**PRESS RELEASE**

 **Unitary Patent now covers 18 states as Romania joins system**

* **Romania will officially join the Unitary Patent (UP) system on 1 September**
* **This will add 19 million people to the market of 330 million already covered by a single Unitary Patent**

**Munich, 29 August 2024 –** The European Patent Office (EPO) is pleased to announce that as of 1 September 2024, Romania will be part of the Unitary Patent (UP) system. This expansion will not only increase the number of participating EU Member States to 18 but will also mean an additional 19 million people to the market of 330 million which are covered by the UP system.

Made up of two pillars – the Unitary Patent and the Unified Patent Court (UPC) – the Unitary Patent system offers lower costs, a streamlined procedure, uniform protection and greater legal certainty across 18 participating EU Member States, up from 17. Inventors can apply for and maintain patent protection at the EPO, which acts as a one-stop shop for patent owners, including when it comes to paying the attractive renewal fees and registering subsequent transactions (such as the granting of licences).

The increased reach is just one of these benefits that make the Unitary Patent an attractive option for patent applicants, especially for SMEs. In fact, over 1,000 users expressed their interest in extending the scope of protection of their Unitary Patents to Romania by requesting a delay in registration until after 1 September.

“*The accession of Romania clearly demonstrates the relevance of the Unitary Patent system for all EU Member States looking to participate in the internal technology market of the EU and advance European economic integration*,” said EPO President António Campinos. “*For innovative businesses, the step paves the way to even more cost-effective and uniform patent protection across Europe. It also offers attractive opportunities for Romanian inventors, particularly SMEs, to grow economically in a dynamic region.*”

**One year of the Unitary Patent**

Since the Unitary Patent entered into force on 1 June 2023, the EPO has received over 34,000 requests for unitary effect and registered 33,000 Unitary Patents. The new patent has seen high demand from European companies: In the first half of this year, 63% of all requests for unitary effect originated from the 39 EPO member states, with over 32% filed by small businesses and individual inventors. For classic European patents filed in 2023, the corresponding figures were 43% and 23% respectively, according to the Patent Index. So far this year, almost one in four European patents granted has been converted into a Unitary Patent.

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**About the EPO**

With 6 300 staff members, the [European Patent Office (EPO)](http://www.epo.org/?mtm_keyword=pressrelease&mtm_medium=press) is one of the largest public service institutions in Europe. Headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin, Brussels, The Hague and Vienna, the EPO was founded with the aim of strengthening co-operation on patents in Europe. Through the EPO's centralised patent granting procedure, inventors can obtain high-quality patent protection in up to 45 countries, covering a market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.