

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

COVID-19 Practical Considerations: Deadlines at IP Offices Extended

30 March 2020

For businesses that are engaged in proceedings or procedural matters before an IP office, such as the European Patents Office or the Intellectual Property Office of Ireland, COVID-19 will impact on meeting filing and other deadlines.

This is because many IP offices are closed to the public with staff working remotely, the personnel of applicants and respondents are also likely working from home or in self-isolation, and in some regions, there may be delays or disruptions to mail and delivery services. In light of these unprecedented practical and logistical difficulties faced by both businesses and IP offices, certain IP offices have extended filing and other deadlines as set out below. As the situation continues to unfold, dates and deadlines are likely to change. Therefore, it is advisable to check for updates from the relevant IP office.

Intellectual Property Office of Ireland (IPOI)

The IPOI has been closed to the public since Friday, 13 March 2020 and will remain closed until at least Sunday, 19 April 2020. The days that the IPOI is closed are deemed "excluded days" for office deadlines. Therefore, if a deadline falls on an excluded day, the deadline is pushed to the first working day that is not an excluded day, which as things currently stand, is **Monday, 20 April 2020**. So, if you have a deadline with the IPOI that falls between 13 March and 29 March, your deadline is now Monday, 20 April 2020.

IPOI staff are working remotely and will continue to maintain all of its online and e-services, including e-filing of applications, electronic fee payments and email enquiries during normal working hours, until further notice. However, IPOI staff will not be able to deal with telephone enquiries. From Monday, 30 March, all enquiries should be made by email to: ipinfo@ipoi.gov.ie. Further details can be found [here](#).

European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)

All procedural deadlines at the EUIPO that fall between Monday, 9 March 2020 and Thursday, 30 April 2020 inclusive, have been extended to **Monday, 4 May 2020**. The extension is automatic, so parties do not need to request an extension nor will they be informed about the grant of the extension. Some of the most common statutory deadlines covered by the extension include: payment of application fees, payment of opposition fees, and requests for a renewal. Further details can be found [here](#).

EUROPEAN PATENTS OFFICE (EPO)

The EPO has extended office deadlines

expiring on or after Sunday, 15 March 2020 to **Friday, 17 April 2020**. The EPO has stated that if disruption continues after 17 April 2020, it may publish another notice informing users about further extensions and remedies in respect of time limits. You can find the most up-to-date EPO guidance [here](#).

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION (WIPO)

When dealing with international trade mark matters, WIPO has indicated that it will excuse users who have failed to meet a time limit for a communication if they send that communication within five days after regaining access to mail or delivery services, or to electronic communication. In any event, WIPO must receive the communication no later than six months from the date on which the applicable time limit expired. Unlike other IP offices, where extensions are granted automatically, WIPO users must provide sufficient evidence of the reason why WIPO should excuse the delay. According to WIPO, such evidence could be, for example, an official announcement or a doctor's note.

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