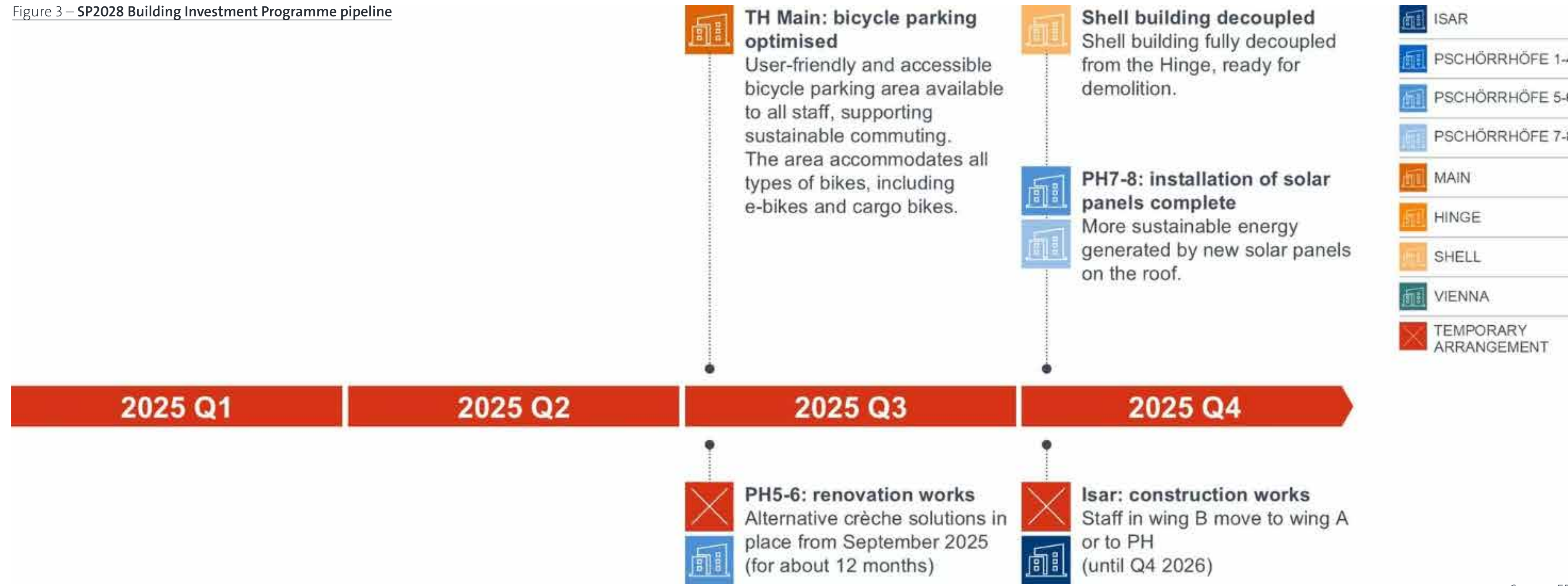
- **Haar:** An agreement with the Haar building owner, Versicherungskammer Bayern⁷ (VKB), was reached, and preparations for the relocation of the Boards of Appeal (BoA) to P7 have started.

- **Vienna:** The EPO successfully participated in the tender procedure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which was seeking rental space for its new offices in Vienna. The rental contract will commence in June 2026, with FRA occupying two floors of the Vienna building that were not needed for EPO use. This allows a more efficient and sustainable use of office space.

⁷ - VKB is a Bavarian public insurance group and the owner of the Haar building.

Optimisation of the bicycle parking in The Hague: The main bicycle parking area in The Hague has been optimised, with the new layout offering improved accessibility and space for a wide range of bicycle types – from ebikes to cargo bikes. As well as providing a safer and more convenient parking option, it also supports sustainable commuting habits.

Figure 3 – SP2028 Building Investment Programme pipeline



Source: EPO

DRIVER 1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Key performance indicator (KPI) | End 2025 value | | SP 2028 target |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------|
| Staff engagement | 75% | ✔ | 75% |
| Sense of purpose | 80% of staff | ○ | 85% |
| Recruitment cycle | 3.6 months | ✔ | ≤ 4 |
| Gender diversity | 35.5% | ○ | 40% |
| Women recruited as examiners | 31% | ✔ | 30% |
| Geographic diversity | 36 EPC countries | ○ | 39 |
| Impact of learning | 56% of staff | ○ | 75% |
| Female managers | 28.5% | ○ | 40% |
| Women in top management | 38.1% | ○ | 40% |
| Environmental sustainability | 3 010 t CO ₂ e | ○ | ≤ 1 000 |
| Build value | -24% lower running costs | ○ | ≤ -25.6% |

○ = in progress; ✔ = target achieved

In 2025, the KPIs under the People driver continued to make progress, and three KPIs have already achieved their SP2028 targets.

This included the indicator for **staff engagement**, which met its SP2028 target of 75%, while sense of purpose remained strong with 80% of staff answering the related question positively in the 2025 Staff Engagement Survey. This positive trend is the result of concrete actions which were defined Office-wide to follow up on the feedback provided by staff via the 2024 survey, focusing on how staff connect with the Office and with each other. See “Foster staff engagement” above for more details.

The KPIs related to **gender diversity** across the organisation increased slightly throughout the year. Alongside the increase in women recruited as examiners, which exceeded its SP2028 target with 31%, the proportion of female managers increased slightly to 28.5% while the representation of women in top management reached 38.1% at year end, close to its long-term target of 40%. **Geographic diversity** remained stable.

Turning to the **impact of training and development activities**, which is monitored via a structured yearly survey, in 56% of cases staff reported that the training received had increased their ability to

perform their work. Following up on the feedback received, improvement activities were put in place to facilitate access to training resources and strengthen links between skills and relevant learning activities.

Total emissions reached 3 010 t CO₂e, reflecting a 7% reduction in CO₂ emissions from energy consumption in owned buildings, keeping the **environmental sustainability** KPI on track towards its SP2028 target. More details on the environmental performance activities are available in the dedicated Environmental Report 2025.

Our commitment to sustainability is also reflected in the **reduced running costs for our buildings** in Munich and The Hague, as measured by the KPI “Build value”. At the end of 2025, the KPI shows a cumulated saving of 24% compared to the baseline costs calculated in 2022.



DRIVER 02

TECHNOLOGIES

EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE
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In 2025, the EPO continued its digital transformation in line with SP2028, focusing on simpler processes, modern platforms and reduced complexity, while safeguarding reliability, availability and user trust.

Within the PGP, modern examiner and formalities tools, greater automation and integrated AI support strengthened end-to-end digital workflows and scalability, while maintaining full human responsibility for decisions. At the same time, the decommissioning of legacy systems reduced fragmentation and operational risk.

User services and corporate capabilities evolved in parallel. Enhanced **MyEPO** services supported the EPO's goal to become paperless by 2027, while improved HR and financial systems and investment in infrastructure and cybersecurity reinforced efficiency, data quality and operational excellence.

PGP pipeline

The PGP pipeline supports the EPO's PGP. It consolidates all changes that directly affect examiners and formalities officers, covering process simplification, new tools, integration of AI assistance and the decommissioning of legacy systems.

Within the PGP, modern examiner and formalities tools, greater automation and integrated AI support strengthened end-to-end digital workflows and scalability, while maintaining full human responsibility for decisions.

■ **Improvements to task management:** The Patent Workbench (PWB)⁸ continued to develop as the central examiner working environment. Thanks to stronger integration with other tools, incoming submissions were increasingly converted into structured PWB tasks. Formalities officers experienced more extensive tool and workflow changes in 2025, with an emphasis on automation, usability and

the decommissioning of legacy interfaces, such as CasexPrima⁹. The expansion of digitalised FO forms and closer integration with the PWB enabled a wider range of incoming submissions to be converted into structured tasks. This supported the automation of certain procedural steps, such as the despatch of communications, handling of annexes and (in selected cases) fully automated closure of proceedings. Manual intervention in formal administrative steps is now largely limited to exception handling, significantly reducing routine activities.

■ **Support for workload management:** The Digital File Allocation¹⁰ was further strengthened, enhancing both examiner autonomy and managerial oversight. The introduction of pull allocation enabled authorised examiners to request new dossiers when capacity allowed, while line management retained responsibility for monitoring timeliness and workload balance. This approach was combined with manual allocation, supported by live dashboards providing up-to-date workload visibility. Together, these developments contributed to improving stock management and timeliness.

⁸ - The Patent Workbench (PWB) is a tool used for managing various patent-related workflows and processes. It provides a single interface for all the incoming workload of the examiners, formalities officers and team managers.

⁹ - CasexPrima is a legacy system used by formalities officers to process and dispatch structured communications linked to patent files.

¹⁰ - The Digital File Allocation (DFA) is a system for the allocation of work to examiners and formalities officers. It leverages AI and other techniques to provide the best technical match between a file and an examining division.

■ **Integration of ANSERA with examination tools and further enhancements:**

Closer integration of ANSERA¹¹ with examination tools allows automated retrieval of citation information for search reports, reducing the manual workload for examiners. Prior art handling in ANSERA was further improved; for example, automatic figure rotation was applied to both new and existing documents across a corpus of around 100 million documents, avoiding manual intervention. Furthermore, ANSERA saw ergonomic improvements, particularly keyboard shortcuts and voice control.

■ **Support for communication drafting:** The stakeholder quality assurance panels (SQAPs) found that there is room to improve the completeness of EPO communications and the substantiation of objections and to provide a clearer, more consistent structure to communications. In response, the first version of a new, smarter communication drafter was

released to pilot users, allowing for the direct reuse of information from ANSERA. This tool currently supports EP search actions and ultimately will be extended to all substantive phases across all procedures. Gradual roll-out of the new drafter will continue in 2026.

■ **AI-assisted minute writing for Oral Proceedings:**

Selected divisions piloted AI support to structure and draft minutes more efficiently. Hearings were audio-recorded and transcribed solely for this purpose, with recordings deleted once minutes were issued. In 2025, approximately 150 oral proceedings benefited from this approach, saving an estimated 15 days of examiner effort.

■ **AI-generated markers for PreSearch:** New AI features learned from real examiner queries help the system to suggest better and more accurate custom sets of search terms in multiple languages. In addition, figure proxy PreSearch was introduced, improving the

retrieval of key technical information contained in drawings. Overall PreSearch accuracy reached approximately 72% at 80 viewed documents.

■ **Explainable AI for classification support:**

Classification-related developments focused on improving the quality and transparency of AI-supported classification. In September, AI-generated explanations for suggested classification symbols were introduced. These provide plain language rationales and supporting passages for the suggestions made by the AI-based tool that increase confidence and auditability.

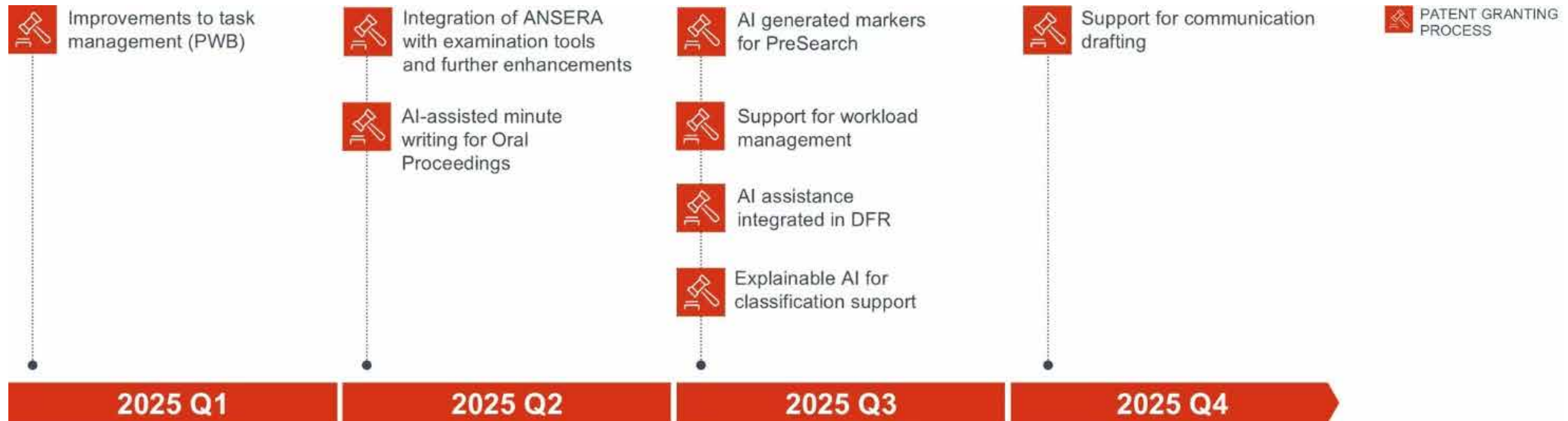
■ **AI assistance integrated in DFR:** The pilot of DFR¹²-AI embedded AI assistance directly into daily work, allowing examiners to analyse dossier content and ask contextual questions in natural language. DFRAI supports tasks such as summarisation, translation, drafting and document analysis, while maintaining full

human responsibility for outcomes. All outputs require verification, and examiners and formalities officers remain fully accountable for decisions. Access to the tool will be progressively expanded in 2026.

¹¹ - ANSERA is the EPO's integrated prior art search and analysis platform, enabling examiners to efficiently identify and assess relevant patent and nonpatent literature in support of high quality patent granting

¹² - The Digital File Repository (DFR) is a digital archive storing all the relevant documents of a file, and also a tool allowing collaboration and sharing of intellectual work.

Figure 4 – SP2028 PGP pipeline



Source: EPO

Online user engagement pipeline

The online user engagement pipeline focuses on enhancing the quality and transparency of the EPO's digital services. Its goal is to strengthen user autonomy through broader self-service options and to streamline interactions with the Office across all stages of the patent lifecycle. Key developments during 2025 were:

- **Legal Interactive Platform open to all MyEPO users:** Opening the Legal Interactive Platform to all MyEPO users enabled them to identify relevant legal information across more than 6 000 pages of patent related legal texts from the EPO and the BoA. The platform provides access to legal information on European patent procedures through natural language queries, returning structured, source-based answers. The pilot of other AI-enabled features within MyEPO will start in 2026.
- **Improved MyEPO interface and increased self-service and digital actions:** The redesigned MyEPO landing page, with changes shaped by input from user groups, reduces navigation effort and supports faster handling of daily tasks. Self-service features were expanded, aimed at empowering users and enabling closer collaboration. As such, company administrators can now create new associations directly in MyEPO, update association details and manage members without

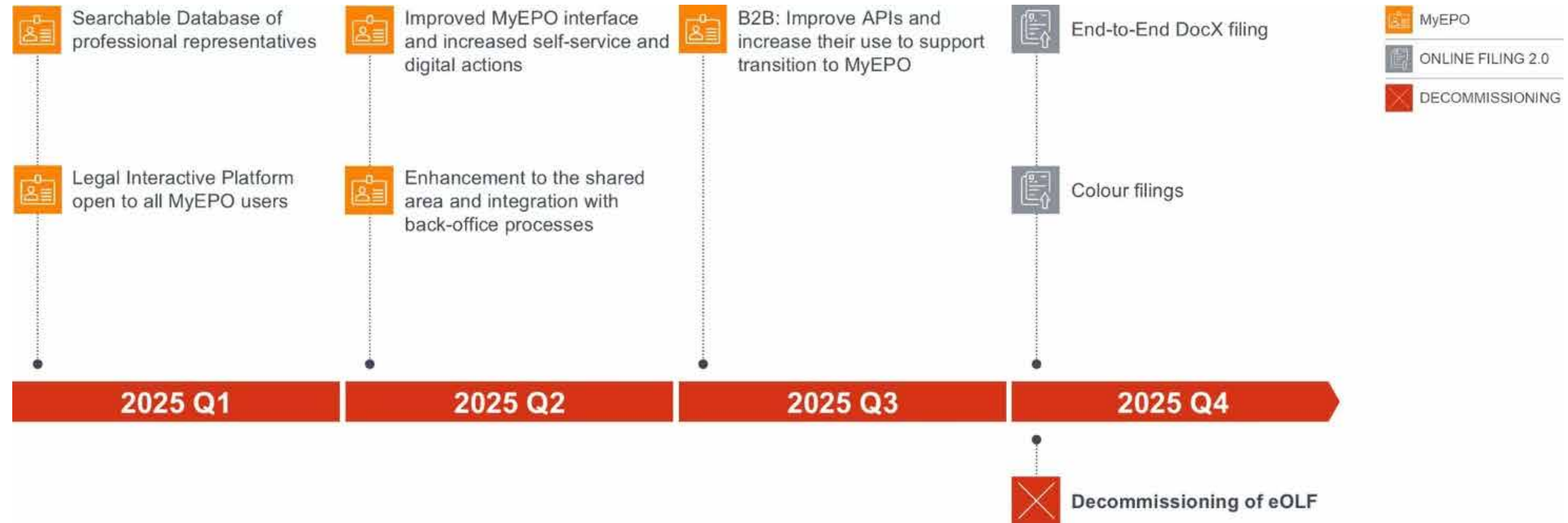
relying on external support. From October 2025, legal practitioners have also been able to join or form associations via their MyEPO profile and request their entry on the register through the same interface, simplifying this process.

- **Searchable database of professional representatives:** The database enables users to find qualified representatives using multiple search criteria. By replacing the monthly publication of changes in the Official Journal, the database improves accessibility, ensures up to date and consistent information and supports more efficient identification of professional representation before the EPO.
- **B2B: Improve APIs and increase their use to support transition to MyEPO:** Enhancing business-to-business application programming interfaces (B2B APIs) and promoting their increased use contributed to a smooth transition from eOLF to MyEPO. Use of APIs makes it easier to securely link MyEPO with internal IP management systems and supports automation and standardised data exchange.
- **Enhancement to the shared area and integration with back-office processes:** The shared area supports real-time interaction with examiners during live consultations, enabling more open and efficient exchanges that can improve quality and reduce the need

for lengthy formal correspondence. In 2025, it was enhanced with user notifications and support for PDF-based exchanges, improving transparency and ease of use. Preparatory work also progressed to extend it to additional proceedings, including PCT, in 2026.

- **Colour filings and end-to-end DocX filing:** In October 2025, the EPO introduced processing of patent applications and related documents in colour to minimise errors and enhance clarity, helping to maintain a more efficient examination process. In parallel, preparation for end-to-end DocX filing moved forward ahead of entry into force in April 2026. This will enable document submission, editing and sharing in a standardised format, reducing administrative burdens, enhancing data accuracy and enabling efficient digital workflows.
- **Decommissioning of eOLF:** Decommissioning eOLF marked an important step in the EPO's digital transformation by consolidating all filing activities under the state-of-the-art MyEPO platform. This shift enhanced efficiency and reduced maintenance costs, and provides users with a more intuitive, integrated filing experience.

Figure 5 – SP2028 Online User Engagement pipeline



Source: EPO

Corporate pipeline

The corporate pipeline aims to modernise and simplify the systems supporting corporate functions, while ensuring that internal and external IT services are built on a resilient, secure and sustainable digital infrastructure. Within **HR**, the focus remained on improving user experience, transparency and efficiency:

- **Creation of a talent intelligence hub:** The introduction of the talent intelligence hub provides a more data-driven view of employees' skills beyond formal job profiles. This supports staff to actively manage their development, in terms of skills and career progression, and enables managers to identify skill gaps and plan targeted up and reskilling initiatives.
- **Simplification and digitalisation of HR processes:** New, simple digital processes replaced manual partner registration and data maintenance, and parenthood declarations. They facilitate data exchanges between staff and HR and ensure that information remains up to date, while

reducing the administrative burden on both HR professionals and staff. The upgrade to our medical case management system made progress with the self-service portal due to go live in 2026, offering enhanced features such as self-booking of appointments and secure handling of medical documentation.

- **Improvements to offboarding processes and tools:** The offboarding process was enhanced through digital handling of offboarding requests and structured, predefined checklists embedded directly into HR workflows. See Driver 1 for more details.
- **Creation of a pension simulator for families and staff under the new pension scheme:** The pension simulator for staff under the new pension scheme was released, enabling self-service and reducing the number of enquiries handled by HR services.

In the areas of **Finance and Procurement**, new technologies enabled efficiency improvements:

- **Optimise financial closing process:** The migration to the new corporate services platform (SAP S4/HANA) enabled improvements in financial transparency and predictability. Monthly financial closing processes were streamlined, and preparations progressed for the introduction of SAP Advanced Financial Closing in 2026, enabling faster, more standardised and more reliable financial processes.
- **Improve the revenue forecasting process:** Revenue forecasting was further enhanced through integration of PGP data into the forecasting model, strengthening the link between operational activity and financial planning. This also enables better financial management through a deeper understanding of revenue flow, including product mix impact.

Additionally, several improvements affected all areas of the EPO and our stakeholders:

- **Administrative Council improved workflows:** The Administrative Council secretariat was provided with new online services in the Single Access Portal to improve efficiency of meeting preparation, handling registrations and reimbursements. A dedicated AI agent was created to streamline and accelerate the preparation of meeting minutes.
- **Self-service translation and drafting of certain non-confidential texts:** Progress was achieved in offering self-service solutions to enable all staff to translate non-confidential text using AI-enabled translation tools and to draft documents using accurate terminology with the help of smart assistants. This allows the translation and editing teams to focus their efforts on more advanced and complex tasks. Following a pilot, the services will be made available to all staff in 2026.

■ **Natural language queries for data dashboards:** In parallel with the migration of the reporting tools from Tableau to PowerBI, the EPO is exploring the potential of AI assistance in data dashboards. In 2025, the first analytics dashboard supporting natural language queries was launched, covering Unitary Patent data. This allows users to generate insights using plain language rather than predefined filters or technical queries.

■ **Migration to the new document management tool and legacy decommissioning:** The new EPO document management platform OpenText is a modern cloud-based repository of administrative documents available to all staff. Once the EPOwide migration of administrative documents was completed, legacy file storage solutions were either decommissioned or substantially reduced in use, simplifying the tool landscape and strengthening information security and governance of administrative documents.

Lastly, a number of initiatives continued to modernise the **IT landscape**, contributing to a simpler and more sustainable IT function that ensured high availability and a secure digital environment for the EPO:

■ **Upgrade to the new SAP technology:** The migration to SAP S/4HANA, the Office's new cloud-based platform, established a more integrated, scalable and future-proof digital landscape. The move improved data consistency across HR, finance, procurement and related corporate processes, enabling faster and more reliable reporting while reducing system complexity through the decommissioning of obsolete functions. It also laid the groundwork for the integration of future advanced and AI-enabled functionalities.

■ **Wi-Fi 6 running in Berlin:** The modern wireless technology provides faster data transfer speeds, increased capacity, improved power efficiency and better performance in environments with many connected devices in our new rented building in Berlin.

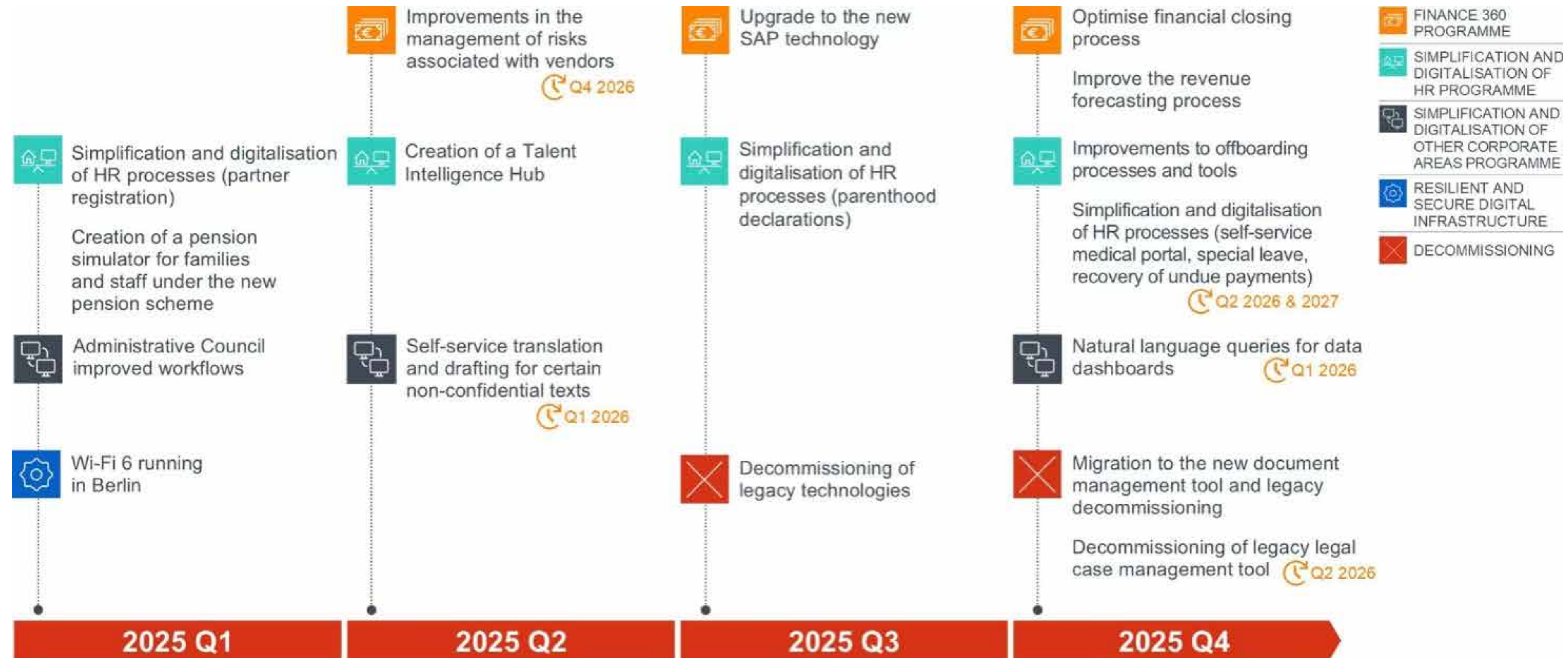
■ **Decommissioning of the legacy legal case management tool:** A new case management solution is being prepared to support the work of legal professionals, bringing improvements in efficiency and oversight. Following the planned roll-out in 2026, the legacy tool (MatterSphere) will be decommissioned.

■ **Decommissioning of legacy technologies:** In line with SP2028 priorities, legacy technologies were progressively phased out in favour of modern alternatives. Following the Office-wide implementation of the new document management system OpenText, Lotus Notes¹³ was decommissioned. Within the financial management domain, the decommissioning of PGVal marked an important step in modernising the post-grant IT landscape, as well as gradual decommissioning of VMware¹⁴ which enables the optimisation of data centre capacity.

¹³ - Lotus Notes is a legacy enterprise platform developed by IBM that provided email, calendaring and document-centric applications and was widely used for document management. ⁹ - The Digital File Repository (DFR) is a digital archive storing all the relevant documents of a file, and also a tool allowing collaboration and sharing of intellectual work.

¹⁴ - VMWare is a software allowing installation of a virtual operating system within any operating system, which supports efficient use of IT infrastructure and application performance.

Figure 6 – SP2028 Corporate pipeline



Source: EPO

DRIVER 2 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Key performance indicator (KPI) | End 2025 value | | SP2028 target |
|---|----------------|---|---------------|
| Availability of IT system (internal) | 99.7% | ✔ | 99.5% |
| Availability of IT system (external) | 99.9% | ✔ | 99.5% |
| Digitalisation and modernisation of Patent Administration processes | 32.1% | ○ | 100% |
| Corporate processes digitalised | 78.1% | ○ | 90% |
| Leverage AI | 45.8% | ○ | 90% |

○ = in progress; ✔ = target achieved;

KPIs under the Technologies driver showed substantial progress in 2025, with two out of five already meeting the long-term SP2028 targets.

Thanks to continuous investments in state-of-the-art tools, ongoing decommissioning of old legacy tools and diligent problem management, the KPIs for internal and external **availability of IT systems** remained consistently well above target in 2025. As a result, the SP2028 targets have been increased in 2026 to remain challenging.

The progress made in the **transformation and simplification of our processes**, as described above, is also reflected in the relevant KPIs. With 100% of PGP processes already digitalised since June 2024, focus turned to the digitalisation of patent administration processes, with a KPI that has shown steady progress since its introduction at the beginning of 2025 to finish the year at 32.1%. On the corporate side, the KPI assessing the level of digitalisation of processes in HR, Finance, General Administration and other corporate areas made continued progress throughout 2025, reaching 78.1% at year-end.

The percentage of classification tasks that do not require human intellectual classification fluctuated around the 46%-47% mark throughout the year. The efforts to ensure high-quality, efficient and accurate **AI-supported classification** continue, to push the KPI “Leverage AI” towards the 2028 target of 90%.

DRIVER 03

HIGH-QUALITY, TIMELY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE

Annual Review

2025

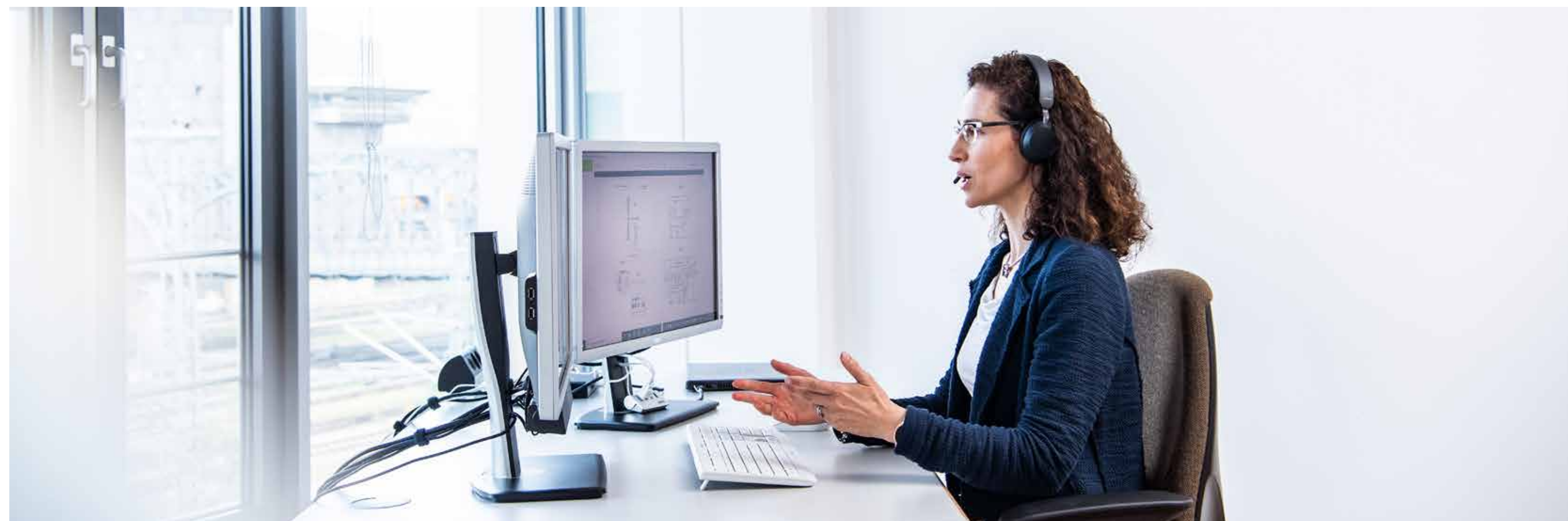
epo.org

Quality at source

Quality is a shared journey and a shared responsibility between the EPO and its users. Clear, well-drafted applications with an appropriate scope facilitate the delivery of quality patents, bringing certainty to the market and reducing costs for all users of the patent system.

We continued to monitor a wide range of metrics to assess the quality of incoming patent applications and their progression through search and examination.

In 2025, we strengthened **quality at source** by enhancing digital tools that support applicants in filing and communicating with the EPO. MyEPO was expanded with new self-service features, improved access to patent and non-patent literature (including multimedia) and support for colour and greyscale drawings. Transparency and interaction were improved through enhancements to the Shared Area, while the generative AI-based Legal Interactive Platform (LIP) was rolled out to all users. The transition from eOLF to Online Filing 2.0 marked a simplification milestone, alongside further legal and procedural simplifications such as general authorisations for employees and an updated database of professional representatives.



We continued to monitor a wide range of metrics to assess the quality of incoming patent applications and their progression through search and examination. Our analysis revealed notable variations between applicants and representatives in areas such as formal errors, lack-of-unity findings, substantive objections, oral proceedings, the effectiveness of responses and amendments and grant rates. These differences can create additional costs, inefficiencies and uncertainty, highlighting the significant impact that applicant practices can have on quality at source and the overall efficiency of the PGP.

Keeping our staff up to date with the latest changes in technology

A priority of the EPO is to ensure that examiners' knowledge remains cutting edge by providing specific training in rapidly developing technology areas.

In September 2025, the EPO started a new initiative entitled **Industry Lectures**. Companies leading in their sectors provided technology lectures directly to EPO staff in an EPO-moderated online format. The focus was geared towards relevant examiners in the various technological areas; however, all events were open to all staff. This initiative seeks to

inform staff about current and future technology trends with the main goal of making sure that examiners understand the latest changes in their field of technology, thereby improving quality and efficiency. Some 500 EPO staff participated in these three lectures. This initiative will continue in 2026 where we will also see collective industry lectures where multiple key players will present together on leading technologies.

We also expanded opportunities for examiners to participate in external events and engage directly with industry and academia. In 2025, more than 350 examiners attended 82 conferences and trade fairs. Beyond applying the knowledge gained, participants were also encouraged to share key learnings and insights with their colleagues through team activities or peer-to-peer activities.

Reskilling and training

The Office provides a wide range of courses for examiners taking up new roles such as opposition or chairing oral proceedings. Staff wishing to pursue the EQE or the EPAC are also supported through

training and structured exam preparation. Regular learning events were held throughout the year, covering topics such as inventive step, third-party observations, BoA case law and SQAPs findings.

Examiners who change technical fields are given support through on-the-job training from experienced colleagues and technical training courses where necessary. In 2025, a targeted technical re-skilling programme was launched in the growing field of batteries and fuel cells.

Balancing expertise of staff with the volume of applications received in each areas of technology

We place a high priority on matching the skills and competencies of our staff in a responsive manner to changes in filing volumes across different areas of technology. Targeted recruitment supported by our established pipeline of suitable candidates has enabled us to respond in a timely manner to staffing needs in fields with rapidly increasing filing activity.

In recent years, filings of battery-related applications have increased dramatically, from around 3 000 in

2021 to almost 9 000 in 2025. In response, the EPO has more than doubled the number of examiners in this area, through a combination of recruitment and reskilling from related technical fields. In doing so, we are ensuring that we maintain our substantive quality standards, that we meet our users' timeliness expectations and that we avoid backlogs that can increase legal uncertainty.

We place a high priority on matching the skills and competencies of our staff in a responsive manner to changes in filing volumes across different areas of technology.

Quality searches – complete and accurate and correct and consistent examination

Over the past few years, we have taken steps to build on the accuracy and completeness of searches and written options and to improve examination by ensuring that the EPC is applied in a consistent

way across our examining teams, something of particular importance within emerging or fast-moving technical areas. Under our Quality Action Plan 2025 we built on this work with actions covering all stages of the PGP.

Embedding best practice of the Active Search Divisions

As 2025 commenced, with over 12 months' experience of full implementation of the **Active Search Divisions (ASD)**, preliminary user feedback and assessment by internal audit already indicated enhanced legal certainty at an early stage of the PGP. As a result, the drive behind integrating ASD into the PGP continued. The primary focus was placed on fostering **broad, early-stage consultations** within the division, initiated by the first examiner for every search file.

To underline the importance of this focus, a presentation **highlighting the importance of the division and best practices** was given to all directors and cascaded to the teams in December 2024. Divisions were encouraged to maintain a

solution-oriented approach aimed at reaching efficient conclusions (grant or refusal). This involved identifying the potential invention early and ensuring comprehensive searches that covered all claimed features, with due regard to the description and drawings. A specific mention was also made to ensure mixed-type inventions were dealt with correctly. Whilst the 2024 quality goals already included explicit reference to ASD, the 2025 search quality goals for examiners, team managers and directors were strengthened and aligned in this regard.

The impact of the ASD is visible in our results, with 94% of searches and written opinions audited internally having no findings affecting validity and 80% of respondents to the User Satisfaction Survey 2024/2025 (USS) rating our search products as very good or good. In 2025 we also met two of our search quality KPIs and have almost met the third.

Added subject-matter

As part of the **Quality Action Plan 2025**, several actions were taken to improve assessment of added subject-matter. New job aids were issued to support structured and more accurate assessments and mandatory refresher training was provided to teams with DQA findings. In addition, examiners must now document their checks in their communications, to assist the work of the division and provide clarity to applicants that the check has been completed.

In November 2025, a technically qualified member of the BoA gave a presentation on added subject-matter to examiners. The presentation focused on how to apply the strict requirement of “direct and unambiguous disclosure” within the diffuse realm of implicit disclosures. It also addressed issues such as “inextricably linked” features, intermediate generalisations, and amendments extending beyond the claim structure.

By the end of 2025, our quality audits on grants showed fewer findings on added subject matter at 4.6% of audited grants, meeting for the first time our challenging KPI target of <5% and improved from 5.9% in 2024.

Assessment of clarity

Following the **Clarity Workshop** with users in 2024, in 2025 we implemented several actions to strengthen clarity in the PGP. User suggestions to include positive examples of clarity in the Guidelines have led to amendments in the 2026 update. Awareness was raised among examiners on the impact of clarity in any post-grant proceedings and the importance of addressing it as part of the PGP. In addition, new quality objectives for 2025 were introduced to encourage examiners to assess clarity with a “mind willing to understand”, to explain clearly what is unclear and why, and propose solutions where possible. In parallel, examiner training materials were reviewed and updated, and the EPO

is monitoring the correctness and consistency of clarity objections through quality audits, SQAP findings and the practice harmonisation dashboard.

Learning from BoA outcomes

BoA decisions offer a rich source of learning for examining and opposition divisions. In this context, an in-depth analysis of BoA decisions was undertaken with the dual aims of creating enhanced input for continual improvement and developing new KPIs to help track progress. In March 2025, **five new KPIs based on BoA outcomes** were added to the Quality Dashboard¹⁵ for examination and opposition. These KPIs are updated annually and two of the new KPIs have already been met.

One area identified for improvement was the application of the problem-solution approach in the assessment of inventive step. To address this, a workshop on inventive step for all opposition examiners took place in June 2025. This included a discussion of BoA decisions that set aside the decision of the opposition division.

¹⁵ - <https://www.epo.org/en/about-us/services-and-activities/quality/quality-dashboard>

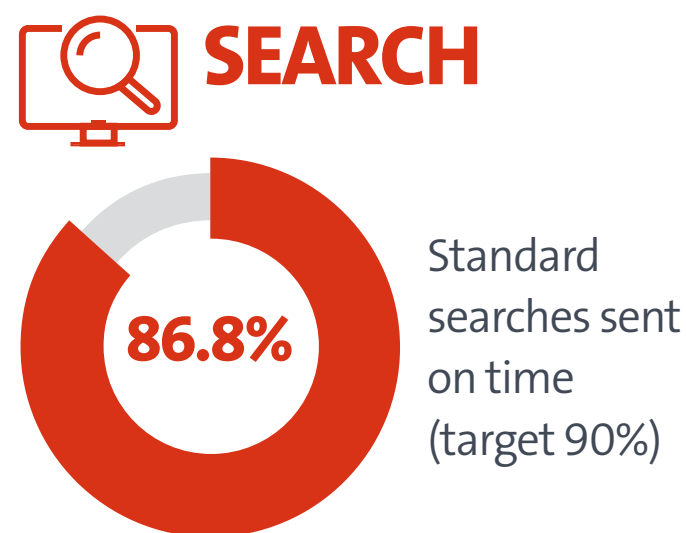
Third-party observations

Following user feedback, a comprehensive study in 2024 identified areas to improve the consistency of the EPO's handling of third-party observations (TPO). Targeted actions were implemented, including clearer guidance, enhanced training and improved internal checks. These measures continued through 2025, with an interim study showing improvements already in mid-2025. Consistency in handling TPOs remains a focus in our Quality Action Plan 2026 and a review study will further assess the impact of our actions.

Timeliness: bringing certainty to the market

Timeliness continues to be an important aspect of quality and legal certainty as highlighted in the USS and also in numerous meetings with users. Overall, **82.6% of search, examination and opposition standard files were produced on time in 2025.**

Figure 7 – Search timeliness



Source: EPO

16 - Standard searches exclude (1) non-unity, (2) unclear and (3) incomplete cases.

17 - Standard examinations exclude cases with (1) more than one request for extension to reply, (2) more than one late fee payment and (3) rescheduling of oral proceedings.

Our users need to receive EPO searches and written opinions on time. This is especially the case for first filings because for these applications, applicants must decide on their next steps before the priority year expires.

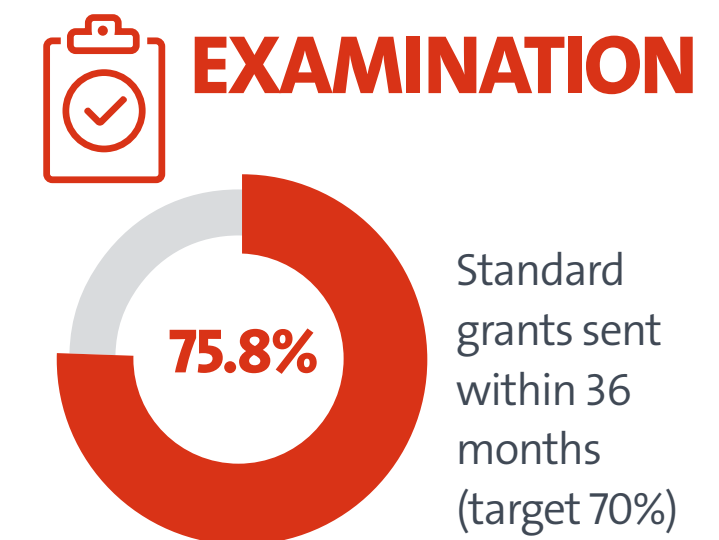
In 2025 we took several steps towards our SP2028 ambition of all searches being completed within six months. This work started in 2022 when we shortened the time for delivery of results to our member states for national searches and delivery of search results on PCT first filings from nine to eight months, and then from eight to seven months in 2023. In November 2025 the time for national searches was further reduced to six months for second filings (EP, PCT and National). At the end of 2024 we also reduced our target for PCT BIS searches (where the EPO did not conduct the search under the PCT) from ten months to eight months, which resulted in extra searches being carried out in the summer of 2025.

As we continue to tighten our search timeliness targets and work towards six months for all searches, it becomes more and more challenging to achieve our ambition of 90% of searches on time. Search timeliness (standard cases¹⁶) further improved from 85.1% on time at the end of 2024 to 86.8% at the end of 2025, with a mean duration of 5.1 months, though we did not achieve our target of 90%.

In 2026 and under our SP2028 timeliness of search will be an ongoing focus for us, as we harmonise our target for all search products at six months on a step-by-step basis.

The timeliness of the receiving section in 2025 was above 98.9% of tasks completed on time. In the case of opposition, the handling of new cases was on time for 99.1% of the tasks.

Figure 8 – Examination timeliness

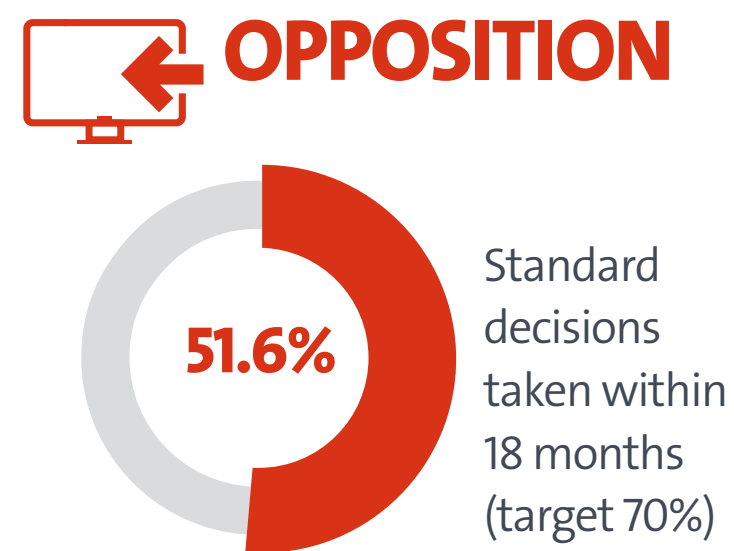


Source: EPO

Examination timeliness is also an important element of our quality policy as delays in the process can cause unnecessary costs and uncertainty for competitors and society. In 2025, 75.8% of standard cases¹⁷ were finalised within the 36-month target starting from the valid examination request, with a mean duration of examination of 24.2 months. For accelerated examination requests (PACE), the timeliness of combined first and further actions was 2.2 months.

In 2025, we managed to keep the number of old files under control. We finished the year with only 6 244 old examination files pending with a valid examination request from before 2020 that could be processed by examiners (i.e. not awaiting applicants' action) and there were around 12 500 actions pending in examination without examiner action for more than 30 months. Overall, our processing time from filing to grant in 2025 was 36.5 months for standard cases¹⁸, with 74.8% of such cases being completed end-to-end within 48 months (78.5% within 48 months for divisional applications).

Figure 18 – Opposition timeliness



Source: EPO

In 2025, we managed to reduce further the opposition stock down to a low level of 3 335 pending files, significantly less than the pre-pandemic number of 5 000. As a result of our efforts in this area **the overall mean duration is now at 19.1 months**, and 51.6% of standard cases¹⁹ were

completed within 18 months, a clear improvement compared to 38.4% in 2024 with a commitment to achieving our target of 70% on time by the end of 2026.

Divisionals

Divisional applications are carefully monitored by the EPO. In recent years, the trend for voluntary divisional applications has remained stable at 86% of all divisional applications filed and the volume of divisional applications is also stable at 6.3% of total stock. SP2028 defines stringent criteria to ensure that divisional applications are dealt with in a timely way.

In compliance with these requirements, in 2025 the EPO's end-to-end timeliness of divisional applications remained at almost 78.5% (reflecting the percentage of standard cases granted within 48 months of request for an EP, see above).

130 meetings took place in 2025 with representatives from 45 SMEs and micro-entities, 42 user associations, 26 larger corporations and 17 universities and public research organisations.

Additionally, the EPO had already implemented measures to ensure swift processing and legal certainty of divisional applications in the past, including:

- The option to summon to oral proceedings as first action where the parent application was refused or withdrawn, since 2023.
- Early publication of the divisional application since 2023.
- Generation-specific fee introduced as prevention for sequences of divisional applications since 2014.

These measures are proving effective, with the processing time from date of receipt to finalisation consolidating the positive trend of the previous year.

Listening to our users

As part of our outreach programme, 130 meetings took place in 2025 with representatives from 45 SMEs and micro-entities, 42 user associations, 26 larger corporations and 17 universities and public research organisations. This ensured that perspectives from applicants of all sizes and from all sectors were heard and reflected in our quality work, with an increasing focus on smaller applicants and educational and research institutions.

¹⁸ - Standard cases are applications with a standard examination – for EP direct: time to grant from European filing date/for PCT: time to grant from entry into the European phase

¹⁹ - Standard oppositions exclude cases with (1) multiple opponents, (2) legal members to take evidence and (3) rescheduling of oral proceedings or multiple oral proceedings taking place

In addition to raising awareness about the Unitary Patent, micro-entity fee reductions and other important topics patent quality, harmonisation and consistency were recurrent themes in discussions with users in 2025. In response, the Quality Action Plan 2026 included intensified harmonisation efforts in key areas such as computer implemented inventions (CII) and AI.

We have also shared some of the feedback externally in the “Voice of our Users” series where short videos are prepared on the outcome of the individual meetings.

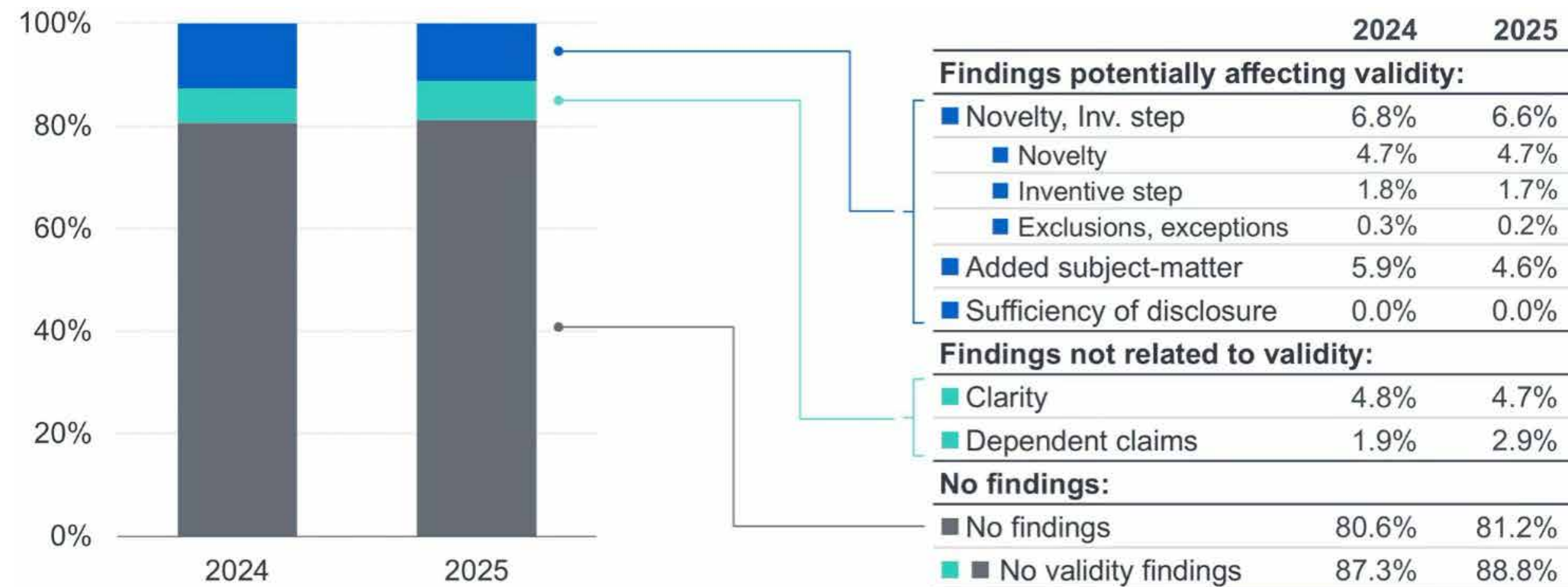
These initiatives will continue in 2026.

Directorate Quality Audit (DQA)

DQA continued to report its independent quality audit findings. DQA reports provide the necessary statistics and selected KPIs to allow accurate and independent monitoring to support quality management. The auditors verify compliance of sampled examiner products against the respective regulations.

At grant stage, the proportion of files with no audit findings affecting validity reached 88.8 % in 2025. Added-subject matter findings reduced from 5.9% in 2024 to 4.6% in 2025 – meeting our KPI for the first time.

Figure 10 – Grant: Quality audit findings



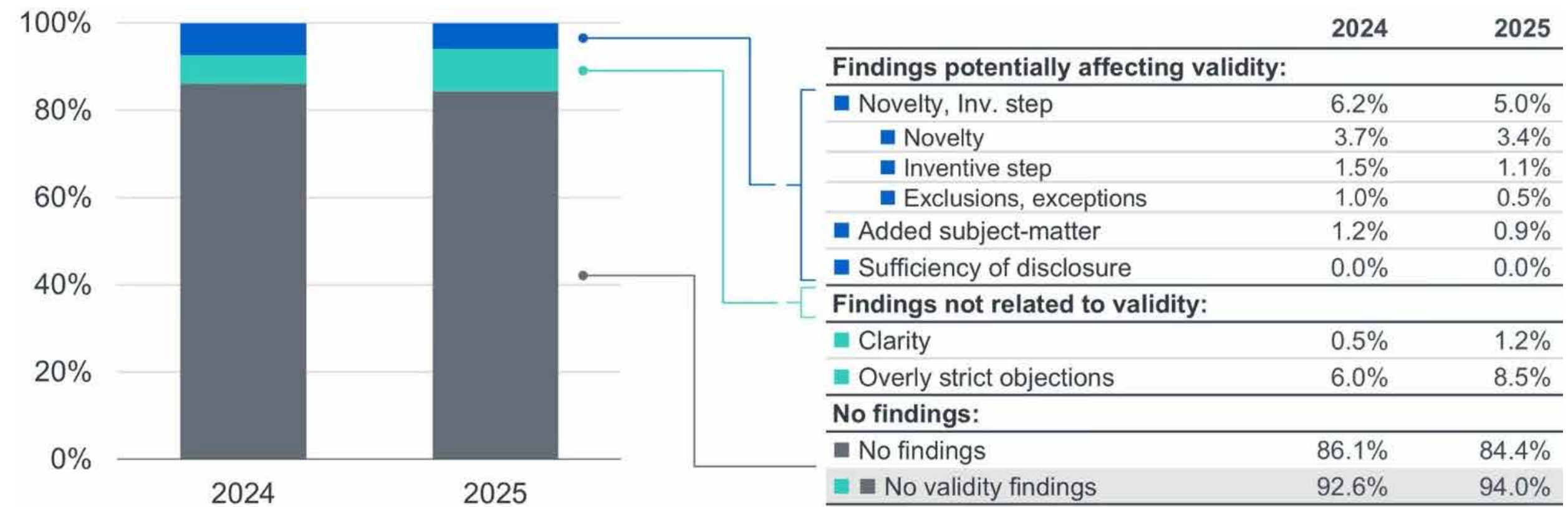
The results are presented as a breakdown of the ratio of files having at least one finding. For files with multiple findings, only the finding corresponding to the highest in the ranking is counted. The other findings are not taken into account for the purposes of this table and results. All findings are considered for correction/learning purposes. Reporting is on a 12-month rolling basis. 1035 files were audited in 2025 vs 984 in 2024.

Source: EPO

At search stage, the share of files without any audit findings remained high in 2025, with consistently low levels of findings related to novelty and inventive step. The results confirm the continued high quality and stability of search and written opinions, with 94% of audited search files showing no findings affecting validity.

In light of this consistently high quality, search reporting has moved from a 12-month to a 24-month rolling period, allowing for a more proportionate audit approach. As 2024 results were reported over a 12-month period, direct numerical comparison should therefore be made with caution.

Figure 11 – Search: Quality audit findings



The results are presented as a breakdown of the ratio of files having at least one finding. For files with multiple findings, only the finding corresponding to the highest in the ranking is counted. The other findings are not taken into account for the purposes of this table and results. All findings are considered for correction/learning purposes. Reporting in 2025 is on a rolling 24-month basis for 739 audited files vs 2024 which is on a 12-month rolling basis for 404 audited files.

Source: EPO

Stakeholder Quality Assurance Panels (SQAPs)

It is important to assess quality through multiple lenses. The SQAPs were established at the EPO in 2019 and continue to evolve in response to user feedback.

Each year the EPO holds one session on search reports and written opinions, and another on grants, ensuring the panels assess our core products annually. These are complemented by a third session which offers additional insights into another stage of the PGP. In 2023 we focused on intermediate communications and in 2024 the first-ever session on refusals took place. In 2025 we held the first-ever SQAPs session dedicated to oppositions.

The findings were presented to the SACEPO Working Party on Quality, as well as to examiners and their managers. They are also published in the quality report. Highly rated cases are being used to promote best practices, while areas for improvement are being addressed through the Quality Action Plan 2026.

Demand for our services

Although we received 1.2% fewer requests for searches than in 2024 (76% of them second filings), demand for EPO products and services remained high in 2025.

| Search type | Count | First or second filing |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| European first filing | 32 652 | first |
| European second filing | 53 063 | second |
| PCT Chapter I first filing | 5 406 | first |
| PCT Chapter I second filing | 77 230 | second |
| Euro-PCT (EPO not ISA) | 64 317 | second |
| National first filing | 24 925 | first |
| National second filing | 999 | second |
| Total Search | 258 592 | |

In terms of examination workload, 177 960 applications entered the European examination phase, with a further 4 519 entering PCT Ch.II, bringing our total incoming workload to 443 352 patent products (searches/written opinions, examinations and oppositions) during the year.

DRIVER 3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Key performance indicator (KPI) | End 2025 value | | Target 2028 |
|---|----------------|--|-------------------|
| Users rating our online services as good or very good | 80% | | 90% |
| Timeliness of search | 86.8% | | 90% |
| Timeliness of examination | 75.8% | | 75% ²⁰ |
| Timeliness of oppositions | 51.6% | | 75% |
| End-to-end timeliness | 74.8% | | 75% |
| Timeliness of divisional applications | 78.5% | | 80% |
| Timeliness of prior art classification | 85% | | 80% |
| Quality of formalities (receiving section) | 96.8% | | 90% |
| Quality of formalities (opposition section) | 93.3% | | 90% |
| Search and written opinion: Incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step | 5% | | < 5% |
| Search: Closer prior art found | 2.8% | | < 4% |
| Users rating our search products as good or very good | 80% | | 80% |
| Grants: Incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step | 6.6% | | < 5% |
| Grants: Findings on added subject-matter | 4.6% | | < 5% |

| Key performance indicator (KPI) | End 2025 value | | Target 2028 |
|--|----------------|--|-------------|
| Boards of Appeal outcomes (<i>ex parte</i>) – Decision of the Board to grant a patent, which sets aside a decision of an examining division to refuse a patent | 4.3%* | | < 4%** |
| Users rating our examination products as good or very good | 79% | | 80% |
| Boards of Appeal outcomes (<i>inter partes</i>) – Decision of the Board to revoke a patent based on novelty, which sets aside an opposition decision to maintain a patent | 2.9%* | | < 3% |
| Boards of Appeal outcomes (<i>inter partes</i>) – Decision of the Board to revoke a patent based on inventive step, which sets aside an opposition decision to maintain a patent | 10.6%* | | < 3% |
| Boards of Appeal outcomes (<i>inter partes</i>) – Decision of the Board to revoke a patent based on added subject-matter, which sets aside an opposition decision to maintain a patent | 5%* | | < 3% |
| Boards of Appeal outcomes (<i>inter partes</i>) – Decision of the Board to maintain a patent, which sets aside an opposition decision to revoke a patent | 1.9%* | | < 2% |

= in progress; = target achieved; * = Dec 2024 value; ** = 2026 target

²⁰ - The SP2028 target of Timeliness of examination increased from 70% to 75% in 2026.

Under the driver High-quality, timely products and services, KPIs continued to show steady progress in 2025.

Timeliness KPIs presented overall positive developments, with timeliness of examination and prior art classification remaining above their SP2028 targets. Notably, timeliness of oppositions improved significantly, rising from 38.1% to 51.6% of oppositions completed within 18 months. Minor declines were recorded in the timeliness of divisional applications and timeliness of examinations, which contributed to the modest overall decrease in the end-to-end patent grant timeliness.

Quality of formalities KPIs have advanced substantially, surpassing their 90% SP2028 targets. Compliance reached 96.8% in operational control checks performed in the receiving section and 93.3% in the checks carried out in the opposition section.

The EPO's commitment to **quality** continued to translate into improved performance across **search, examination and grant products**. Focusing on the quality of our search, the accuracy of search and written opinion and of prior art found showed further progress. In particular, the share of audited files with incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step registered a notable decrease, from 6.2% to 5%, moving closer to the SP2028 target. For grants, findings on added subject-matter have progressively reduced over the year, resulting in this KPI meeting its target.

Reflecting this strong focus on product and service quality, the 2025 **USS** results indicate a consistently high level of satisfaction. Ratings for examination products increased to 79% of users satisfied, approaching the 80% target. Satisfaction with online services was 80% and search products remained stable at 80%. These findings are in line with feedback obtained from other sources and suggestions for improvement have been taken forward in the Quality Action Plan 2025.

Striving for high-quality examination and grant products also reinforces our aim of reducing the number of contested decisions between the opposition division and the **BoA**. Most notably, two of the related KPIs have already reached their target: 1.9% of decisions of the Board to maintain a patent, which sets aside an opposition to revoke a patent; and 2.9% of decisions of the Board to revoke a patent based on lack of novelty. Moreover, in 4.3% of ex parte cases, the Boards set aside a decision of the examining division to refuse a patent, approaching the target.



DRIVER 04

PARTNERSHIPS

EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE
Annual Review
2025
epo.org

Partnerships are central to the EPO's mission of delivering a high-quality, accessible and future-proof patent system. In 2025, the Office further deepened its collaboration with European and international partners, strengthening the European Patent Network, advancing digital and legal harmonisation and extending the global reach of the European patent system. These efforts reinforced Europe's innovation ecosystem, supported users across the patent lifecycle and contributed to competitiveness, legal certainty and skills development.

Strengthen European co-operation

At the heart of the European patent system lies the European Patent Network (EPN) – a partnership that continued to grow stronger in 2025 through closer collaboration, shared expertise and targeted support initiatives.

A highlight for the EPN was the **19th Annual Meeting on Co-operation**, held in Reykjavík in June. The meeting brought together representatives of the EPO's 39 member states, the European Innovation Council, start-ups and investors to discuss the future of innovation and IP-backed financing in Europe. Participants explored how the strengths of the EPN could help advance the recommendations of the Draghi and Letta reports, particularly in enabling technology start-ups to scale and in enhancing Europe's competitiveness. For the first time, the gathering also featured a standalone Young Inventors Prize ceremony, celebrating emerging innovators shaping a more sustainable future.

Figure 12 – EPO's 19th Annual Meeting on Co-operation with member states in Reykjavik



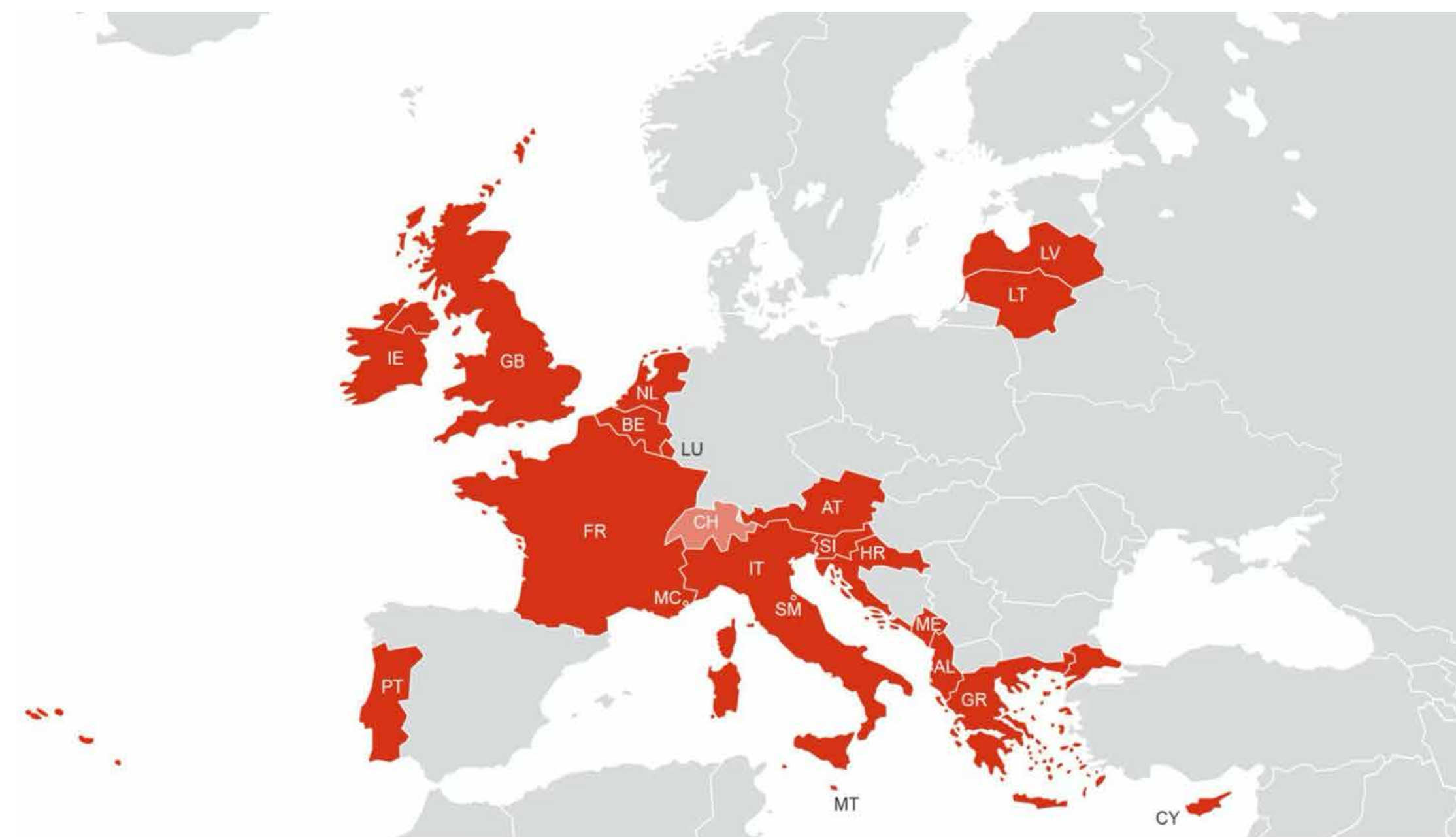
Source: EPO

Alongside this strategic dialogue, preparations for the **accession to the EPC** of two new member states progressed steadily, leading to the **Republic of Moldova** becoming the 40th contracting state on 1 June 2026. The EPO is ready to welcome **Bosnia and Herzegovina** into the EPC community once it has taken the necessary internal steps. Towards the end of 2025, also **Georgia** formally expressed its interest in acceding to the Convention, pointing to further momentum ahead.

Interms of strengthening co-operation within the EPN, a major step forward in 2025 was the conclusion of new **Bilateral Co-operation Agreements (BCAs)** with all 39 member states – providing a structured and modern framework for joint activities under the SP2028 co-operation catalogue. These agreements ensure continuity for long-standing initiatives while also enabling the launch of new ones. One such example was the pilot project to **increase search and examination capacity at national patent offices**. The project allows national offices to draw on the expertise of recently retired EPO examiners to address temporary capacity gaps. Throughout 2025, the scheme received strong interest, leading to expansion in 2026.

Search co-operation also advanced, with new agreements entering into force with Portugal, Ireland and Montenegro, broadening participation in the EPN’s **work-sharing framework**. These agreements allow national offices to draw on EPO search expertise, enhancing quality for applicants. Complementing this, other co-operation instruments such as the **seconded national expert (SNE)** programme and the placement of EPO **Young Professionals** in national patent offices continued to strengthen capacity across the network, fostering valuable knowledge exchange and closer operational ties.

Figure 13 – Member states currently covered by a working agreement on search co-operation



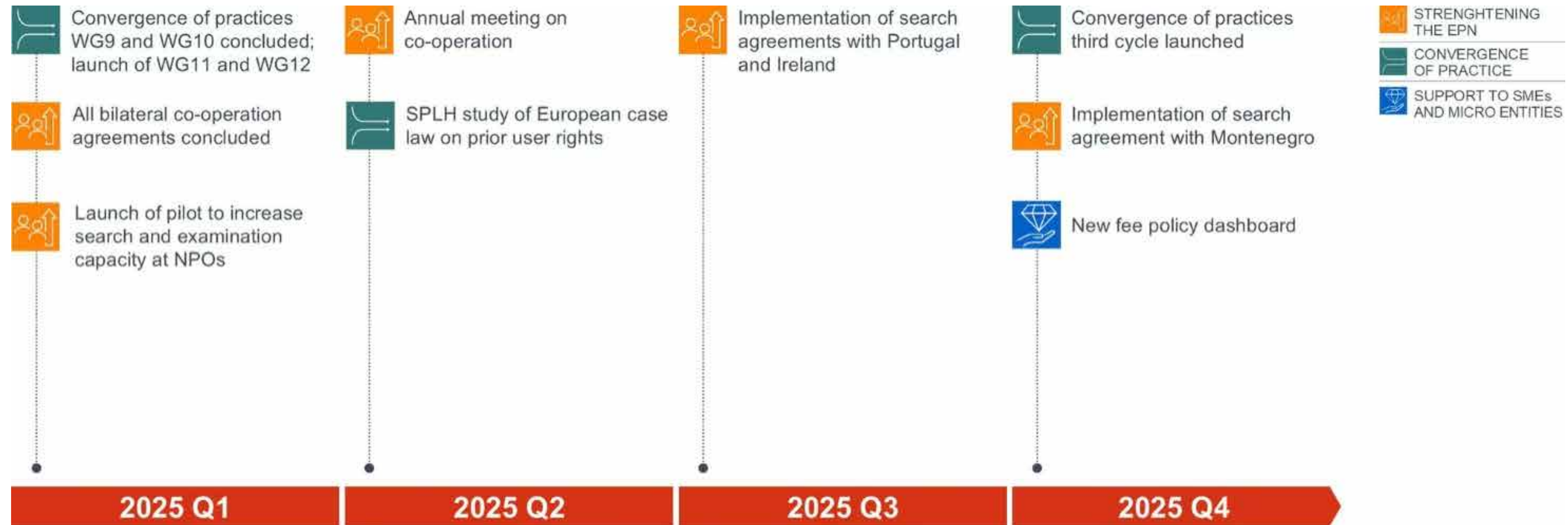
Source: EPO

Work on harmonising patent procedures across the EPN reached a milestone in 2025: the second cycle of the **convergence of practices** programme concluded its work in December, with the final pair of common practices subsequently adopted by the Administrative Council in early 2026. The conclusion of this second cycle represents an important step towards greater alignment of practices and enhanced legal certainty for users across Europe, and is supported by the [convergence of practices dashboard](#) enhancing transparency on the implementation status of these practices.

Alongside this work, the EPO continued to drive **substantive patent law harmonisation (SPLH)** at European and international level. A European case law study on prior user rights was completed in 2025 and fed into discussions of the B+ Working Group, contributing to efforts to build a coherent and balanced European position. These initiatives collectively help create a more predictable, efficient and user-friendly patent system for innovators across the continent.

To provide transparency on initiatives to **support European SMEs and micro-entities**, the EPO published a new [fee support scheme insights](#) which shows how much money applicants are already saving as a result of the EPO’s **fee reduction schemes**. These have delivered savings totalling €28 million to smaller applicants since 2024, of which €11 million related to the targeted micro-entity support scheme introduced at that time. In parallel, the EPO launched a new **Fee Assistant** tool to support applicants, especially those who are smaller or new to the system, in taking advantage of the support measures. This interactive tool helps applicants assess what fees will be due at the first stages of the PGP, and which fee reductions they may be eligible for.

Figure 14 – SP2028 European co-operation pipeline



Source: EPO

Enhance IT co-operation

The IT cooperation pipeline serves to advance the digital transformation of the European Patent Network through close collaboration with national patent offices and other stakeholders. 2025 brought further consolidation of services, decommissioning of legacy systems as well as the launch of the Digital Toolkit and various AI-enabled solutions.

- **Delivery of an upgraded version of Front Office and Implementation of Front Office 3.0 in the member states:** The upgrade introduced usability, accessibility, administrative and functional enhancements, including features designed to ensure equitable access for users with disabilities. The first national rollout of this upgrade is planned for early 2026.
- **Further development of the Single Access Portal (SAP):** The SAP continued to evolve with the addition of new services, including support for the operation of the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) scheme and the Technology

Intelligence Platform. The introduction of mandatory multifactor authentication further enhanced security.

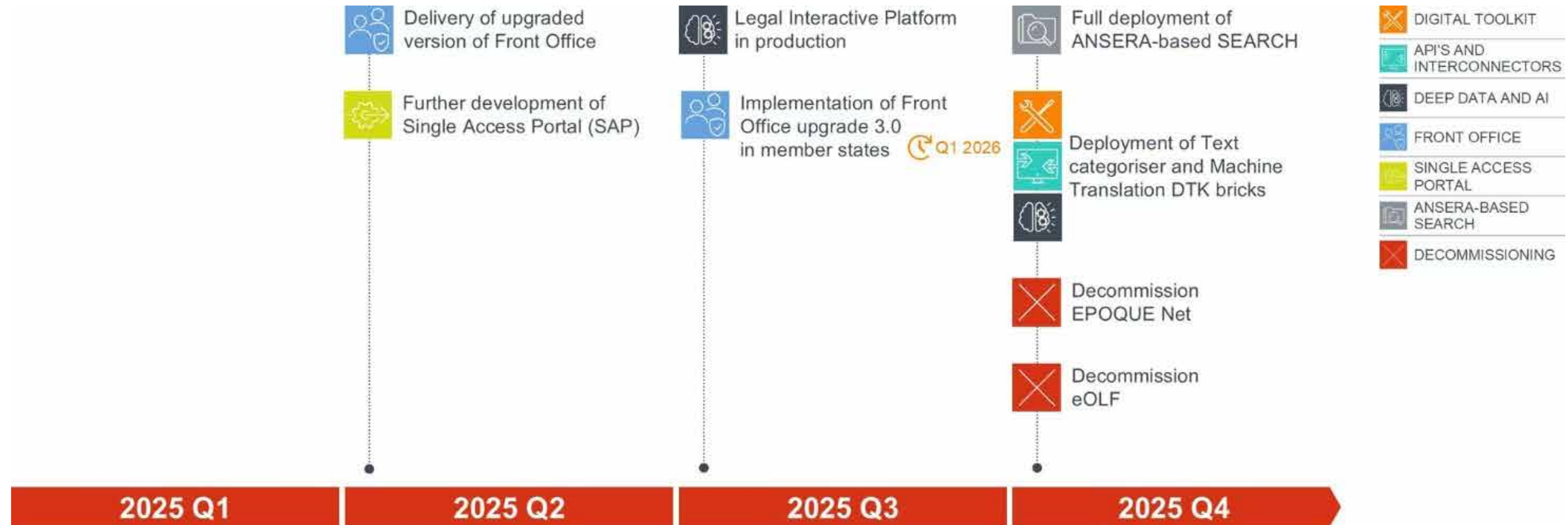
- **Legal Interactive Platform in production:** The Legal Interactive Platform, an AI-based conversational tool supporting access to national patent law and procedures, was successfully launched in Italy and Ireland. This marked the first major new deliverable of the IT co-operation programme under SP2028. It will be progressively rolled out to further interested member states in 2026.
- **Deployment of Text Categoriser and Machine Translation Digital Toolkit (DTK) bricks:** The first bricks of the Digital Toolkit²¹—the Text Categoriser and the Machine Translation—were deployed and made available for testing by pilot national offices. The Text Categoriser uses AI to find suitable CPC terms directly from text input while the Machine Translation brick provides automated translations adapted to patent-related terminology. Several member states have expressed interest in piloting these services, with early adopters preparing for production deployment in 2026.

- **Full deployment of ANSERA-based SEARCH and Decommissioning of EPOQUE Net:** The adoption of ANSERA-based SEARCH (AbS) was completed in 2025. More than 2 500 examiners are actively using the system and AbS has been made available to over 40 national patent offices. This transition has supported evolving search practices, with a focus on interoperability, data quality and efficiency, and has allowed decommissioning of EPOQUE Net after more than 30 years of service.
- **Decommissioning of eOLF:** The successful transition of national patent offices to Front Office, or alternative local online filing solutions, rendered the eOLF obsolete. The end of support for locally deployed eOLF solutions contributes to reduced maintenance effort, increased efficiency and a more coherent filing ecosystem across EPN offices.

Finally, 2025 further confirmed the Office's leadership among international organisations in **data protection**. The European Commission adopted the Adequacy Decision for the EPO, recognising its data protection framework as providing an equivalent level of protection to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This is a milestone and saw the EPO become the first international organisation to receive such recognition, underscoring the Office's role in setting high standards for data protection in the international public sector. This decision will also facilitate cooperation and data flow with EU member states, especially relevant for IT cooperation projects.

²¹ - The DTK is designed as a flexible and scalable set of building blocks supporting both front- and back-office systems, with a strong emphasis on enabling an end-to-end digital workflow from filing through to publication.

Figure 15 – SP2028 IT co-operation pipeline



Source: EPO

International co-operation, legal developments and the Unitary Patent

International co-operation: projecting the European patent system beyond our borders

Following strong progress in 2024, **validation** remained a cornerstone of the EPO's international co-operation efforts in 2025, extending the global reach of the European patent system and supporting innovation-led growth. 2025 marked the tenth anniversary of the very first validation agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco, which has contributed to strengthening national IP capacity including through improved IT infrastructure, examiner training and legal harmonisation.

A consolidated **validation policy** paper was adopted by the Administrative Council, representing the first comprehensive revision of the framework since 1999. The updated policy modernises the assessment of potential partners, introduces clearer indicators and preserves key flexibilities, including tailored scopes and the existing fee-sharing model. Together, these elements help maintain the system's attractiveness while ensuring cost neutrality and effective support for partner offices.

Meanwhile, the validation agreement with the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** entered into force, extending the coverage of European patents in Southeast Asia. Technical co-operation also continued with the seven

existing validation offices – Morocco, Tunisia, the Republic of Moldova, Cambodia, Georgia, Laos and Costa Rica – as well as with the 13 offices participating in **reinforced partnerships**.

Interest in the validation system continued to grow. **Burundi, El Salvador** and **São Tomé and Príncipe** signalled their intention to initiate validation negotiations. Engagement with **Angola** progressed further, leading to a draft validation agreement, which the Administrative Council authorised the EPO to sign in March 2026. Taken together, these developments reflect the sustained attractiveness of the EPO's validation model as a practical and trusted pathway to high-quality patent protection beyond Europe.

Beyond validation, international co-operation was further strengthened through continued collaboration on patent classification. In 2025, the **CPC** – the EPO's classification system co-owned with the USPTO – extended its international footprint with France joining the CPC community, bringing participation to 39 IP offices and organisations worldwide. Co-operation with partner offices also remained active, including the renewal of bilateral CPC arrangements with key partners such as CNIPA and IP Australia.

Multilateral co-operation advanced through the EPO's engagement in the IP5 and Trilateral frameworks. The **18th IP5 Heads of Office meeting**, hosted by the China National Intellectual Property

Administration (CNIPA) in Tianjin, focused on promoting the effective use and commercialisation of IP, advancing digital transformation and strengthening the application of AI in patent office operations. Offices and user groups highlighted the importance of user-centred services and steady, practical progress on shared initiatives such as Global Dossier and Global Assignment.

Figure 16 – Co-operation with our IP5 partners in Tianjin, China



Source: EPO

In parallel, the EPO deepened its engagement within Trilateral co-operation with the JPO and USPTO. Discussion at the **43rd Trilateral Conference**, held in October at the USPTO in Alexandria, centred on improving patent quality and operational efficiency through advanced IT and AI-driven tools, as well as on aligning approaches to emerging technologies. Looking ahead, the partners agreed to strengthen collaboration on AI through the establishment of a Trilateral AI Working Group, which will report its outcomes at the 44th Conference, to be hosted by the EPO at its new Vienna office.

International co-operation also continued in the context of the **Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)**. Since December 2020, the EPO has acted as an International Searching Authority (ISA) for nationals and residents of the People's Republic of China filing PCT applications in English with CNIPA. In 2025, the EPO and CNIPA agreed to extend this successful pilot for a further five years, until 30 November 2031, confirming its long-term value for both offices and users. As long-standing partners, the EPO and IP Australia (IPA) announced a two-year pilot under which Australian users may also choose to have the EPO carry out their international searches.

Finally, in December 2025, the EPO initiated the process toward its **reappointment as PCT Authority** for the period 2028-2037. It submitted all formal application documents to WIPO, including the certification of compliance with the new PCT Minimum Documentation requirements. The reappointment process is expected to conclude in the course of 2026.

Legal developments: toward certainty, accessibility and digitalisation

A clear, consistent and predictable legal framework not only facilitates smoother operations for innovators, but also cements the EPO's reputation as a reliable and user-friendly organisation. This alignment of interests ultimately leads to a more productive and harmonious relationship with users, fostering innovation and growth within the patent system. In 2025, joint efforts with our partners to maintain and improve this framework resulted in several noteworthy developments.

A new version of the **EPC and PCT-EPO Guidelines** was pre-published on 1 February ahead of entry into force on 1 April. The new guidelines are the result

of extensive user consultation, and take account of the latest developments regarding PGP practices and the case law of the BoA, especially decisions of the Enlarged Board of Appeal. Increasing the pre-publication period to two months improved transparency and legal certainty, including for EQE candidates. In addition, for the first time, the publication included a set of **Unitary Patent Guidelines**, replacing and expanding on the existing guides to better support users in navigating the new system.

The implementation of the **second package of legal changes** in support of digitalisation and simplification, which started in 2024, was largely completed in 2025 with the adoption of measures regarding electronic priority documents, colour filings, and multimedia citations. Self-service options for the data in registers have simplified the processing of data for the users. A **third wave** of changes began with the launch of a user consultation exercise. A particular focus area of this third basket was the EPO's contribution to the **modernisation of PCT procedures and workflows**. The Office also developed proposals for possible additional measures supporting the transition to a

paperless PGP, which were presented to the TOSC and Patent Law Committee and later adopted by the Administrative Council in 2026.

The Office's internal processes for the systematic identification, assessment and reporting of relevant **case law** by the BoA and national courts were revamped and expanded to also cover decisions by the UPC and feed these back into the EPO's **quality management cycle**. This integrated approach contributes to the harmonisation of practices and ultimately enhances legal certainty for users.

On 1 April 2025, amendments introducing **gender-neutral language** into the EPC Implementing Regulations and associated texts entered into force – a key step in the EPO's ongoing efforts to align its various legal texts with its commitment to diversity and inclusion, while ensuring clarity and legal certainty across all three official languages.

In September, the EPO hosted a **Biopatents Workshop** attended by delegations from 35 contracting states, and the European Commission as an observer. The event addressed the timely topic of New Genomic Techniques, reflecting growing

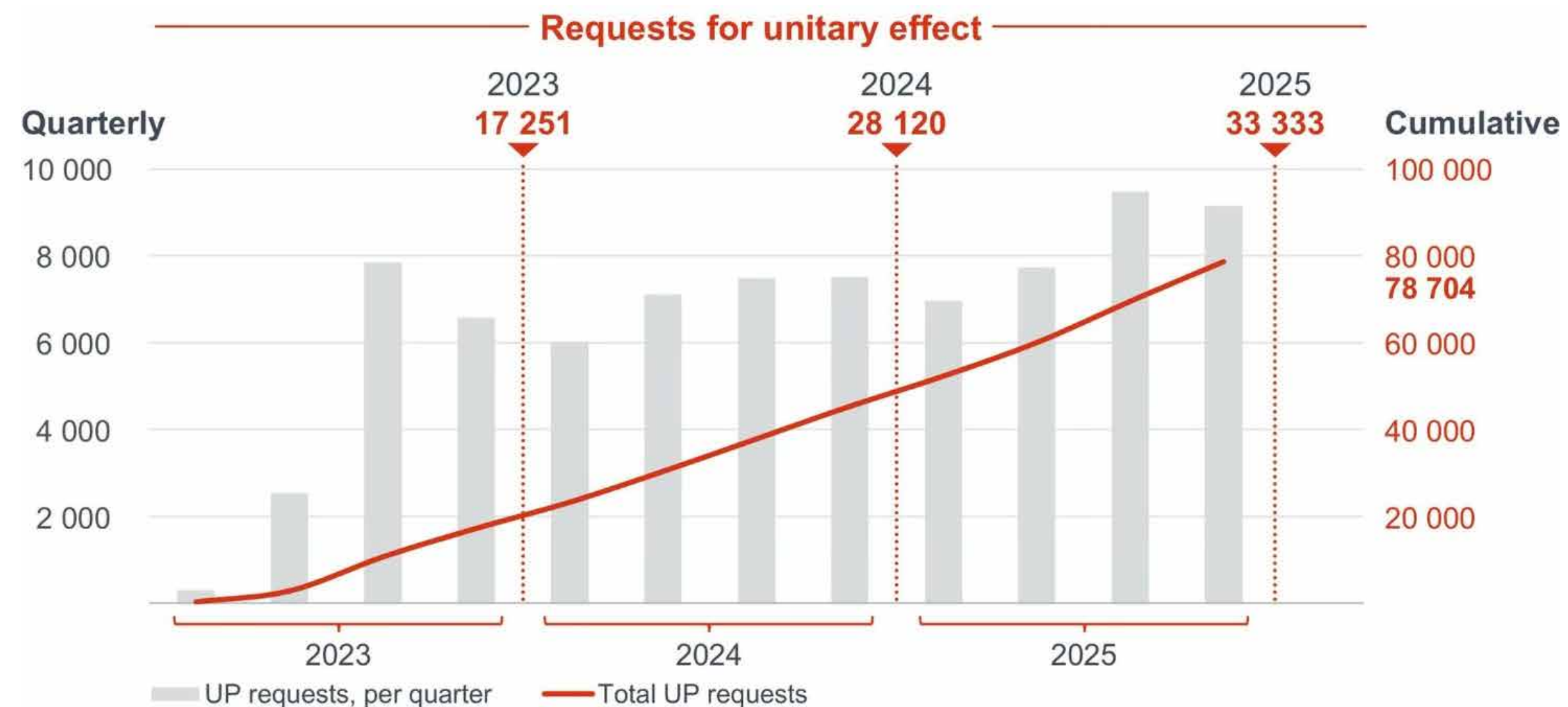
interest and debate at EU level. The workshop focused on fact-based dialogue and supporting informed decision-making in biotechnology – an area of strategic importance for Europe’s competitiveness and sustainability.

Legal co-operation extended to **data protection** matters: in 2025, the DPO forged closer ties with peers in other international organisations – the network of DPOs of international organisations launched at the end of 2024 now counts 30 organisations – and expanded co-operation with European institutions and data protection authorities, further positioning the Office within the international data protection community.

The Unitary Patent: driver of innovation and competitiveness

The **Unitary Patent system** has continued to gain strong traction and has strengthened its role as a key pillar of patent protection in Europe. Since the start of the system in June 2023, the number of requests for unitary effect has continued to increase, and uptake rates have further risen compared to the previous reporting period, confirming the attractiveness of the system across technology fields and user profiles. By the end of 2025, almost **79 000 unitary patents** had been registered by the EPO. In 2025, more than one in four European patents granted resulted in a request for unitary effect. In EPC member states, uptake was even higher at 40%, reflecting strong interest from European industry in this new form of patent protection.

Figure 17 – Evolution of Unitary Patent requests 2023-2025



Source: EPO

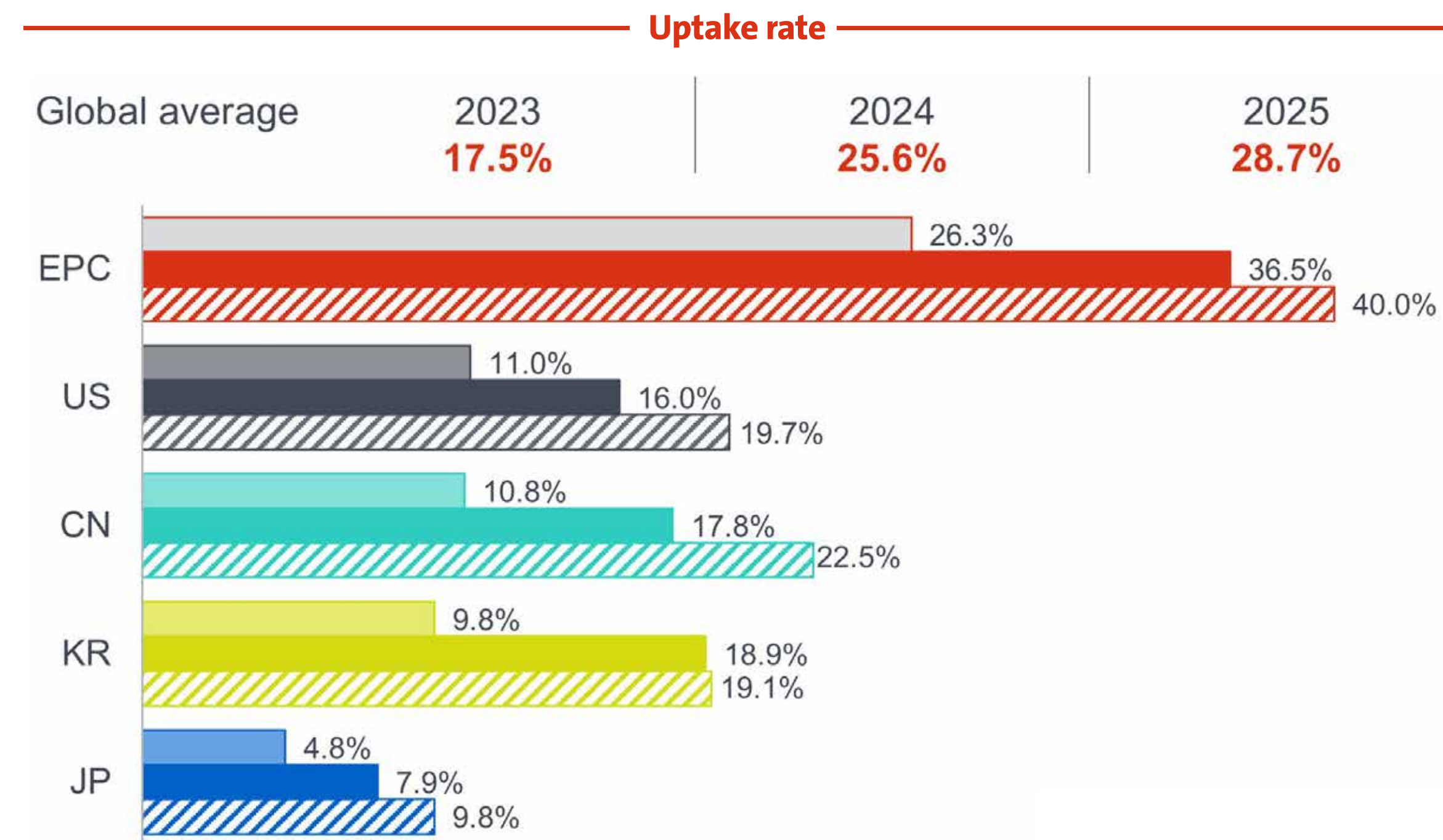
The Unitary Patent remains particularly attractive for **SMEs, individual inventors, universities and PROs** (48% of the total share of European proprietors in 2025), underlining the system’s contribution to improving access to patent protection and reducing administrative complexity and costs for users with limited resources. At the same time, the system continues to be widely used by large industry, demonstrating its relevance for commercially significant patent portfolios.

Geographically, the Unitary Patent is used predominantly by **patent owners based in Europe** (60% of the total in 2025), confirming that the system primarily serves European innovators and supports the functioning of the Single Market. At the same time, the Unitary Patent is increasingly attracting interest overseas, in particular from the United States and East Asia. Within East Asia, China accounts for the largest share of requests, followed by the Republic of Korea, while uptake

in Japan has also increased steadily over time. These trends underline the growing international relevance of the system.

In terms of implementation and user support, a range of **common tools and information services** continue to accompany the Unitary Patent system. In June 2025, the EPO launched an upgraded and expanded version of the [Unitary Patent Dashboard](#), delivering an even broader range of insights into the usage and trends of the Unitary Patent system, directly addressing the feedback and expectations of stakeholders and users.

Figure 17 – Evolution of Unitary Patent requests 2023-2025



Source: EPO

Together, the improved Unitary Patent Dashboard, the Unitary Patent Register and the new Unitary Patent Guidelines support **transparency and information-sharing** by providing up-to-date public information on the use of the system, while tools such as the **Unitary Patent fee calculator** support users in understanding the cost implications of different protection strategies. These instruments contribute to a consistent and transparent framework for users and stakeholders across participating member states.

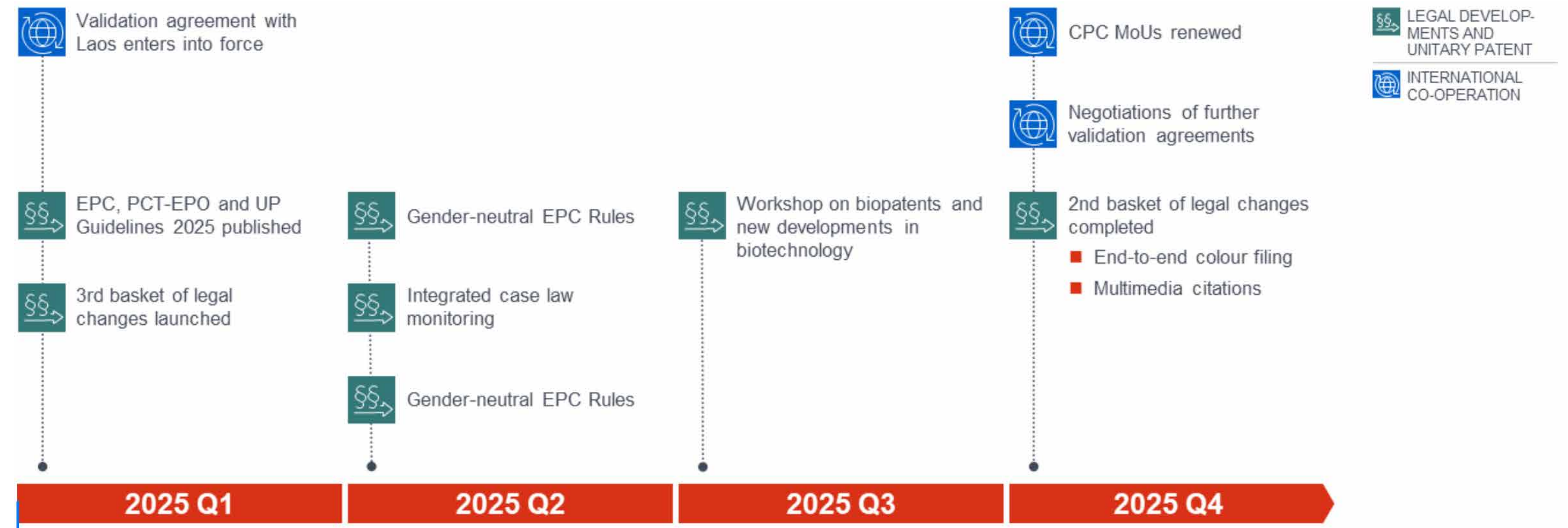
In this context, and in line with its institutional responsibilities, the Office contributed to the **European Commission's report** on the operation of Regulation (EU) No 1257/2012. The contribution was published on the Office's website and underlines the positive performance and growing visibility of the system.

The **UPC** has further strengthened its role as a centralised forum for patent litigation in Europe. Its growing body of case law and the increasing number of proceedings demonstrate rising user confidence in the Court as an effective and specialised jurisdiction. Moreover, decisions taken so far by the UPC have confirmed EPO practices, and demonstrated full alignment on fundamental patentability aspects, such as claim interpretation – further building trust in the system.

During 2025, the Office continued to collaborate closely with the UPC in training activities and IT-related developments, contributing to the effective enforcement of patents in Europe. Further progress was also made in the institutional set-up of the **Patent Mediation and Arbitration Centre (PMAC)**, which is expected to commence its activities in June 2026, enhancing the range of dispute resolution options available to users of the system.

Overall, the continued growth in uptake, the broad and increasingly international user base and the stable operational performance demonstrate the success of the Unitary Patent system. It is contributing to reducing fragmentation in the European patent landscape and strengthening the attractiveness of Europe as a location for innovation and investment.

Figure 19 – SP2028 International co-operation, legal development and Unitary Patent pipeline



Source: EPO

Increase skills and knowledge

The European Patent Academy: IP training of excellence

In 2025, the **European Patent Academy** strengthened its role as a key provider of IP education, offering a broad and modern learning portfolio that supported professionals across the entire patent lifecycle. The Academy delivered 136 training activities, totalling 1 532 learning hours and attracting almost 30 000 registrations. Engagement with digital learning also continued to grow, with the e-learning centre reaching over 23 000 active users and recording close to 300 000 visits. User satisfaction remained high, while online and modular formats ensured wide accessibility, with women representing 53% of registrations and an increasing share of learners joining from outside the EPN. Close collaboration with national offices, the PATLIB network and international partners underpinned the Academy’s global impact, fully aligned with SP2028 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Figure 20 – Academy training activities and UN Sustainable Development Goals

109 training activities specifically targeted SDGs | **All** Academy training contributes to SDG4.



Source: EPO

Throughout the year, the Academy supported the rollout of the **AbS** tool across national patent offices through targeted training and capacity-building activities. These efforts helped strengthen national expertise, support the integration of AbS into daily search practice and contribute to greater consistency across the EPN.

To broaden access to high-quality IP education among students, the Academy continued rolling out the **Modular Intellectual Property Education Framework (MIPEF)**. Across its 2025 editions, MIPEF engaged over 4 000 registrations from universities across Europe and is now firmly embedded in the academic landscape, having already exceeded the SP2028 objective for institutional participation.

In parallel, the Academy advanced its **Children & Youth** initiative, aimed at fostering early innovation skills and raising awareness of intellectual property among young people. Preparatory work continued on new learning content to be launched in 2026, while outreach activities at science fairs and youth innovation events helped inspire the next generation of innovators, reaching over 8 000 children and teenagers.

The EPO's flagship conferences once again brought together the wider patent community and strengthened professional dialogue across Europe and beyond. **Opposition Matters** provided global audiences with insights into patent quality, procedural developments and emerging trends. **Litigation Matters** and the **BoA Case Law Conference** offered valuable exchanges on the Unitary Patent system, case law and early UPC practice. The European **Judges' Forum** in Venice further deepened dialogue within the judicial community, helping align perspectives across the EPN and reinforcing the foundations of a coherent and high-quality European patent system.

The PATLIB & KT2A: supporting innovation ecosystems in Europe and Africa

The **PATLIB** network continued to strengthen its role in Europe's innovation ecosystem, with 335 centres across 39 countries supporting SMEs, researchers and entrepreneurs through IP information and technology transfer services.

Figure 21– **Winners of the CodeFest awarded at prize ceremony during the 2025 PATLIB Conference in Vienna**



Source: EPO

Engagement remained high: the **PATLIB Conference 2025** in Vienna attracted a record of almost 4 000 online viewers, complemented by Shaping the Future seminars, active working groups and wide use of the PATLIB Learning Path, which has now been accessed more than 8 000 times. It also

hosted the prize ceremony of the third edition of the CodeFest, which focused on innovative automated approaches to patent data classification for sustainable development. The Development and Support Package saw increased uptake, supporting 122 centre-led activities across 11 member states.

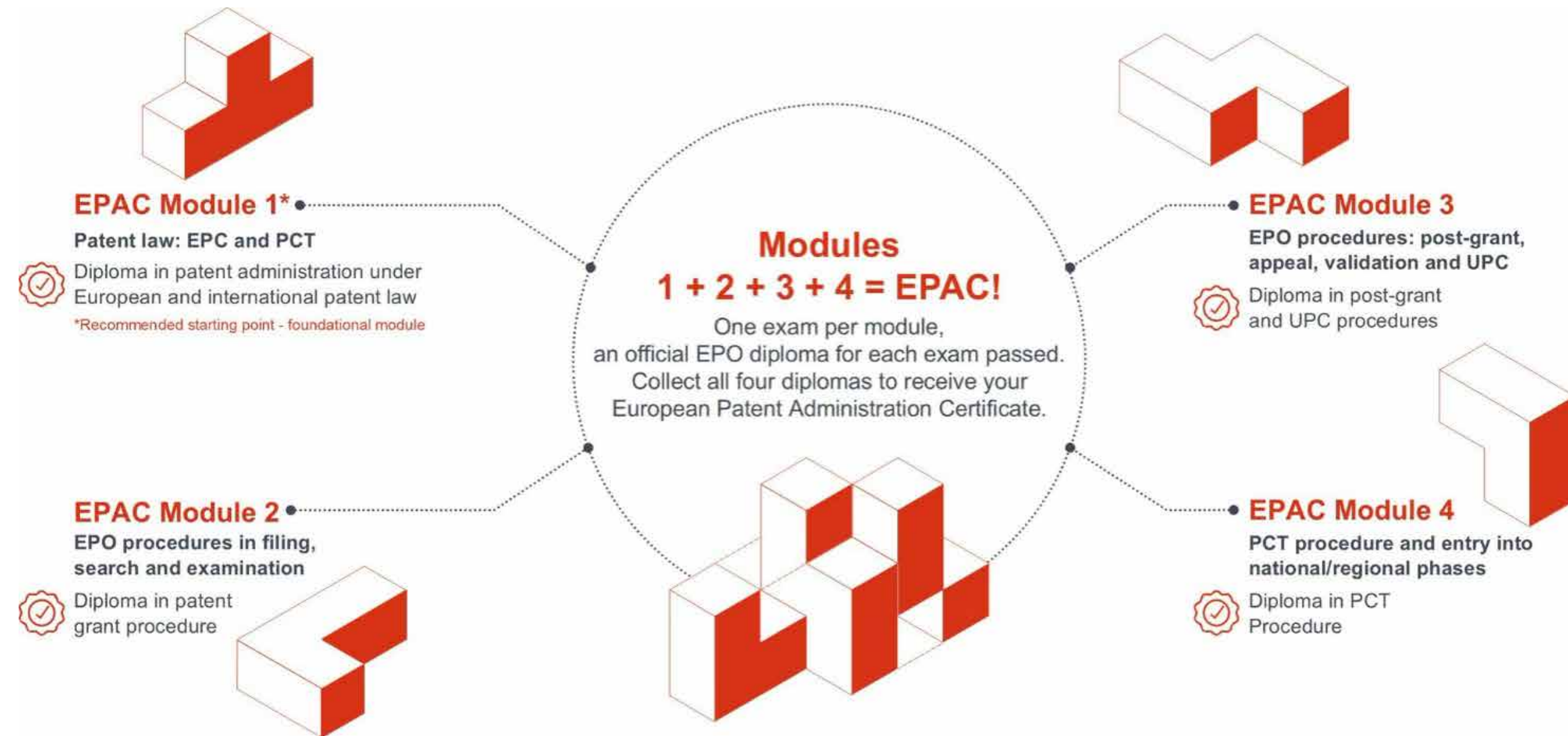
Beyond Europe, the Knowledge Transfer to Africa (KT2A) initiative extended its reach, engaging 80 universities in 29 African countries through tailored training, mentoring and twinning partnerships. Participants reported clearer IP awareness, stronger collaboration and valuable exchange between African and European innovation ecosystems. Looking ahead, PATLIB2028 and the updated service level framework will further professionalise centres and increase their impact across local and regional innovation landscapes.

Certifications: reinforcing the patent profession

In 2025, the EPO made significant progress in strengthening professional certification, with important advances in both the **EQE** and the **EPAC**. A milestone was the introduction of the new foundational paper F, marking the first step in the gradual transition to a modernised, modular EQE framework. The session concluded with candidates sitting more than 4 000 papers, including over 600 taking paper F. Extensive preparatory support accompanied this change, helping candidates adapt to the new structure ahead of the fully reformed EQE planned for 2027.

EPAC also continued to gain momentum, reflecting growing demand for recognised qualifications in patent administration. Participation increased compared to previous years, and preparations advanced for the introduction of a **modular EPAC structure** from 2026. This new approach will allow candidates to progress more flexibly by earning individual diplomas on the pathway to full certification, broadening the programme's appeal across the innovation ecosystem.

Figure22 – Launch of modular European Patent Administration Certification (EPAC)



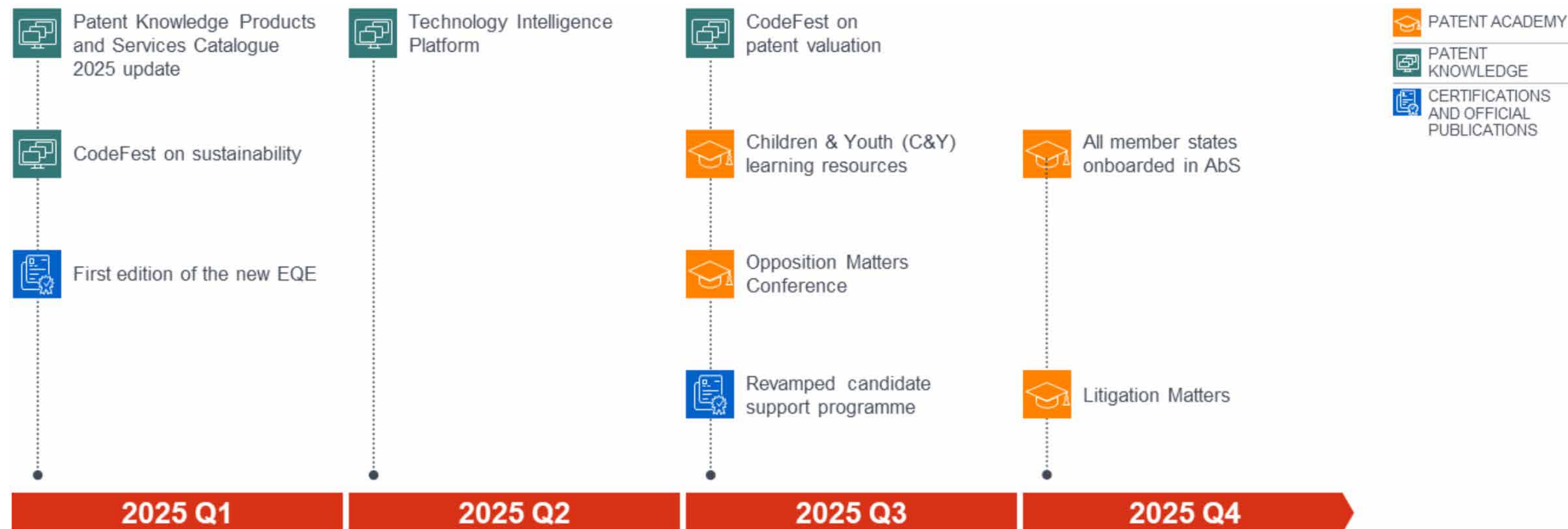
Source: EPO

As a cornerstone of SP2028, the **Candidate Support Programme (CSP)** continued to promote access, diversity and geographical balance within the patent profession. The programme extended to 30 participating member states in 2025 and further strengthened its collaborative model, notably through close co-operation with epi and an increasingly active alumni network. Targeted training activities and mentoring continued to support candidates for the EQE, with the scope of the programme set to widen further in 2026 to include preparation for the EPAC.

The new edition of **CodeFest** is focused on patent and IP portfolio (e) valuation, challenging participants to develop data-driven approaches to assess the economic and technological value of patents. Participants were given access to EPO patent databases and advanced analytics tools, such as Technology Intelligence Platform, to develop prototypes that transform complex patent data into insights. The finalists of the current edition will be announced in mid-2026.

Following its official launch in 2024, the **Technology Intelligence Platform** was enhanced in 2025. This version introduced automatic user registration and faster data updates. This ensures that more up-to-date information is available to our users, enables faster registration and reduces the need for manual interaction.

Figure 23 – SP2028 Increasing skills and knowledge pipeline



Source: EPO

Observatory on Patents and Technology

In the second phase of its first 2023-2025 Biennial Work Plan, the Observatory on Patents and Technology continued to deliver high-impact analysis, insights on the innovation ecosystem and strategic mapping of critical technologies. In 2025, the Observatory significantly expanded its analytical output, outreach activities and stakeholder engagement, strengthening its role as a central reference point for patent-based technology intelligence.

The Observatory’s publications continued to gain visibility, with their data and conclusions increasingly referenced by authoritative external sources. This helped anchor its work more firmly in wider policy and innovation debates. In the course of 2025, it released 14 publications: six economic studies, three technology insight reports and five innovation case studies. These publications continued to address high-impact themes such as patents and standards, the role of PROs and innovation in quantum technologies. Observatory publications were downloaded almost 100 000 times during the year 2025, demonstrating their growing reach and relevance.

In 2025, the Observatory also advanced the EPO's foresight initiative, *Scenarios for the Future 2025–2045*. Inspired by the EPO's landmark 2007 foresight report, the new exercise broadens its scope to encompass innovation and technology trends, supporting long-term planning. The project was launched in mid-2025 and formally presented at the December 2025 Administrative Council meeting, with its delivery strategically aligned with the EPO's 50th anniversary in 2027.

As its analytical presence grew, the Observatory also broadened its engagement across the innovation ecosystem. Three online events were organised on Observatory topics in 2025 reaching over 16 000 cumulative views, and the Observatory tripled its participation in external events, from 60 interventions in the 2023–24 period to 180 interventions in 2025. This steady increase deepened exchanges with stakeholders and reinforced the visibility of patent-related topics across innovation networks.

In parallel, collaboration with member states intensified. The collaboration with EPO member states proved instrumental in enhancing both

Collaboration with member states intensified. The collaboration with EPO member states proved instrumental in enhancing both the quality and relevance of the Observatory deliverables and in strengthening connections with national innovation ecosystems.

the quality and relevance of the Observatory deliverables and in strengthening connections with national innovation ecosystems. A total of 36 NPOs engaged in Observatory initiatives following the previous year's call for interest. This included active participation in the "Reach out to high-tech startups" project, which continued to support national authorities in connecting patent-based intelligence with local innovation communities. Altogether, this project supported 12 events in 2025.

At the European level, the Observatory further strengthened its ties with EU institutions, ensuring that its evidence directly supported EU-

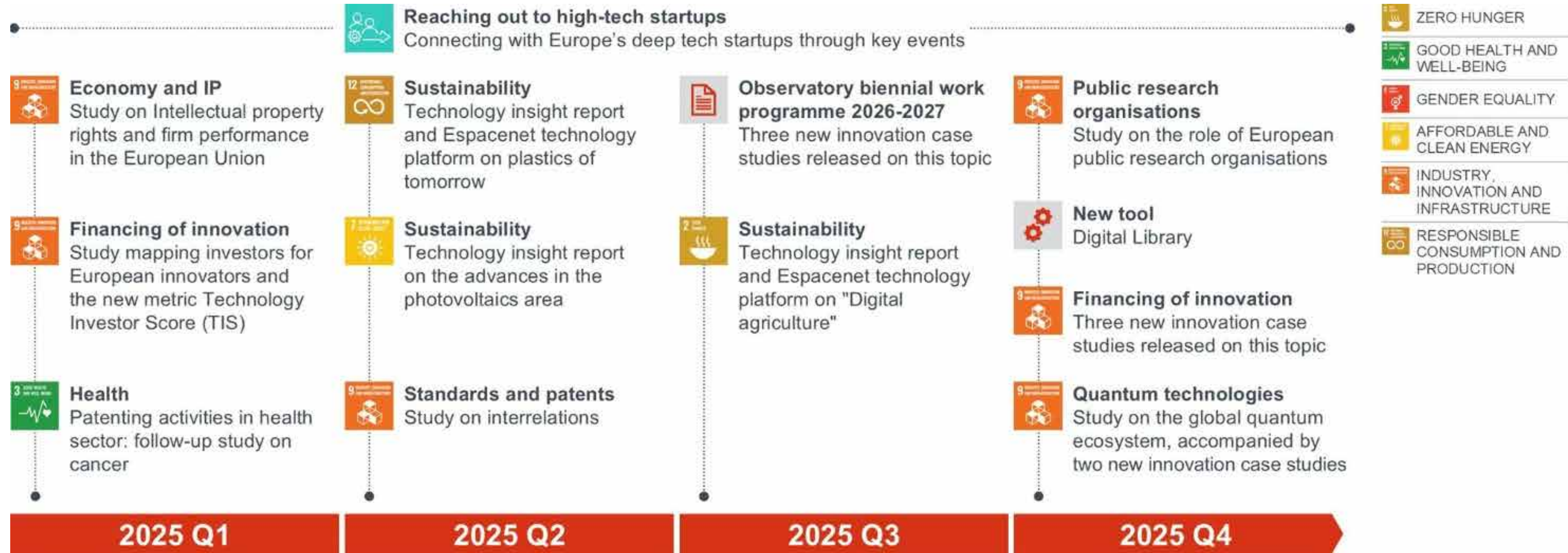
level innovation priorities. Its studies contributed to Horizon Europe discussions and aligned with the themes highlighted in Mario Draghi's report on Europe's competitiveness. Cooperation advanced through new arrangements with the European Commission, EISMEA, the EIT and the EIB. Technology cartographies became a central element of this collaboration, supporting Pathfinder and other programmes, and expanding into new emerging fields. The Observatory also provided technical input to EISMEA juries, offering expert assessments on Horizon Europe Transition proposals. Since the launch of this co-operation, EPO experts have provided more than 170 advisory technical evaluations representing EUR 350 million of requested funding from startups.

Complementing these institutional partnerships, the Observatory partnered with several institutions to co-publish studies, drawing on complementary expertise to enhance both the depth and the reach of its analyses. This included joint work with the EUIPO, the European Innovation Council, the OECD and the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research. In addition, some other studies

benefited from more focused cooperation, such as drawing on expert input from EARTO and ASTP, and working with several Latin American patent offices.










Finally, the Observatory continued to expand and deliver tools that make patent-based evidence more accessible to innovators, policymakers and researchers. The Deep Tech Finder saw major upgrades throughout the year, adding new technical-field filters, extending coverage to PROs and their spinouts, introducing investor-search functionality and launching a mobile app. By December, it featured over 10 000 startups and attracted strong user engagement, and achieved more than 38 000 views in its desktop version. Alongside this, three new technology platforms were released and together with the existing ones received over 20 000 visits during 2025; the Digital Library was launched as a central hub for publications and other media types, registering 1 000 views during the month and a half since its launch; and the Observatory's technology-intelligence offering was strengthened by a new dataset called the Patent Standards Explorer, which was downloaded 680 times in 2025, alongside an enhanced PATSTAT.

Figure 24 – SP2028 Observatory on Patents and Technology pipeline



Source: EPO

DRIVER 4 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Key performance indicator (KPI) | End 2025 value | | SP2028 target |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| IT co-operation | 184 IT projects implemented |  | 240 |
| Convergence of practice | 79.1% of member states |  | 90% |
| Validation agreements | 16 validation agreements ²² |  | 14 |
| Modular IP education framework in university curricula | 90 universities |  | 80 |
| Pan-European Seal universities that offer STEM degrees | 82% |  | 90% |
| Patent intelligence | 9 technology platforms |  | 14 |
| PATLIB network training | 29% technology transfer training completed |  | 50% |
| PATLIB network certifications | 14% technology transfer certified |  | 20% |
| Observatory on Patents and Technology | 234 000 views |  | 152 900 |

 = in progress;  = target achieved

In 2025, KPI performance under the Partnerships driver advanced steadily, with three KPIs reaching their targets.

In the area of **IT co-operation**, consistent progress was achieved throughout the year, with 43 additional projects implemented during 2025 from multiple domains, namely: Digital Toolkit, Front Office, ANSERA-based Search, Data Quality and Process, Deep Data and AI, APIs and Interconnectors, and Single Access Portal. Strong collaboration was also reflected in the harmonisation

efforts aimed at increasing **convergence of patent practices** between EPN members. At the end of 2025, 79.1% of members had implemented the agreed common practices at a national level. Moreover, two new practices were introduced during the year: “Allowable features in drawing” and “Issuing and accepting electronic priority documents”.

²² - Seven with signed agreements and nine under formal negotiation.

The **geographical reach of EPO’s products and services** remained stable and above target, with 16 validation agreements: seven with signed agreements and nine under formal negotiation.

Collaboration with universities continued to deepen, as part of the EPO’s commitment to supporting future generations of innovators and decision makers. In 2025, 50 additional universities integrated the **Modular IP education framework (MIPEF)** into their curricula, bringing the total to 90 universities and surpassing the target. Within the **YPP**, the number of universities offering STEM degrees remained stable at 82%.

EPO’s support to **PATLIB centres** was also enhanced, with continuous development of capabilities and expertise through network training and certification. The share of PATLIB staff that completed the EPO technology transfer training increased in 2025, from 6% to 29%. Corresponding certifications among Level 3 PATLIB centres saw a more contained improvement (from 12% to 14%), partly due to a substantial expansion of staff in these centres.

Within the **Observatory**, access to patent-related intelligence continued to expand. In 2025, three new technology platforms were launched, bringing the total to nine, while the Observatory’s content and tools reached 234 000 views, exceeding the annual target. As a result, the target for this KPI has been increased to 257 400 views for 2026.

DRIVER 05

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Long-term financial sustainability is part of the EPO's overarching goal, set out in SP2028, of becoming a more sustainable organisation. In this context, the Financial Study Phase I (CA/68/23) provided a comprehensive long-term projection of how the EPO's finances were expected to evolve between 2023 and 2042. It confirmed that the six measures adopted in 2020 to address the funding gap had a positive impact, substantially improving the Office's long-term financial position to a positive surplus of EUR 4.2 billion over the next 20 years. However, sensitivity analyses highlighted ongoing exposure to capital market fluctuations and inflation, which could affect the EPO's future funding requirements.

Phase II of the Financial Study (CA/23/24) therefore aimed to identify options for optimising available funding sources and to define a comprehensive funding plan to achieve full coverage of all long-term obligations. The Office also proposed a set of orientations to further strengthen long-term financial sustainability (CA/39/24), on which progress continued in 2025, such as the creation and funding of buffers (Operational Reserve for short-term liquidity needs: €2.5 billion, Sustainability Fund for extra-ordinary circumstances: €1.0 billion, SAM buffer for mitigating risks arising from the pending ILOAT judgment on the salary adjustment method: €2.0 billion) and the preparation of the insourcing of EPOTIF asset management to the RFPSS.

During 2025, the Office implemented the following actions stemming from the recommendations of the Financial Study Phase II (CA/23/24):

- **Financial risk management and monitoring framework:** Following the validation by the Council of the Financial Risk Management and Monitoring Framework in December 2024 (CA/89/24), the Financial Study KPI dashboard was developed in the first half of 2025. The dashboard shows risk KPIs in three categories: strategic, macro-economic and operational. All members of the Budget Finance Committee and Administrative Council have access to the dashboard, allowing them to monitor the EPO's progress towards securing long-term financial sustainability.
- **Insourcing of EPOTIF asset management:** In December 2025, the Administrative Council approved the insourcing of the asset management of EPOTIF to the Administration of the RFPSS (CA/68/25). The project planning phase was well underway in 2025, while work in 2026 will focus on the adaptation of internal and external asset management services and investment management platforms to the EPOTIF requirements, on the amendment of regulations, reviewing the strategic asset allocation and terminating the agreements with the external asset managers and the capital management company (KVG). The liquidation of EPOTIF assets held by the three external asset managers and reinvestment of the cash proceeds by the Fund Administration is planned for the first quarter of 2027.

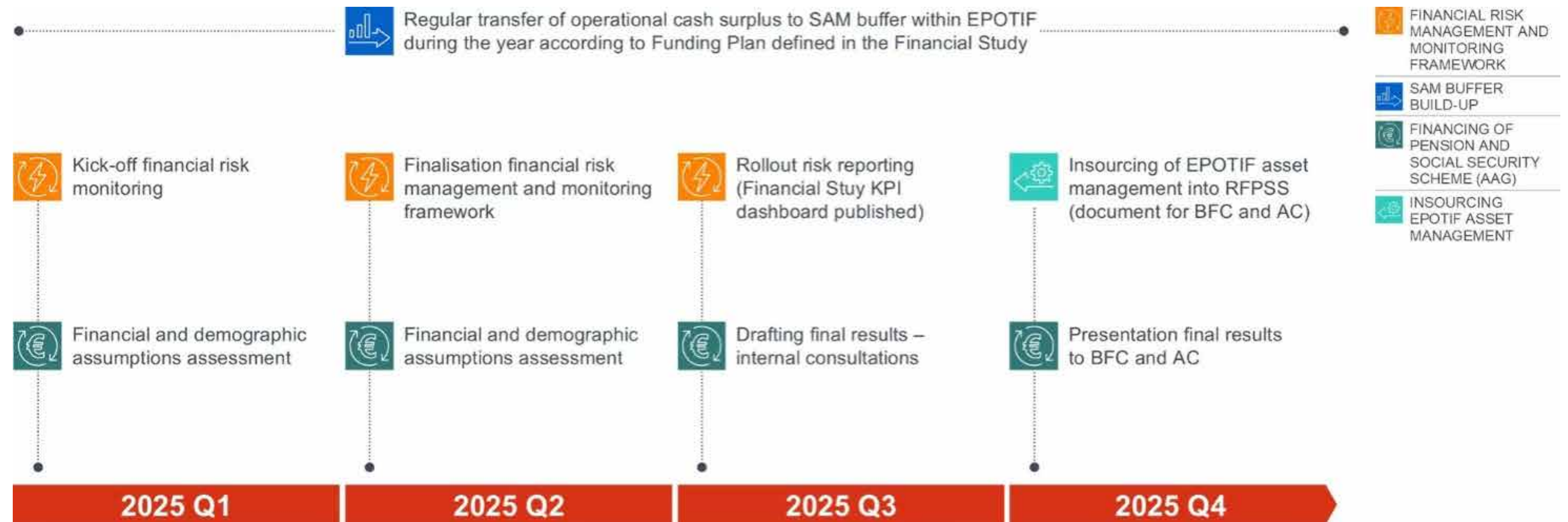
■ **Build financial security buffers:** The Financial Study Phase II defined a funding strategy targeting a funding level of 105% for all benefit liability plans. During 2025 the Office continued with the implementation of the funding plan, achieving a funding level of 88.0% at the end of the year, compared to 80.1% in December 2024. At the end of 2025, the buffer for the litigation on the salary adjustment method (SAM buffer) reached the target value of EUR 2 billion. This comprises, EUR 1 340 million in dedicated cash injections and EUR 660 million that were gained as investment returns on the entire EPOTIF.

■ **Applying the new risk tolerance policy of the EPO to the funding of pension and social security schemes:** The Actuarial Advisory Group carried out an actuarial study in 2025, consisting of the periodic review of demographic and financial assumptions, and the application of the new risk tolerance adopted by the Office following the Financial Study, resulting in an alignment of the discount rate. The result was an increase of the pension contribution rate from 32.1% to 37.8%. Also, the contribution rate to the New Pension Scheme was increased from 28.5% to 33.9%, the contribution for healthcare was increased from 9.6% to 10.5%, and the long-term care contribution rate was maintained at 1.8%. The new rates are applied from 1 January 2026 and represent a shared effort between EPO and staff to safeguard the financial sustainability of our pension and social security schemes.

Review of the salary adjustment method and of the financial impact of the bundle of measures of the 2019 Financial Study:

In December 2025, the EPO presented to the Administrative Council a review report of the salary adjustment method adopted in 2020 (CA/79/25). This review confirmed that the current method has achieved its key objectives for the period 2021-2026, including maintaining long-term financial sustainability, managing salary growth in line with economic conditions, and preserving parity of purchasing power among places of employment. The orientations for the new method were submitted to the Administrative Council in March 2026 for opinion, with the aim of submitting a final proposal to be decided in June 2026. Also in December 2025, the Office provided a review of the impact of the financial measures adopted by the Administrative Council following the 2019 Financial Study (CA/86/25), concluding that the implementation of the measures was ahead of the expected progress, having already delivered realised gains of EUR 3.2 billion.

Figure 24 – SP2028 Observatory on Patents and Technology pipeline



Source: EPO

DRIVER 5 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Key performance indicator (KPI) | End 2025 value | | Target |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|
| Productivity | 115.6 SEO products per FTE | ✓ | 2025 target: 114.4 |
| Plan production | 1.3% deviation from plan | ✓ | 2028 target: ≥ -2% |
| Funding level | 88.0% ²³ of liabilities covered | ○ | 2032 target: 105% |

○ = in progress; ✓ = target achieved

The KPIs under the Financial sustainability driver continued to show robust performance in 2025.

Productivity showed a sustained upward trend throughout the year, reaching a new record level of 115.6 SEO products per FTE in December 2025. This performance surpassed the KPI annual target and represented a 3.7% year-on-year improvement. In addition, total **production** closed the year 1.3% above the annual plan.

The funding level measures the extent to which the EPO can cover its long-term pension and social security obligations (referred to as DBOs standardised at 4.6%) by means of the total RFPSS market value. This indicator evolved from 80.1% at the end of 2024 to 88.0% at the end of 2025, mainly driven by the robust operational result and the strong financial markets performance recorded in 2025.

²³ - The value of the defined benefit obligations is calculated using the standardised discount rate of 4.6%.



ANNEX 1

MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT

The EPO recognises that identifying and addressing material sustainability topics is fundamental to building a resilient, future-ready organisation. In an evolving global context, the EPO remains committed to understanding the impacts of its operations on society and the environment, as well as the sustainability-related risks and opportunities that influence long-term value creation and operational excellence.

In line with SP2028, the EPO conducted a comprehensive materiality assessment structured in three phases: understanding the organisation's context, identifying actual and potential impacts, and evaluating their significance. This process embeds sustainability across the Office's five strategic drivers – People, Technologies, High-quality, timely products and services, Partnerships, and Financial Sustainability – and is aligned with international frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

The assessment combined in-depth internal analysis with insights from the public consultation on the SP2028, which invited stakeholders to share their views on how the EPO can contribute to a more sustainable patent system and society. Impacts were evaluated across economic, environmental and social dimensions using a structured methodology based on four key criteria: nature of the impact, time horizon, intentionality, and reversibility. This approach ensured a transparent, evidence-based prioritisation of sustainability issues.

The results reaffirm the relevance of the EPO's strategic focus while providing greater clarity. Material topics such as innovation and economic growth, employment, energy and emissions, and customer privacy reflect the EPO's contribution to Europe's innovation ecosystem and broader sustainability objectives. These topics highlight the Office's role in fostering technological progress, enabling knowledge-sharing, supporting job creation and promoting responsible operations.

To support these priorities, the EPO tracks performance through key indicators and reports annually on progress in areas such as carbon neutrality, digital transformation and staff engagement. Sustainability is fully integrated into the EPO's operational model and public service mission.

Looking ahead, the outcomes of the materiality assessment will continue to guide the EPO's sustainability reporting, monitoring and strategic planning. Through this work, the EPO reinforces its commitment to robust governance, stakeholder transparency and long-term impact – ensuring that its mission to deliver high-quality patents and efficient services continues to support innovation, competitiveness and sustainable growth for the benefit of society.

ANNEX 2

LIST OF ANNEXED REPORTS

Quality Report 2025 (CA/40/26 Add. 1)

Social Report 2025 (CA/40/26 Add. 2)

Environmental Report 2025 (CA/40/26 Add. 3)

Digital Transformation Report 2025 (CA/40/26 Add. 4)

Data Protection Report 2025 (CA/40/26 Add. 5)

Partnerships Report 2025 (CA/40/26 Add. 6)

ANNEX 3

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

| | |
|------------------|---|
| AC | Administrative Council |
| AbS | ANSERA-based SEARCH |
| ALM Study | Asset Liability Management Study |
| API | Application programming interface |
| ASD | Active Search Division |
| BE | BusinessEurope |
| BFC | Budget & Finance Committee |
| BIP | Building Investment Programme |
| BoA | Boards of Appeal |
| CKT | Continuous Knowledge Transfer |
| CNIPA | China National Intellectual Property Administration |
| COHSEC | Central Occupational Health and Safety Committee |
| CPC | Cooperative Patent Classification |
| D&I | Diversity and inclusion |
| DFA | Digital File Allocation |
| DPO | Data Protection Office |
| DQA | Directorate Quality Audit |
| DTF | Deep Tech Finder |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| EIN | European Inventor Network |
| EP | European patent |
| EPAC | European Patent Administration Certificate |
| EPC | European Patent Convention |
| epi | Institute of Professional Representatives before the EPO |
| EPN | European Patent Network |
| EPO | European Patent Office |
| EQE | European Qualifying Examination |
| GCC | General Consultative Committee |
| GRI | Global Reporting Index |
| ICT | Information and communications technology |
| IDP | Individual Development Plan |
| IPC | International Patent Classification |
| IPR | Intellectual property right |
| ISA | International Searching Authority |
| KPI | Key performance indicators |
| LIP | Legal Interactive Platform |
| MIPEF | Modular Intellectual Property Education Framework |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| NPL | Non-patent literature |
| NPO | National patent office |
| NWoW | New Ways of Working |
| PACE | Accelerated examination |
| PGP | Patent granting process |
| PKF | Patent Knowledge Forum |
| POC | Proof of Concept |
| PPH | Patent Prosecution Highway |
| PWB | Patent Workbench |
| SACEPO | Standing Advisory Committee before the EPO |
| SDGs | United Nations Sustainable Development Goals |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| SES | Staff Engagement Survey |
| SME | Small and medium-sized enterprise |
| SNE | Seconded national expert |
| SP2028 | Strategic Plan 2028 |
| SPLH | Substantive patent law harmonization |
| SQAPs | Stakeholder Quality Assurance Panels |
| TIP | Technology Intelligence Platform |
| TOSC | Technical and Operational Support Committee |
| UPC | Unified Patent Court |
| USS | User Satisfaction Survey |
| WSA | Web Search Assistant |
| YPP | Young Professionals Programme |



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Published and edited by
European Patent Office
Munich
Germany
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