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European Patent Guide

How to get a European patent | October 2021

EPC

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ONE PATENT – 44 COUNTRIES

HIGH QUALITY PATENTS

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European Patent Guide

How to get a European patent

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Chapter 1 – Foreword

The **European Patent Guide** aims to provide applicants and their representatives with an outline of the procedure involved in applying for a European patent.

This updated 21st (2021) edition of the Guide is based on the revised European Patent Convention (EPC 2000) which entered into force on 13 December 2007. All references to articles or rules in this Guide therefore relate to the EPC as in force since that date or as amended between that date and October 2021. Please note, however, that in some cases certain provisions of the earlier Convention (EPC 1973) will continue to apply for applications which were pending at the time the revised EPC entered into force. The present edition has been updated to reflect the situation as at 1 October 2021, and takes account of changes to European Patent Office (EPO) procedures entering into force before or on that date. Users of this Guide should therefore always check the EPO website (www.epo.org) for information about any changes which may have occurred since then.

Any comments and questions on the present Guide may be addressed to Directorate 5.2.1 Patent Law (patentlaw@epo.org).

There is also another guide for applicants covering the Euro-PCT route (**Euro-PCT Guide: PCT procedure at the EPO** (see point 2.3.002)).

Chapter 2 – General

2.1 Introduction

2.1.001 This Guide outlines the provisions relevant to the filing of European patent applications, offering practical advice to smooth the way to a European patent. In addition, it briefly describes the post-grant procedures carried out by the EPO. It cannot, however, go into the details or specific issues of the European patent grant or post-grant procedures, and it does not constitute an official commentary on the European Patent Convention (EPC).

If you need more detailed information, you are advised to consult the **Guidelines for Examination in the European Patent Office**, a comprehensive guide to every stage of the grant procedure and to EPO practice.

The charts in Annexes I and in V to the present Guide illustrate the course of the grant procedure and the time limits applicants have to observe.

2.1.002 In the right-hand margin¹ you will find references to the provisions of the EPC, the Implementing Regulations and the Rules relating to Fees, and to passages from the Guidelines for Examination in the EPO (2019 edition) and the Official Journal (OJ) of the EPO. You are strongly advised to consult the works in question before taking any decisions in practice.

The authentic texts of the EPC and the Guidelines are given in two EPO publications, the **European Patent Convention** and the **Guidelines for Examination in the European Patent Office**, both available on the EPO website (www.epo.org), where you will find the latest edition of these and any of the other publications mentioned in this Guide. We also refer you to the decisions and notices published by the EPO in its Official Journal and on its website.

Decisions of the boards of appeal of the EPO (see points 5.7.001-5.7.012) are published on the EPO website. We recommend that you consult the relevant decisions when questions regarding the interpretation of particular EPC provisions arise. The **Case Law of the Boards of Appeal of the EPO** contains brief summaries of selected decisions and makes it easier to find the relevant ones.

The most important sources for European patent law and EPO practice, along with much other useful information, are accessible on the internet via the EPO website (www.epo.org).

2.1.003 As in any other patent grant procedure, you need to be thoroughly familiar with patent matters if you are to steer your way successfully through the European route. **So if you lack the**

¹ Not visible in the HTML version if viewed on a mobile device.

requisite experience, we advise you to consult a professional representative before the EPO (see points 4.1.023-4.1.031).

2.1.004 The EPO brochure entitled **National law relating to the EPC** contains detailed information on the regulations and requirements governing European patent applications and patents in the contracting, extension and validation states. A valuable supplement to this Guide, it is available on the EPO website (www.epo.org).

2.2 Nature and purpose of the European Patent Convention

2.2.001 A patent is a legal title granting its holder the right – in a particular country and for a certain period of time – to prevent third parties from exploiting an invention for commercial purposes without authorisation. The EPC has established a single European procedure for the grant of patents on the basis of a single application and created a uniform body of substantive patent law designed to provide easier, cheaper and stronger protection for inventions in the contracting states.

The contracting states are: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom.

In each contracting state for which it is granted, a European patent gives its proprietor the same rights as would be conferred by a national patent granted in that state. If its subject-matter is a process, protection is extended to products directly obtained by that process. Any infringement of a European patent is dealt with by national law (but see point 2.3.004).

Art. 64

A published European patent application provides provisional protection which is no less than that conferred by a contracting state for a published national application and which must at least include the right to reasonable compensation in the event of wrongful infringement.

Art. 67

The standard term of a European patent is twenty years as from the date of filing. Provided that the annual renewal fees are duly paid, patents remain in force for the maximum term.

Art. 63

Article 63(2) sets out circumstances in which the term of a patent can be extended or a longer term granted. This option of extension by means of a supplementary protection certificate (SPC) is intended primarily for medicinal or plant protection product patents, where the administrative approval procedure takes so long that the useful life of the patent is diminished.

2.2.002 European patents may also be effective in some countries that have not acceded to the EPC (extension and validation states). At present these are Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (extension states) as well as Morocco, the Republic of Moldova, Tunisia and Cambodia (validation states) (see point 2.5.001).

2.3 Relationship to other international conventions

2.3.001 The EPC constitutes a special agreement within the meaning of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

This means in particular that the principles of the Paris Convention on claiming priority and the national treatment principle also apply in the European procedure and to European applications. *Art. 87-89*

Since nearly all the EPC contracting states are members of the WTO, the relevant provisions of the TRIPS Agreement (Agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights) are implemented in the revised EPC.

2.3.002 The EPC further constitutes a regional patent treaty within the meaning of Article 45(1) PCT, which means that European patents can be granted on the basis of an international application filed under the PCT. The **Euro-PCT Guide** deals with this filing route to obtaining patent protection in Europe. It is available on the EPO website (*www.epo.org*). *Art. 150-153
R. 157-165
GL E-IX*

2.3.003 The Agreement on the application of Article 65 EPC – the London Agreement – is an optional agreement aiming at reducing the costs relating to the translation of European patents. The EPC contracting states which have ratified or acceded to the Agreement undertake to waive, entirely or largely, the requirement for translations of European patents. For more information, please consult the EPO website (*www.epo.org*).

2.3.004 The future Unitary Patent will be a "European patent with unitary effect", which means a European patent granted by the EPO under the rules and procedures of the EPC to which, after grant, unitary effect is attributed for the territory of the EU member states participating in the Unitary Patent scheme. After grant of the European patent – but no later than one month after the mention of grant is published in the European Patent Bulletin – you will have the option to file a request for unitary effect with the EPO if you wish to obtain a Unitary Patent. The EPO will among other things: *OJ EPO 2016, A39, A40, A41
OJ EPO 2013, 111, 132*

- examine these requests and register unitary effect,
- set up and administer a new Register for Unitary Patent Protection and
- collect renewal fees for Unitary Patents.

These new tasks will be carried out by the EPO under new rules which will implement Regulation (EU) No 1257/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The Unitary Patent will become available when the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court enters into force. This Agreement must be ratified by at least thirteen states, including the three states in which the highest number of European patents had effect in 2012 (i.e. Germany, France and Italy), before it can enter into force.

A list of the EU member states which have already ratified the Agreement is available at: www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/treaties-agreements/agreement/?id=2013001

For further detailed information, you can consult the **Unitary Patent Guide** (1st edition, August 2017) on the EPO website (www.epo.org).

2.4 Choosing a route: national, European or international

2.4.001 The European procedure has not superseded the national grant procedures. So when seeking patent protection in one or more EPC contracting states you have a choice between following the national procedure in each state for which you want protection and taking the European route, which in a single procedure confers protection in all the contracting states that you designate.

2.4.002 If you decide you want a European patent, you have a further choice between the direct European route and the Euro-PCT route (see point 2.3.002 and the **Euro-PCT Guide: PCT procedure at the EPO**). With the direct European route, the entire European patent grant procedure is governed by the EPC alone; with the Euro-PCT route, the first phase of the grant procedure (the international phase) is subject to the PCT, while the regional phase before the EPO as designated or elected Office is governed primarily by the EPC.

2.4.003 We will now summarise the chief legal and economic factors that are likely to influence your choice between the European and national procedures.

Legal factors

2.4.004 A European patent is granted after an examination designed to establish whether the European patent application and the invention to which it relates comply with the patentability requirements of the EPC.

These requirements are the basis not only for the granting of a European patent, but also for the assessment of its validity by national courts. In addition, under the EPC the extent of the protection conferred by the European patent is determined uniformly for all the contracting states.

Art. 69, 138

2.4.005 The grant procedure is conducted by the EPO's Receiving Section, search divisions and examining divisions; if they decide against

*Art. 16, 17, 18
Art. 99, 106*

your application, you can file an appeal before the boards of appeal of the EPO. Once a European patent has been granted, there follows a nine-month period in which third parties are entitled to file a reasoned notice of opposition; and at the end of the resulting opposition proceedings, either the patent is maintained as granted or as amended or it is revoked. The decision taken in the opposition proceedings applies to all designated contracting states and can also be appealed before the boards of appeal of the EPO.

Once it has been granted, you can file a request for limitation or revocation of your own patent.

Art. 105a, 105b

2.4.006 European patents have a uniform wording and a uniform extent of protection for all designated contracting states (but see points 4.2.027 and 4.2.039) and offer a high presumption of validity.

Patent law in the contracting states has been extensively harmonised with the EPC in terms of patentability requirements. However, as grant procedures continue to be differently structured and are conducted in parallel by several offices, the national route generally leads to national rights with differing extents of protection.

Economic factors

2.4.007 Processing fees in the European patent grant procedure are staggered; so at each stage of the procedure you have a further chance to decide, in the light of the completed stages, whether your interest in obtaining patent protection is still great enough to justify paying the next fee.

Art. 2 RFees

In particular, the separation between search and substantive examination (see points 5.1.002 and 5.1.003) enables you to decide in the light of the European search report (see point 5.2.009) whether it is worth requesting substantive examination.

2.4.008 In certain circumstances you may be interested in having your application processed faster, at the search stage or the substantive examination stage or both.

If you file a request for accelerated processing, the EPO will make every effort to reduce the usual processing times as much as it can, under the programme for accelerated prosecution of European patent applications.

GL E-VIII, 4

2.4.009 Your application may be a **first filing** with the EPO.

As a rule, you will be sent the search report within **five** months of the date of filing.

2.4.010 Like a first filing with a national office, a European first filing gives rise to the right of priority for a national, European or international second filing made in the priority year (see points 4.1.017-4.1.021).

- 2.4.011** Taking into account the fees levied for the European grant procedure, costs for representation by a single agent and the cost of conducting the proceedings in a single language, a European patent as a rule costs about as much as three or four national patents.
- 2.4.012** Information on fees and conditions for fee refunds is provided in points 4.3.011 ff.
- 2.4.013** The European procedure is conducted in one of the three official languages of the EPO (English, French, German), specifically the one in which you choose to file your application or a translation thereof. In addition, if you are from a contracting state whose language is not one of the EPO's official languages, you enjoy certain advantages as regards languages and fees if you use an official language of your contracting state (see points 4.1.008-4.1.011). *Art. 14(2), (3)
R. 6(3)
Art. 14(1) RFees
GL A-X, 9.2*
- 2.4.014** In the final phase of the European patent grant procedure, however, you are required to file a number of translations. You have to provide the EPO with translations of the claims in its other two official languages. Some contracting states require you to file a translation of the European patent specification or of the claims in one of their official languages, if different from the language of the proceedings, in order for the European patent to take effect there (see point 5.4.023). Further information is available on the EPO website (www.epo.org). *Art. 65, 97
R. 71*
- 2.4.015** The European patent grant procedure lasts about two to four years from when the application is filed. It breaks down into two main stages. The first comprises formalities examination, search report preparation and the drafting of an opinion on whether the application and the invention to which it relates seem to meet the requirements of the EPC. The second comprises substantive examination. *R. 55-66, 70-72*
- 2.4.016** In the first of these stages there is no need for your active involvement unless the Receiving Section finds formal deficiencies or the search division requests clarification of the subject-matter to be searched. However, in the second stage – substantive examination – your application is assigned to an examining division, which usually communicates with you or your representative before deciding whether to grant the patent or refuse the application (see points 5.1.003 and 5.4.001-5.4.022). *R. 62a, 63, 71-72*

Competent preparation of the patent application and of all procedural steps before the EPO is a crucial factor in ensuring that the examination procedure runs quickly and satisfactorily (see point 2.1.003).

2.5 Extending/validating European patents to/in non-contracting states

2.5.001 The European Patent Organisation has signed co-operation and European patent extension agreements with a number of European states that are (or at the time were) not party to the EPC. Since 2010, it has concluded further agreements providing for European patents to have effect in non-contracting states. However, these "validation agreements" are not limited to European countries.

GL A-III, 12

As an applicant for a European patent you thus have a simple and cost-effective way of obtaining patent protection in some countries which are not contracting states. If you request extension/validation and pay the extension/validation fee(s) in time, you can have European patent applications (direct and Euro-PCT filings) and patents extended to/validated in these countries, where they will then in principle have the same effect as national applications and patents, will be subject to national law and will enjoy essentially the same protection as patents the EPO grants for EPC contracting states. You can currently request extension to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Montenegro, as well as validation in Morocco, the Republic of Moldova, Tunisia and Cambodia. Lists of countries which have concluded an extension/validation agreement with the EPO are available at www.epo.org/about-us/foundation/extension-states.html and www.epo.org/about-us/foundation/validation-states.html.

The extension and validation systems are largely the same as the designation system for contracting states. For example, the period for payment of the extension/validation fee is the same as the period for payment of the designation fee. However, the extension and validation systems are based not on direct application of the EPC but solely on the relevant national law modelled on the EPC. Hence they are subject to the national extension/validation rules of the country concerned. Further information is available at www.epo.org/law-practice/legal-texts/extension-validation-system.html.

Chapter 3 – Patentability

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.001** European patents are granted for inventions that are new, involve an inventive step and are susceptible of industrial application. An invention can belong to any field of technology. *Art. 52(1)*

3.2 Invention

- 3.2.001** The EPC does not define the meaning of "invention", but it does provide a non-exhaustive list of subject-matter and activities that may not be regarded as inventions, i.e. that are expressly excluded from patentability. *Art. 52(2), (3)
Art. 53
GL G-II, 3*

In this respect your attention is particularly drawn to the following four fields:

- 3.2.002** The first is **programs for computers**, which are not regarded as inventions if claimed as such. However, a computer program is not excluded from patentability under Article 52 if, when running on a computer, it causes a further technical effect going beyond the "normal" physical interaction between the program (software) and the computer (hardware). An example of a further technical effect is where the program serves to control a technical process or governs the operation of a technical device. The internal functioning of the computer itself under the influence of the program could also bring about such an effect. *Art. 52(2)(c), (3)
GL G-II, 3.6
GL Index for
Computer-
Implemented
Inventions*

Thus computer programs are not automatically excluded from patentability. More information about the patentability of computer-implemented inventions is available on the EPO website (www.epo.org).

- 3.2.003** The second field is **methods for treatment** of the human or animal body **by surgery or therapy**, and **diagnostic methods** practised on the human or animal body. These inventions are expressly excluded from patentability. The exclusion from patentability does not apply to products, substances and compositions for use in such methods, e.g. medicaments or surgical instruments. Substances and compositions are in fact singled out for special treatment in the EPC as regards the novelty requirement: even a known substance or composition may be patented for further medical or veterinary uses, provided that such use is novel and inventive. *Art. 53(c), 54(4)-(5)
GL G-II, 4.2*

This exception does not exclude the patentability of other methods of treatment of living human beings and animals; moreover the treatment of body tissues after they have been removed from the human or animal body and diagnostic methods applied to such tissues are patentable as long as the tissues are not returned to the same body. *GL G-II, 4.2.1*

3.2.004 The third field is **plant and animal varieties** and essentially biological processes for the production of plants or animals and the plants or animals exclusively obtained by such processes, which are expressly excluded from patentability.

Art. 53(b)
R. 26, 27, 28(2)
GL G-II, 5.4

In the case of plant varieties, a separate form of protection is available in most contracting states and under EU law.

A process for the production of plants or animals is essentially biological if it is based on sexual crossing of whole genomes and on the subsequent selection of plants or animals, even if other technical steps relating to the preparation of the plant or animal or its further treatment are present in the claim before or after the crossing and selection steps.

The exclusion does not apply to microbiological processes or the products of such processes. In general, biotechnological inventions are also patentable if they concern biological material that is isolated from its natural environment or produced by means of a technical process, even if it previously occurred in nature.

GL G-II, 5.5

3.2.005 The last field is inventions excluded from patentability because their commercial exploitation would be contrary to "**ordre public**" or **morality**. In particular, patents are not granted in respect of processes for cloning human beings, processes for modifying the germ line genetic identity of human beings, uses of human embryos for industrial or commercial purposes, or processes for modifying the genetic identity of animals that are likely to cause them suffering without any substantial medical benefit to man or animal, and also animals resulting from such processes.

Art. 53(a)
R. 28(1)
GL G-II, 4.1

3.3 Novelty

Basic principles

3.3.001 An invention is considered to be new if it does not form part of the state of the art.

Art. 54(1)
GL G-VI

The definition of the state of the art in the EPC reflects the principle of absolute novelty: the state of the art comprises everything made available to the public anywhere in the world by means of a written or oral description, by use, or in any other way, before the date of filing or priority. However, novelty is prejudiced only by something which is clearly disclosed to a skilled person in a **single** source of prior art, e.g. in a patent application published before the date of priority.

Art. 54(2), 89
GL G-IV

3.3.002 An earlier disclosure of the invention is non-prejudicial only if it occurred less than **six months** before the filing of the European patent application **and** was due to an evident abuse in relation to the applicant or to display at an exhibition falling within the terms

Art. 55
R. 25
GL A-IV, 3
GL G-V

of the Paris Convention on international exhibitions.² Except in these two cases, the second of which is rare in practice, any disclosure of the invention before the date of filing or, if applicable, the earliest priority claimed (see point 4.1.021) can be cited against the applicant as forming part of the state of the art, even if the applicant themselves was responsible for the disclosure.

Prior rights

3.3.003 The state of the art is also held to comprise the content of European patent applications filed before the date of filing or priority but not published until on or after that date. *Art. 54(3), 89
GL B-VI, 4*

A PCT application which is filed before the date of filing or priority but not published until on or after that date and for which the EPO acts as designated Office forms part of the state of the art for the purposes of Article 54(3) if the filing fee has been paid to the EPO and the PCT application is published in one of the EPO's official languages (English, French or German). If the PCT application was published in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian or Spanish, a translation into one of the official languages of the EPO must have been filed with the EPO, which will publish it (see point 2.3.002). *Art. 153(5)
R. 165
GL G-IV, 5.2*

Everything in the earlier application as filed is prejudicial to novelty.

The consequences that any earlier national patent applications or patents have for the patentability of the invention in the designated contracting states are assessed by the competent national courts after the European patent has been granted (but see point 4.2.040). *Art. 139(2)
GL H-III, 4.4*

3.3.004 As a rule, a conflict between two European patent applications has only limited consequences, as the disclosed content of the earlier application is relevant only to the assessment of the later application's novelty, not its inventive step. Hence the later application's claims can mostly be drafted in such a way that the earlier application is not prejudicial to novelty. *Art. 56
GL G-IV, 5*

3.4 Inventive step

3.4.001 An invention is held to involve an inventive step if it is not obvious to the skilled person in the light of the state of the art (which does not include prior rights, see points 3.3.003-3.3.004). In assessing inventive step as opposed to novelty (see point 3.3.001), **multiple** sources of prior art may be applied. *Art. 56*

The inventive step requirement is intended to prevent exclusive rights forming barriers to normal and routine development.

² Every year the EPO in its Official Journal publishes a list of exhibitions falling within the terms of this Convention that have been registered by the International Exhibition Bureau.

3.4.002

The EPO seeks to make a realistic and balanced assessment of the inventive step criterion. Inventive step is usually evaluated on the basis of the "problem/solution" approach, in other words whether the solution presented to the problem in the patent application is obvious or not to the person skilled in the art.

GL G-VII

This always depends on the specific circumstances of the case. Depending on the situation, various factors are taken into account, such as the unexpected technical effect of a new combination of known elements, the choice of specific process parameters within a known range, the difficulty the skilled person has in combining known documents, secondary indicia such as the fact that the invention solves a long-standing technical problem which there have been many attempts to solve, or the overcoming of a technical prejudice.

If you need more detailed information, you are advised to refer to the Guidelines for Examination and to the decisions of the boards of appeal (see point 2.1.002).

Chapter 4 – Preparing and filing a European patent application

4.1 Formal requirements

Entitlement to file European patent applications

- 4.1.001** A European patent application may be filed by any natural or legal person, or any body equivalent to a legal person, irrespective of nationality and place of residence or business (but see point 4.1.023). *Art. 58, 59, 118
GL A-II, 2*

A European patent application may also be filed by joint applicants or by two or more applicants designating different contracting states; where there are different applicants for different contracting states, they are regarded as joint applicants for the purposes of proceedings before the EPO (see also point 4.1.029).

States for which European patent applications may be filed

- 4.1.002** When filing a European patent application all the contracting states for which the EPC has already entered into force on the date of filing are deemed to be designated (see point 2.2.001 for the list of contracting states). *Art. 79*

Switzerland and Liechtenstein may only be designated jointly.

*Art. 149
OJ EPO 1980, 407*

- 4.1.003** In addition, European patent applications and patents may be extended to a number of states not party to the EPC, these at present being Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (see point 2.5.001).

- 4.1.004** European patent applications and patents can be validated in the countries in which a validation agreement entered into force on or before the date of filing of the European patent application (see point 2.5.001).

References in this Guide to the designation of contracting states also apply to extension to and validation in non-contracting states, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

- 4.1.005** Even though all the contracting states are deemed to be designated upon filing of the application you must subsequently confirm the designations by paying the appropriate fee, which covers the designation of all contracting states, unless you have expressly withdrawn individual designations. *Art. 79(2)
R. 39
GL A-III, 11
Art. 2(1), item 3,
RFees*

As regards extension and validation states, all extensions and validations are deemed to be requested upon filing of the application, but you need to confirm the request for extension/validation by paying the extension/validation fee for each state to or in which you wish to extend or validate protection.

GL A-III, 12

Languages for European patent applications

- 4.1.006** The official languages of the EPO are English, French and German. *Art. 14(1)*
- 4.1.007** If you file your European patent application in any other language, you need to file a translation into one of the official languages of the EPO within two months of filing the application. If the translation is not filed in time, you will be invited to file it within two months of the notification of the invitation. If the translation is not filed within the time limit set in the invitation, the application is deemed to be withdrawn. *Art. 14(2)*
R. 6(1), 58
GL A-III, 14
- The language in which you file the European application (or its translation, if not filed in English, French or German) is used as the language of the proceedings, and any amendments made to the application or the European patent must be drawn up in that language. Otherwise, in written proceedings, any party may use any of the EPO's official languages. *Art. 14(3)*
R. 3
GL A-VII, 2, 3.1
- At any time during the proceedings before the EPO, the translation may be brought into conformity with the text of the application as filed. *Art. 14(2)*
- With regard to divisional applications see point 5.8.004.
- ### Language arrangements to assist applicants from certain contracting states
- 4.1.008** If you (or one of your co-applicants) have your residence or principal place of business in a contracting state that has a language other than English, French or German as an official language, or if you (or one of your co-applicants) are a national of such state but are resident abroad, you may file a European patent application and/or the request for examination in one of that state's official languages ("admissible non-EPO language"). *Art. 14(4)*
GL A-VII, 3.2
- 4.1.009** If you are thus entitled to file the application or the request for examination in an admissible non-EPO language and do so, a 30% reduction of the filing and/or examination fee applies if you, as an applicant, are a natural person, a small or medium-sized enterprise, a non-profit organisation, a university or a public research organisation. In order to benefit from the reduction, you must submit a declaration of entitlement at the latest by the time of payment of the (reduced) filing or examination fee. *R. 6(3)-(6)*
Art. 14(1) RFees
GL A-X, 9.2
- If you have co-applicants, each one of them must also be either a natural person or an entity according to the above definition and must declare so if you wish to benefit from the 30% reduction of the filing and/or examination fee. *R. 6(7)*
- 4.1.010** If point 4.1.008 applies to you, at any time in the procedure after filing your application you may file any documents subject to a time limit in an official language of your state; but within **one month** of filing any such document you must submit a translation into the language of the proceedings. *Art. 14(4)*
R. 6(2)
GL A-VII, 3.2

4.1.011 However, if you use the official language of your state for filing an opposition, appeal or petition for review, you can file the translation into one of the official languages of the EPO **within** the opposition, appeal or petition for review period respectively, if that period expires after the one-month period mentioned in point 4.1.010. If you do not file the translation in due time, the document is deemed not to have been filed.

The fee reduction mentioned in point 4.1.009 does not apply to the fees for opposition, appeal, petition for review, limitation and revocation.

Items making up a European patent application

4.1.012 A European patent application consists of a **request** for the grant of a European patent, a **description** of the invention, one or more **claims**, any **drawings** referred to in the description or claims, and an **abstract**. *Art. 78(1)*

Request for grant

4.1.013 The request **must** be filed on a **form prescribed by the EPO** (EPO Form 1001). The request for grant form is integrated in the electronic filing tools EPO Online Filing (OLF) and Online Filing 2.0. *R. 41
GL A-III, 4.1
OJ EPO 2021, A20*

The form, which can also be submitted using the EPO Web-Form Filing service, and the associated explanatory notes can be downloaded free of charge from the EPO website (*www.epo.org*). You are strongly advised to read the explanatory notes carefully before completing the request form. By completing the form you meet all the mandatory requirements governing the information that the request for grant must contain.

The request must be **duly signed**. It may be signed by your representative if you have appointed one. Where it is signed on behalf of a legal person, the signatory's position within the legal entity must also be indicated. If you have co-applicants and do not appoint a European representative, the request for grant must be signed by all of the applicants (see point 4.1.029). *R. 2(2)
GL A-III, 4.2.2
GL A-VIII, 3.2
GL A-VIII, 3.4*

If you file on paper, one copy of the request itself must be filed; the receipt for documents (page 9 of the request for grant form) must be filed in triplicate, or in quadruplicate if filed with a national authority (see point 4.3.002). If the application is filed electronically, no additional copies are necessary.

Designation of inventor

- 4.1.014** In your European patent application you must designate the inventor(s). *Art. 81*
- If you yourself are not the inventor or are not the sole inventor, you must file the designation of the inventor in a separate document, which must indicate the origin of your right to the European patent. *R. 19*
GL A-III, 5
- You can designate the inventor(s) in the tools provided by the EPO for online filing. Another option is to fill in and file the "Designation of inventor" form (EPO Form 1002) available on the EPO website (*www.epo.org*).
- 4.1.015** The person designated as the inventor will be mentioned in the published European patent application, in the European patent specification, in the European Patent Register and in the European Patent Bulletin, unless they waive this right in due time in advance of publication. *Art. 127, 128(4), 129(a)*
R. 20(1), 143(1)(g), 144(c)
GL A-III, 5.2
- 4.1.016** If you do not designate the inventor when you file the European patent application, you will be invited to correct this deficiency within **sixteen months** after the date of filing or, if priority is claimed, the earliest priority date, and in any event no later than five weeks prior to the intended date of publication of the application (see point 5.3.001). If you fail to submit the designation of inventor within the specified period, your application will be refused (see point 5.2.005). *Art. 90(3)-(5)*
R. 60(1)
GL A-III, 5.5

Claiming priority

- 4.1.017** If you or your predecessor in title have duly filed an application for a patent, a utility model or a utility certificate in or for any state party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property or any member of the World Trade Organization you may claim priority when filing a European patent application in respect of the same invention. You must file the European patent application no later than **twelve months** after filing the first application (see points 5.10.008-5.10.010). *Art. 87*
GL A-III, 6
GL F-VI, 1.3
- If the earlier application was filed in or for an EPC contracting state, you may also designate that state in the subsequent European application. The earlier application whose priority you claim may also be a European or an international (PCT) application (see point 2.4.010).
- 4.1.018** You may claim multiple priorities in respect of one European patent application, even if they originate from different countries. You may also claim multiple priorities for any one claim. If you claim multiple priorities, time limits which run from the date of priority are computed from the earliest priority date. *Art. 88(2), (3)*
GL F-VI, 1.5
GL A-III, 6.3
- 4.1.019** To claim the priority of an earlier application you must indicate the date, country and file number of the earlier application. *Art. 88(1)*
R. 52, 53
GL A-III, 6.5, 6.7
GL F-VI, 3.1-3.3
- You must also file the priority document, i.e. a copy of the earlier application certified by the authority with which it was filed,

together with authentication of its filing date from that authority, within 16 months of the priority date. In certain cases you are exempted from having to submit a priority document: currently the EPO includes a copy of the earlier application whose priority you claim in the file of the European patent application free of charge if the earlier application is³:

- a European patent application
- an international patent application filed with the EPO as receiving Office
- a Chinese patent or utility model application
- a Korean patent or utility model application
- a United States provisional or non-provisional patent application

It is also possible for you to request that the EPO retrieve the priority document electronically via the WIPO Digital Access Service (DAS). To enable you to make use of DAS, the Office of First Filing will generate a dedicated access code, which you will need to provide to the EPO together with your retrieval request. In response, the EPO will automatically retrieve the priority document issued by the Office of First Filing. For more information please consult the WIPO website (www.wipo.int).

*OJ EPO 2020, A57
OJ EPO 2019, A27*

If you are filing a European patent application claiming priority from an earlier application, you have to file a copy of any search results in respect of the earlier application. Where the search results are not available when filing the European patent application, they have to be filed without delay after they have been made available to you. The obligation to file the search results for the earlier application exists as long as the application is pending before the EPO. Where the EPO notes, at the time when the examining division assumes responsibility, that the search results have still not been filed, it invites you to file them within a non-extendable time limit of two months. If you fail to file the search results or a declaration that they are not available to you, the European patent application will be deemed to be withdrawn.

*Art. 124
R. 141, 70b
GL A-III, 6.12*

You are exempted from the obligation to file a copy of the search results if the EPO drew up the search report or your priority application was filed in Austria, China, Denmark, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK or the US. In future, further countries are expected to be included in this list.

4.1.020

You should preferably submit the declaration of priority indicating the date, country and file number of the earlier application **when you file your European patent application.**

*R. 41(2)(g), 52(1)
GL A-III, 6.5, 6.7
GL F-VI, 3.2*

³ As of 1 January 2022, this only applies to European patent applications and international applications filed with the EPO as receiving Office.

You must supply the complete declaration of priority and the priority document no later than **sixteen months** after the earliest priority date.

R. 52(2)
R. 53(1)

If you do not indicate the file number or file the copy of the earlier application within the above time limit, you will be invited to remedy the deficiency; if you fail to do so, you will lose your right to priority (but see point 5.2.006).

R. 59
GL A-III, 6.10, 6.11
GL F-VI, 3.5, 3.6

4.1.021 Among the effects of a valid claim to priority is that the date of priority determines the prior art that can be cited against the European patent application.

Art. 54(2), (3)
Art. 60(2), 89

As a rule, the EPO initially examines only the formal conditions for claiming priority. The examining division (see points 5.4.001 et seq.) normally checks whether a right to priority exists if it finds prior art (see point 3.3.001) from between the priority date and the date of filing of the European patent application or if it finds a prior right under Article 54(3) (see point 3.3.003). The subject-matter for which priority is claimed must be derivable directly and unambiguously from the full disclosure of the invention in the priority document.

GL F-VI, 2.1, 2.4

Where the priority document is not in English, French or German, you may be invited to file a translation of the previous application into one of the EPO's official languages. If you receive such an invitation, which may happen throughout the grant or opposition proceedings, you must file the translation within the period set by the EPO. Alternatively, if the European patent application is a complete translation of the previous application, you may submit a declaration to that effect. If you fail to supply the translation of the priority document or the declaration in due time, the right to priority with respect to the priority claim in question will be lost. However, during grant proceedings, you may file a request for further processing if you have failed to file the translation in time.

R. 53(3)
Art. 121
R. 135
GL A-III, 6.8
GL F-VI, 3.4

Filing by reference

4.1.022 Instead of filing application documents, you may file a European patent application by making reference to a previously filed application. When filing your patent application by reference to a previously filed application, you should indicate in the request for grant form (section 26.1 of the paper form) the filing date, the file number and the state or office where the previous application was filed. The reference must indicate that it replaces the description and any drawings. You will then have to file a certified copy of the previously filed application within two months of filing the application. If the previous application is not in English, French or German, you must file a translation thereof into one of those languages within the same time limit. If you do not file the certified copy within the said time limit or within a time limit set in a subsequent invitation, the application will not be dealt with as a European patent application. If you do not file a translation of the previously filed application within the said time limit or within a time

R. 40(1)(c), (2), (3)
Art. 90(1), (2)
R. 55
Art. 14(2)
GL A-II, 4.1.3.1
GL A-III, 14

limit set in an invitation, the application will be deemed to be withdrawn.

Claims can also be filed by reference to those in the previously filed application. However, you may also decide to file a new set of claims replacing the set in the previously filed application.

Representation

- 4.1.023** If you have your residence or principal place of business in a contracting state, you may act on your own behalf in proceedings before the EPO (but see point 2.1.003). *Art. 133(1)*
GL A-VIII, 1
GL A-III, 2
- If you have neither a residence nor your principal place of business in a contracting state, you must appoint a representative and act through them in all proceedings before the EPO other than in filing your European patent application and paying the fees. *Art. 133(2)*
- 4.1.024** Representation before the EPO may be undertaken only by professional representatives who are on a list maintained by the EPO, or by legal practitioners entitled to act before the EPO. You will find a searchable online database of professional representatives on the EPO website (*www.epo.org*). *Art. 134(1), (8)*
GL A-VIII, 1.2, 1.5
- 4.1.025** As a rule, professional representatives who identify themselves as such do not need to file an authorisation, unless required under special circumstances. *GL A-VIII, 1.6*
- Representatives may be authorised either by individual authorisation or by general authorisation. The relevant forms, to which amendments are permitted, can be downloaded free of charge from the EPO website (*www.epo.org*). *R. 152(1), (4)*
GL A-VIII, 1.6, 1.7
- General authorisations are registered at the EPO. These are a practical option for all concerned.
- 4.1.026** If an authorisation is required but not filed within the period specified by the EPO, any actions taken by the representative other than the filing of the European patent application and the payment of fees are deemed not to have been taken. *R. 152(2), (6)*
GL A-VIII, 1.8
- 4.1.027** If several representatives are appointed, they may act either jointly or singly before the EPO, regardless of any provisions to the contrary in the notification of their appointment or in the authorisation. With multiple representatives it is also advisable to give the particulars of only one of them in the request for grant, appending "et al." to their name. The EPO will address its correspondence to the representative named in the request for grant as long as it is not informed to the contrary. *R. 152(10)*
- You may also appoint an association of representatives consisting of professional representatives in private practice or employed in a company. In such a case each representative practising in this association is deemed to be authorised. *R. 152(11)*
GL A-VIII, 1.6

If you appoint an association, all communications will be notified to the registered address of the association indicated in the request for grant form (see point 4.1.013).

- 4.1.028** If you have your residence or principal place of business in a contracting state, you may also be represented by an employee, who need not be a professional representative. *Art. 133(3)*
GL A-VIII, 1.3

An employee who is representing their employer and who is not a professional representative must have an individual or general authorisation (see point 4.1.025).

- 4.1.029** If an application is filed by more than one person, the request for grant should designate one of them or a professional representative as the common representative. Otherwise, the applicant named first in the request for grant is deemed to be the common representative. However, if one of the applicants is obliged to appoint a professional representative, the latter is deemed to be the common representative unless the applicant named first in the request for grant has appointed a professional representative. *Art. 133(4)*
R. 41(3), 151(1)
GL A-VIII, 1.4

- 4.1.030** The particulars of the representative's name and business address given in the request for grant are recorded in the European Patent Register, published in the European Patent Bulletin and printed in the published European patent application and patent. *R. 143(1)(h)*
Art. 129(a)
R. 68

- 4.1.031** Notifications sent by the EPO (communications, notices, decisions and summonses) are addressed: *Art. 119*
R. 130
GL E-II, 2.5
- (a) to the representative recorded in the European Patent Register; or
 - (b) to you as applicant if you do not appoint a representative, and also if an employee is acting on your behalf.

If you are acting without a professional representative, have several addresses and wish notifications in proceedings before the EPO to be sent to one address while a different address is to be used for publications, the European Patent Register and the patent certificate, you can indicate an address for correspondence in the request for grant (see point 4.1.013), "Address for correspondence" (section 9 of the paper form). The address for correspondence must be your own address and must be located in an EPC contracting state. Post cannot be sent to a different (natural or legal) person, since that requires a valid form of representation under Articles 133 and 134. If you are acting through an employee (Article 133(3)), the address for correspondence still has to be one of your own addresses. To facilitate postal delivery or internal distribution of mail, the address may include a sub-division within a firm, provided it is not a separate legal person. *GL A-III, 4.2.1*

4.2 Presenting your invention

Disclosing your invention

- 4.2.001** The European patent application must disclose the invention in a manner sufficiently clear and complete for it to be carried out by a person skilled in the art. *Art. 83, 84, 69(1)*

The description and any accompanying drawings form the basis for the claims, which determine the extent of the protection conferred by the European patent. The description and the drawings are also used to interpret the claims. *GL F-II, 4.1
GL F-IV, 6.1*

- 4.2.002** Once a European patent application has been filed, no amendments extending beyond its content as filed may be made to the description, the claims or the drawings. Hence you are not allowed to add examples or features to the application documents at a later date to remedy deficiencies in the disclosure. Nor are you allowed to extend the subject-matter of the claims, e.g. by omitting certain features, unless there is clear support for such amendment in the application as filed. You must therefore make sure that the claims as filed clearly and accurately identify the invention that you want to protect (see also point 5.4.021). *Art. 123(2)
GL H-IV, 2.1, 2.2
GL F-II, 4.3,
F-III*

Unity of invention

- 4.2.003** European patent applications must relate to a single invention only, or to a group of inventions so linked as to form a single general inventive concept. In the latter case, multiple independent claims in the same category are allowed as long as they comply with Rule 43(2); but the more usual scenario is multiple independent claims in different categories (see point 4.2.021). *Art. 82
R. 43(2), 44
GL F-V*

Drafting the technical application documents

- 4.2.004** The requirements relating to the content of the description, claims, drawings and abstract are set out in Articles 83 to 85 and Rules 42, 43, 47 and 48. *Art. 83-85
R. 42-50
GL A-VIII, 2
GL A-IX*

The formal requirements for these documents are defined in Rules 46, 47 and 49; those for documents filed subsequently are in Rule 50.

- 4.2.005** The following are the main provisions governing the form of application documents and documents filed subsequently: *Art. 78(1)
R. 49
R. 50
GL A-VIII, 2.1*
- (a) The documents making up the European patent application (description, claims, drawings and abstract) must be filed in a single copy. The same applies to documents replacing these original documents.
 - (b) In the case of paper filings, the documents must be on strong, pliable, white A4 paper (portrait format).

- (c) Each document making up the application (request, description, claims, drawings and abstract) must begin on a new sheet.
- (d) All the sheets must be numbered in consecutive Arabic numerals, which must be positioned top centre but not in the top margin.
- (e) The following minimum margins (type area) must be left blank:
 - top: 2 cm
 - left: 2.5 cm
 - right: 2 cm
 - bottom: 2 cm
- (f) The lines of each sheet of the description and the claims should be numbered in sets of five, the numbers appearing on the left side, to the right of the margin.
- (g) The line spacing must be 1.5.
- (h) The documents must be typed or printed, with a minimum character height of 0.21 cm for capital letters (normally font size 9 or 10).
- (i) There must be no handwritten additions to the text. *R. 49(12)*

The special requirements for drawings are dealt with in the Guidelines for Examination (A-IX).

4.2.006 Annex II gives three examples of how to draft a European patent application.

Description

4.2.007 In the description you must:

- (a) Specify the technical field to which the invention relates. You may do this for example by reproducing the first ("prior art") portion of the independent claims in full or in substance or by simply referring to it. *R. 42*
GL F-II, 4
R. 42(1)(a)
- (b) Indicate the background art of which you are aware, to the extent that it is useful for understanding the invention, preferably citing source documents reflecting such art. This applies in particular to the background art corresponding to the prior art portion of the independent claims. Source document citations must be sufficiently complete to be verifiable: patent specifications by country and number; books by author, title, publisher, edition, place and year of publication and page numbers; periodicals by title, year, issue and page numbers. *R. 42(1)(b)*
GL F-II, 4.3-4.4

- (c) Disclose the invention as claimed. *R. 42(1)(c)*
GL F-II, 4.5-4.6
- The disclosure must indicate the technical problem that the invention is designed to solve (even if it does not state it expressly) and describe the solution.
- To elucidate the nature of the solution according to the independent claims you can repeat or refer to the characterising portion of the independent claims or reproduce the substance of the features of the solution according to the relevant claims.
- At this point in the description you need only give details of embodiments of the invention according to the dependent claims if you do not do so when describing ways of performing the claimed invention or describing what the drawings show.
- You should state any advantageous effects your invention has compared with the prior art, but without making disparaging remarks about any specific previous product or process. *R. 48(1)(b)*
- (d) Briefly describe what is illustrated in any drawings, making sure you give their numbers. *R. 42(1)(d)*
R. 46(2)(i)
GL F-II, 4.7
- (e) Describe in detail at least one way of carrying out the claimed invention, typically using examples and referring to any drawings and the reference signs used in them. *R. 42(1)(e)*
GL F-II, 4.8, F-III, 1-3
- (f) Indicate how the invention is susceptible of industrial application within the meaning of Article 57. *R. 42(1)(f)*
GL F-II, 4.9
- 4.2.008** In exceptional cases you may arrange the description in a different manner and order if this affords a better understanding or a more economic presentation. *R. 42(2)*
GL F-II, 4.10
- 4.2.009** Although the description must be clear and straightforward and avoid unnecessary technical jargon, the use of recognised terms of art is acceptable and often desirable. Little known or specially formulated technical terms may be allowed provided that they are adequately defined and that there are no generally recognised equivalents. *R. 49(11)*
GL F-II, 4.11-4.14
- You may use proper names or similar words to refer to a product only if they uniquely identify it. Even then, however, the product must be sufficiently identified, without reliance upon such terms, to enable the invention to be carried out by the skilled person. If such proper names or similar words are registered trade marks, that fact should be mentioned. *GL F-III, 7*

Biotechnology applications

Nucleotide and amino acid sequences

- 4.2.010** If your European patent application discloses nucleotide or amino acid sequences (unbranched sequences of four or more amino acids or unbranched sequences of ten or more nucleotides), the description must include a sequence listing in electronic format complying with WIPO Standard ST.25 or, as of 1 July 2022, WIPO Standard ST.26. You are advised to use the EPO's free BiSSAP or PatentIn software (for sequence listings in Standard ST.25 filed up until 30 June 2022) or WIPO's free "WIPO Sequence" desktop tool (for sequence listings in Standard ST.26 filed as of 1 July 2022), which simplify the creation of ST.25 txt or ST.26 xml sequence listings. The sequence listing must not be filed on paper or in PDF format. However, if it is, the sequence listing on paper or in PDF format must be identical to that in electronic format and you must submit a statement of identity.

R. 30, 57
GL A-IV, 5
GL F-II, 6
OJ EPO 2013, 542
OJ EPO 2011, 372

Electronic sequence listings are usually filed online, using one of the EPO's online filing tools. Uploading to EPO Form 1001 is enabled if you indicate that the application includes a sequence listing by ticking the relevant checkbox (Tab "Biology/Application details"). Further advice is obtainable from the EPO by contacting Customer Services at www.epo.org/contact.

- 4.2.011** The standardised presentation of such nucleotide and amino acid sequences in electronic form is mandatory. If you do not comply with the requirements even following an invitation to do so, including payment of the late furnishing fee, your European patent application will be refused (but see point 5.10.007).

R. 30

Depositing biological material to supplement the description

- 4.2.012** If your invention involves the use of or concerns biological material that is not available to the public and cannot be described in your European patent application in such a way that it can be carried out by a skilled person, you must deposit a sample of this biological material with a recognised depositary institution no later than at the date of filing.

Art. 83
R. 31-34
GL A-IV, 4
GL F-III, 6
OJ EPO 2010, 498

The recognised depositary institutions are the international depositary authorities under the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure and a number of other institutions designated by the President of the EPO. A full list of recognised depositary institutions is published once a year on the EPO website and in the EPO's Official Journal; the Official Journal also publishes changes to the list as they occur, and any other relevant information.

R. 33(6)

- 4.2.013** The application as filed must also give any relevant information that is available to you on the characteristics of the biological material.
- R. 31(1)(b)*
GL F-III, 6.3
- If the biological material has been deposited by someone else, you must state the depositor's name and address in your application and submit documents satisfying the EPO that the depositor has authorised you to refer to the deposited biological material in your application and has given unreserved and irrevocable consent to the deposited material being made available to the public.
- R. 31(1)(d)*
R. 33
- 4.2.014** Lastly you must state your chosen depositary institution and the accession number of the deposited biological material, as a rule within sixteen months after the date of filing or, if you have claimed priority, after the earliest priority date. If any of these requirements is not satisfied, the biological material in question cannot be considered as having been disclosed by way of reference to the deposit. Please refer to the Guidelines for Examination (F-III, 6.3) for further details.
- Art. 83*
R. 31(1)(c), (2)
- 4.2.015** You should also ensure that you complete the corresponding sections in the EPO's eOLF or Online Filing 2.0 online filing tools (Tab "Biology"), or in EPO Form 1001, sections 35 to 37 ("Biological material") (paper or Web-Form Filing). These sections are designed to alert the EPO that the application refers to biological material deposited under Rule 31 and to enable it to draw your attention to any deficiencies before the time limits laid down in Rule 31(2) expire.
- GL A-IV, 4.2, 4.4*
- You are also strongly advised to file the deposit receipt issued by the depositary institution. This document shows the depositor, the chosen depositary institution and the accession number assigned to your deposit (see 4.2.013). This information enables the EPO to certify any requests for the issuance of a sample (see 4.2.017) and the examining division to establish whether the application satisfies the requirements of sufficient disclosure (see 4.2.012). A deposit receipt must be filed for each sample of biological material disclosed in the application and deposited at one of the recognised depositary institutions. The deposit receipt may be filed as long as proceedings before the EPO are pending.
- 4.2.016** From the date of publication of the European patent application (see point 5.3.001), the deposited material is available to anyone on request, but only if the requester makes certain undertakings to the applicant or proprietor regarding restrictions on the transmission and use of the material.
- R. 33*
- Until the technical preparations for publication of your application are deemed to be completed (see point 5.3.001), you may inform the EPO that, for a certain period, the only way the biological material can be accessed is by the issue of a sample to an independent expert ("expert solution"). Any natural person may be nominated as an expert, provided that they fulfil the requirements and obligations laid down by the President of the EPO. The EPO must receive the information that you wish to choose the "expert solution" no later than about six weeks before the European patent application is published. You can select "expert solution" in the
- R. 32*
GL A-IV, 4.3
OJ EPO 2017, A60, A61

EPO's eOLF and Online Filing 2.0 online filing tools (Tab "Biology") or in EPO Form 1001 (paper or Web-Form Filing) by ticking the corresponding checkbox.

The "expert" option is mentioned in the published European patent application.

- 4.2.017** If you are interested in receiving a sample of biological material deposited in someone else's application, you must file a corresponding request with the EPO. Requests for the issue of samples of biological material deposited must be submitted on the requisite forms, which can be downloaded from the EPO website (www.epo.org). The completed forms must be sent to the EPO, which certifies them and transmits them to the competent depositary institution. *R. 33(4), (5)*

Claims

- 4.2.018** The claims must define the matter for which protection is sought in terms of the technical features of the invention. They must be clear and concise and supported by the description. *Art. 84
R. 43
GL F-IV, 1*
- 4.2.019** Wherever appropriate, claims should consist of two parts (see the examples in Annex II), a prior art portion and a characterising portion. In the first claim and all other independent claims, the prior art portion should designate the subject-matter of the invention and the technical features which are needed to define it but which, in combination, form part of the prior art. The characterising portion should state the technical features for which protection is sought in combination with the features in the prior art portion. *R. 43(1)
GL F-IV, 2*
- 4.2.020** An "independent" claim must state all the essential features of the invention. *R. 43(3)
GL F-IV, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 4.5*
- 4.2.021** A European patent application may not contain more than one independent claim in the same category (e.g. product and/or process) unless one of the exceptions applies. See point 5.2.010 for further information. *R. 43(2)*
- 4.2.022** Each independent claim may be followed by one or more "dependent" claims concerning particular embodiments of the invention. *R. 43(3), (4)
GL F-IV, 3.4-3.6*

Dependent claims should include all the features of the claim to which they relate. They must contain, if possible at the beginning, a reference to this other claim, which may also be dependent, and then state the additional features for which protection is sought.

As far as possible, all dependent claims referring back to one or more previous claims must be grouped together in the most appropriate way.

- 4.2.023** As Article 84 requires claims to be concise (a requirement that applies both to the claims in their entirety and to each claim individually), you must keep the number of claims reasonable in consideration of the nature of the invention you wish to protect. You should therefore avoid undue repetition resulting from the use *R. 43(5)
GL F-IV, 5*

of independent claims in the same category or a proliferation of dependent claims.

- 4.2.024** You must number your claims consecutively in Arabic numerals. *R. 43(5)*
- 4.2.025** It is essential to formulate your claims clearly, as they define the matter that you want to protect. *Art. 84, 69
GL F-IV, 4.1*
- The wording you use in claims must leave no doubt as to their meaning and scope, and you must avoid any inconsistencies between the description and the claims. *GL F-IV, 4.2-4.9*
- The scope defined by the claims must be as precise as the invention allows. As a general rule, claims which attempt to define the invention in terms of the result to be achieved are not allowed. Where the invention relates to a chemical product, it may be defined by its chemical formula or as a product of a process or, exceptionally, in terms of its parameters. *GL F-IV, 4.10-4.16*
- Furthermore, references to the description or drawings, particularly in the form of "as described in part ... of the description" or "as illustrated in figure ... of the drawings", are not allowed unless they are absolutely indispensable. *R. 43(6)
GL F-IV, 4.17*
- 4.2.026** However, in a European patent application containing drawings, reference signs linking the claims to the drawings should be placed in brackets after the technical features mentioned in the claims if this makes the claims easier to understand. Reference signs are not to be construed as limiting the claims. *R. 43(7)
GL F-IV, 4.18*
- 4.2.027** In exceptional circumstances, a European patent application or patent may include separate sets of claims for specific designated states (see point 4.2.039). *Art. 139
R. 138
GL H-III, 4*

Claims incurring fees

- 4.2.028** If your European patent application comprises more than 15 claims, you must pay a claims fee in respect of each claim over and above that number. For the 51st and each subsequent claim the amount of the claims fee is higher. You must pay claims fees within one month of filing the first set of claims. *R. 45(1), (2)
GL A-III, 9
Art. 2, item 15,
RFees*
- If your application includes several sets of claims (see point 4.2.039), a fee is payable only in respect of each claim beyond the 15th in the set that contains the highest number of claims.
- If you fail to pay the fees in due time, you may still validly pay them within a non-extendable period of one month after being notified of your failure to observe the time limit. If you do not pay the fees within this period, the claims for which you have not paid the fees are deemed to be abandoned, and you are notified accordingly (but see point 5.10.007). *R. 45 (2), (3)
R. 112(1)
GL A-III, 9*
- 4.2.029** If your application contains more than 15 claims at the time of grant, claims fees are payable at this stage if they have not already been paid. If you do not pay them in due time, your *R. 71(4)
GL C-V, 1.4*

application is deemed to be withdrawn (see points 5.4.011, 5.4.014).

Drawings

- 4.2.030** The requirements governing the representation of your invention in the drawings are set out in Rules 46, 48 and 49. Reference signs not mentioned in the description and claims must not be used in the drawings, and vice versa. The same features, when denoted by reference signs, must be denoted by the same signs throughout the application. *R. 46, 48, 49
GL A-IX
GL F-II, 5*
- 4.2.031** Drawings must not contain text matter except, when absolutely indispensable, keywords such as "water", "steam", "open", "closed", "section on AB" and, on electric circuits and block schematics or flow sheet diagrams, short catchwords indispensable for understanding. Any such keywords must be placed in such a way that they can be replaced by their translations without interfering with any lines of the drawings. *R. 46(2)(j)
GL A-IX, 8*
- 4.2.032** Flow sheets and diagrams are considered to be drawings. *R. 46(3)
GL A-IX, 1*
- 4.2.033** Good-quality drawings are very important for the correct disclosure of the invention. If the drawings are unreadable, e.g. completely black, you may not be allowed to file better-quality drawings at a later stage, disclosing more details than those originally filed. *Art. 123 (2)
GL A-III, 3.2, A-V,
2.1*

Although the EPC has no express provisions for photographs, they are nevertheless allowed. Colour photographs are scanned and made available in the electronic file in black and white. *GL A-IX, 1.2*

If you file the application in electronic form, you have the advantage that the original quality of the drawings will be available to the EPO and generally no deficiency communication will be issued, as may happen if you file drawings on paper and only the scanned version is available to the EPO.

Abstract

- 4.2.034** The abstract merely serves for use as technical information. It may not be taken into account for any other purpose, such as interpreting the scope of the protection sought or applying Article 54(3). It must be so drafted that it constitutes an efficient instrument for searching in the particular technical field and for evaluating whether it is worth considering the whole content of the application. *Art. 85
R. 47(5)
GL F-II, 2.1*
- 4.2.035** The abstract, which must be preceded by the title of the invention, must contain a concise summary (preferably no more than 150 words long) of the disclosure as contained in the description, claims and drawings. It should indicate the technical field to which the invention relates, unless that is already clear from the title, and should be so drafted as to allow a clear understanding of the technical problem, the gist of the solution of that problem through the invention and the principal use of the invention. *R. 47(1)-(3)
GL F-II, 2.3*

4.2.036 If your application contains drawings, you must indicate the figure or, exceptionally, figures which you suggest should accompany the published abstract. In this case each main feature mentioned in the abstract and illustrated in the drawing must be followed by the corresponding reference sign in parentheses.

R. 47(4)
GL A-III, 10.3

4.2.037 The definitive content of the abstract is determined by the examiner (see point 5.2.013). Once the abstract has been published as part of the European patent application (see point 5.3.001), it is not amended again.

R. 66
GL A-III, 10.2
GL F-II, 2.2, 2.7

Prohibited matter

4.2.038 Your application must not contain statements or drawings that are contrary to *ordre public* or morality. Nor should it contain statements disparaging the products or processes of any third party, or the merits or validity of any third party's applications or patents. Mere comparisons with the prior art are not considered disparaging *per se*. Furthermore, no statements should be made which are obviously irrelevant or unnecessary under the circumstances.

R. 48
GL A-III, 8
GL F-II, 7

Unitary character of European patent applications and patents

4.2.039 European patent applications and European patents have a unitary character, which means that the text and any drawings are uniform for all designated contracting states.

Art. 118
GL H-III, 4

The exceptions to this principle are as follows:

(a) If the EPO is informed of the existence of a prior right under Article 139(2), the European patent application or patent may, for such state or states, contain different claims and, if the examining division considers it necessary, different descriptions and drawings.

R. 138
GL H-III, 4.1, 4.2

(b) If it is adjudged by a final decision that a third party is entitled to be granted a European patent in respect of only one part of the matter disclosed in the European patent application, the original European patent application must, for the designated states in which the decision was taken or recognised, contain claims, descriptions and drawings which, where necessary, are different from those for the other designated contracting states.

R. 18
GL H-III, 4.3

4.2.040 National rights of earlier date do not form part of the state of the art for the purposes of the EPO's examination for patentability (see point 3.3.003, last paragraph).

GL H-III, 4.4

However, during substantive examination (see point 5.4.019) or opposition proceedings (see point 5.5.005) you may, on your own initiative, submit separate claims for each designated contracting state in which an earlier national right exists, provided that you supply evidence of its existence to the examining or opposition division as appropriate. In such cases the examining or opposition

division examines only the admissibility of the separate claims; it does not have to judge whether you have adequately limited the scope of your application in relation to the earlier national right. What it does examine, however, is whether the invention identified in the separate claims meets the patentability requirements of the EPC.

4.3 Filing European patent applications

Where and how to file

4.3.001 You can file European patent applications in electronic form using the EPO Online Filing software, which can be obtained from the EPO free of charge (see www.epo.org). Filings using this software may be made online or on electronic data carriers admitted by the EPO.

*GL A-II, 1.2.2
OJ EPO 2021, A20
OJ EPO 2020, A105
OJ EPO 2007,
Special edition No.
3, A.5*

Alternatively, you may use the web-based Online Filing 2.0 or the EPO Web-Form Filing service, which are also provided free of charge via the EPO website (www.epo.org). Links to the online filing services are given in Annex III.

You can also file European patent applications in electronic form with the competent national authorities of the contracting states which so permit. Divisional applications must, however, be filed with the EPO direct.

Art. 76(1)

4.3.002 The EPO's electronic filing services have a number of advantages. They offer a secure, reliable and efficient way of filing applications with the EPO. They enable fully electronic handling of filings, save you time and paper-handling costs and provide you with an instant acknowledgement of receipt. A further benefit of electronic filing is that the original quality of the documents is maintained. In addition, for applications filed in electronic form with either the EPO or a competent national authority, the filing fee is reduced.

In the event of the unavailability of, or a general breakdown in, any of the means of electronic communication permitted by the President of the EPO, the general safeguards under the EPC apply.

*R. 134(1)
OJ EPO 2020, A120*

On the EPO website you will find more information regarding the other online services provided by the EPO, including Online Fee Payment, My Files and the Mailbox service.

4.3.003 You can also file European patent applications in person, by postal services or by fax

(a) with the EPO in Munich, its branch at The Hague or its sub-office in Berlin, but not at its sub-offices in Vienna and Brussels

*Art. 75
R. 35
GL A-II, 1.1, 1.2.1
OJ EPO 2019, A18
OJ EPO 2018, A18
OJ EPO 2017, A11*

- (b) with the central industrial property office or other competent authority of a contracting state if the law of that state so permits or prescribes (with the exception of divisional applications)

If you decide not to file online, the EPO's addresses and fax numbers are given in Annex III. The addresses and fax numbers of the national patent authorities and national provisions of the contracting states governing compulsory or optional filing of European patent applications with such authorities are given in **National law relating to the EPC** (see point 2.1.004).

- 4.3.004** You cannot file European patent applications with the EPO by email or by any means other than those described above. *GL A-II, 1.3
OJ EPO 2000, 458*
- 4.3.005** If you file on paper by post or especially by fax, the quality of the documents may be reduced. As the EPO uses an optical character recognition system to capture European patent applications for printing, you are urged to use a machine-readable typeface for your applications (see point 4.2.005). *R. 46, 49
OJ EPO 1993, 59*
- 4.3.006** No confirmation on paper is needed if you file your application electronically. If you file by fax and the fax is received in poor quality, the EPO may invite you to file replacement documents of better quality. *GL A-II, 1.2.1
OJ EPO 2019, A18*

Date of filing

- 4.3.007** The date of filing accorded to applications filed in electronic form (using the EPO Online Filing software, EPO Online Filing 2.0 or the EPO Web-Form Filing service) or sent by post or fax is the date on which the application documents are received at the EPO, provided the documents comply with the requirements of Article 80 and Rule 40 (see point 5.2.001). *OJ EPO 2021, A20
OJ EPO 2019, A18*

Where applications are filed in person at the EPO, the corresponding date is the date on which they are handed in or posted in one of the EPO's automated mailboxes, which are available in Munich (PschorrHöfe building only, Zollstrasse) and Berlin.

*Art. 80, R. 40
GL A-II, 1.1
OJ EPO 2018, A18
OJ EPO 2017, A11*

The above rules similarly apply to applications filed with the competent national authorities of the contracting states.

Acknowledgement of receipt

- 4.3.008** Receipt of documents filed online using the EPO Online Filing software is acknowledged electronically during the submission session. If you file on electronic data carriers admitted by the EPO, receipt is acknowledged by post. *R. 35(2)
GL A-II, 3.1
OJ EPO 2018, A45*

Similarly, receipt of documents filed via EPO Online Filing 2.0 is acknowledged electronically by the EPO via an acknowledgement of receipt.

Receipt of documents filed via the EPO Web-Form Filing service is acknowledged electronically via an acknowledgment of receipt on the website once the files have been transferred. You can also request to have acknowledgement of receipt sent to you by email.

If you file your application on paper, the authority with which you file it acknowledges receipt without delay by sending you page 9 of the request for grant, on which it notes the date it received the application documents and the number of the application.

Applications filed with national authorities and forwarded to the EPO

4.3.009 When you file a European patent application on paper with a national authority, the national authority issues the receipt for documents (page 9 of the request for grant). After checking the application for security or for other national requirements, it then forwards it to the EPO. The EPO then notifies you accordingly, indicating the date of receipt at the EPO, by sending you a copy of the receipt for documents (page 9 of the request for grant).

*R. 35(3), (4)
GL A-II, 3.2*

You are also sent an acknowledgement of receipt from the national authority concerned if you file European patent applications electronically with any of the national authorities that so permit. If you do not receive this acknowledgement, please contact the national authority.

If the national authority withholds your European application on account of the above-mentioned national requirements, you may pursue it as a national application.

4.3.010 In the very rare event that your application fails to reach the EPO before the end of the fourteenth month after filing or after the earliest priority date, it is deemed to be withdrawn, and any fees that you have paid are refunded. The EPO notifies you accordingly, and you can then convert your European patent application into a national application.

*Art. 77, 135(1)(a)
R. 37, 112(1)
GL A-II, 1.6, 3.2*

You must file the request for conversion with the central industrial property office of the contracting state in which you filed the application, and you must do so within three months after receiving notification from the EPO. For more details see **National law relating to the EPC** (see point 2.1.004).

*Art. 135(2)
R. 155(1)
GL A-IV, 6*

Fees

4.3.011 The following basic fees are payable in respect of a European patent application:

*Art. 2 RFees
GL A-X*

- (a) filing fee and any additional fee for the 36th and each subsequent page of the application (see point 4.3.015)
- (b) search fee
- (c) claims fee in respect of the 16th and each subsequent claim (where appropriate) (see points 4.2.028, 4.2.029)

- (d) designation fee (see points 4.3.016, 5.3.004)
- (e) extension fees (one for each extension state, see point 2.5.001)
- (f) validation fees (one for each validation state, see point 2.5.001)
- (g) examination fee (see points 4.3.016, 5.3.004, 5.4.002)
- (h) fee for grant and publishing (see point 5.4.011)
- (i) renewal fees in respect of the third and each subsequent year (see points 5.9.001-5.9.006)

Further fees may fall due in the course of the proceedings.

- 4.3.012** After filing the application you must pay the filing fee (and any additional fee) and the search fee (as well as any claims fees, where claims were filed together with the application) within one month of the date of filing. If you file the claims after the date of filing, any claims fees must be paid within one month of filing the first set of claims (see point 5.2.002).
- Art. 78(2)*
R. 38, 45(2)
GL A-III, 13.1, 13.2
GL A-X, 5.2.1
GL A-III, 9, 15
- You must pay the designation fee (and any extension and/or validation fees) within six months of the date on which the European Patent Bulletin mentions publication of the European search report.
- Art. 79(2), 94(1)*
R. 39
GL A-X, 5.2.2
GL A-III, 11.2.1, 12.2
- The examination fee is payable within the same period.
- R. 70(1)*
GL C-II, 1
- An overview of important deadlines for filing a European patent application, including deadlines for the payment of fees, is contained in Annex V to this Guide.
- 4.3.013** The EPO will not send you invoices or reminders to pay these fees in due time. If you receive invoices, please check their origin carefully.
- OJ EPO 2020, A34*
- 4.3.014** If you fail to pay the filing and search fees in due time, your European patent application is deemed to be withdrawn (but see points 4.3.017 and 5.10.007).
- Art. 78(2)*
GL A-III, 13.1
- If you fail to pay the designation or examination fee in due time, the application is deemed to be withdrawn (but see points 4.3.017 and 5.10.007). If you fail to pay the extension fee in due time, the request for extension to this state is deemed to be withdrawn (but see point 4.3.017). The same applies to payment of the validation fee and the request for validation (but see point 4.3.017).
- R. 39(2)*
GL A-III, 11.2.3, 12.2
- 4.3.015** An additional fee as part of the filing fee is payable for European patent applications comprising more than 35 pages. The amount of the additional fee depends on the number of pages over 35 and is calculated on the basis of the pages of the description, claims, any drawings and one page for the abstract, in the language of filing. The language reduction under Rule 6(3) applies if you as an applicant fulfil the relevant requirements (see point 4.1.009). The pages of the request for grant form (EPO Form 1001) are not
- Art. 2(1), item 1a,*
RFees
GL A-III, 13.2

counted, nor are any pages forming part of a sequence listing, provided that it complies with WIPO Standard ST.25 and is presented as a separate part of the description. The additional fee is payable within one month of the date of filing. If the application is filed without claims or by reference to a previously filed application, the additional fee is payable within one month of filing of the first set of claims or the certified copy of the previously filed application (see points 4.1.022 and 5.2.002).

4.3.016

In the case of European divisional applications (see points 5.8.001-5.8.005), you must pay the filing fee, any additional fee and the search fee (and any claims fees) within one month of filing. An additional fee is payable as part of the filing fee for divisional applications of second or subsequent generations. The amount of the fee depends on the generation to which the newly filed divisional application belongs.

*R. 36(3)
R. 38(4)
Art. 2(1), item 1b,
RFees
GL A-IV, 1.4.1*

Renewal fees which have fallen due in the parent application must also be paid for the divisional application. The period for payment of these fees is four months after the date of receipt of the divisional application. If you fail to pay the renewal fees due, they can still be paid within six months of the date of receipt of the divisional application, provided that a surcharge of 50% of the renewal fees is paid.

*Art. 86(1)
R. 51(3)
GL A-IV, 1.4.3*

You must pay the examination fee, the designation fees and any extension and/or validation fees within six months of the date on which the European Patent Bulletin mentions publication of the European search report on the divisional application (see point 4.3.012).

*R. 70(1)
R. 39(1)*

It is advisable to pay fees as promptly as possible, preferably at the same time as filing your application.

4.3.017

You should note that, if you fail to observe the above-mentioned time limits for payment of the filing fee, additional fee(s), the search fee, the designation fee or the examination fee, further processing is available within two months of notification of a communication of loss of rights under Rule 112(1). To request further processing you must pay the outstanding fee(s) and the prescribed fee for further processing (see point 5.10.007).

*R. 112(1)
Art. 121
R. 135(1)
GL E-VIII, 1.9, 2*

If you fail to pay the extension or validation fee in due time, the request for extension or validation in respect of the state concerned is deemed to be withdrawn. The EPO will not send a communication to that effect. However, the extension or validation fee can still be paid with a 50% surcharge within a period of two months of expiry of the basic period for payment.

GL A-III, 12.2

If a loss of rights has occurred due to non-payment of the designation fee, you will be informed of this in a communication noting the loss of rights under Rule 112(1). Together with the designation fee and the fee for further processing you will have the opportunity to pay any extension or validation fee within two months from notification of said communication together with a 50% surcharge on the respective extension or validation fee(s).

Fee amounts and payment methods

4.3.018

Fee amounts, payment methods and effective payment dates are governed by the Rules relating to Fees (RFees) and by measures adopted by the President of the EPO implementing certain provisions of those Rules.

*Art. 2, 5, 7 RFees
Arrangements for
deposit accounts
(ADA)⁴
GL A-X*

Guidance on fee payment is published in each issue of the EPO's Official Journal and on the EPO's website at www.epo.org, so you should consult the latest issue to find out the current situation.

Fees due to the EPO, including those for a European patent application filed with a national authority, must be paid in euros direct to the EPO. You can do this by paying them into or transferring them to the bank account held by the EPO, by debiting a deposit account you have opened with the EPO, or by means of a credit card.

*GL A-X, 2, 3
ADA
OJ EPO 2021, A61,
A73
OJ EPO 2017, A72,
A100*

Introduced on 11 September 2021, a new central service called Central Fee Payment provides users with a unique gateway for paying fees and claiming refunds across the entire patent grant procedure and via all permitted payment methods.

4.3.019

The following advice and recommendations on paying fees to the EPO should be noted:

- (a) Depending on how you pay, the deemed date of payment is the day on which
- the amount of the payment or transfer is actually credited to the bank account held by the EPO, or
 - the order to debit a deposit account is received at the EPO, provided the deposit account contains sufficient funds, or
 - the credit card transaction is approved by the contracting bank or other financial institution ("acquirer"), i.e. generally immediately.

*Art. 7 RFees
GL A-X, 4*

- (b) If you can prove to the EPO that:
- in a contracting state, within the relevant period for payment
- you effected the payment through a banking establishment, or
 - you duly gave an order to a banking establishment to transfer the relevant amount

Art. 7(3) RFees

you will be considered to have observed the period for payment even if the amount paid is received by the EPO after expiry of the period for payment.

⁴ Published as a supplementary publication to the EPO's Official Journal

The EPO may request you to produce evidence of the date on which you took one of the actions listed above within a period which it specifies. If you fail to comply with this request, or if you produce insufficient evidence, the period for payment is considered not to have been observed.

Art. 7(4) RFees

- (c) If you pay fees through a banking establishment, the following account with the Commerzbank in Germany is available for payments and transfers:

OJ EPO 2021, A61

IBAN DE20 7008 0000 0333 8800 00
BIC DRESDEFF700
Commerzbank AG
Leopoldstrasse 230
80807 München
Germany

- (d) The EPO only accepts debit orders filed in an electronically processable format (XML). Debit orders submitted in any other way, e.g. on paper, by fax, via the EPO Web-Form Filing service or using a different format such as a PDF attachment or the annotation field in the online forms, are invalid and thus will not be carried out. For more information on online fee payment, go to Online services on the EPO website (*www.epo.org*).

*Point 5.1.2, 5.1.3
ADA*

- (e) If you are an EPO deposit account holder, you also have the option of issuing an automatic debit order, which must likewise be filed in an electronically processable format.

*Point 7 ADA
ADA, Annexes A.1
and A.2
GL A-X, 4.3*

If an automatic debit order is filed in due time, any fee which must be paid within a time limit will be debited on the last day of that time limit, unless special provisions apply. For more information, reference is made to Supplementary publication 4, OJ EPO 2019.

Payment by deposit account, using either an individual debit order or the automatic debiting procedure, reduces the risk of late payment and possible extra costs resulting therefrom.

Refund of fees

4.3.020

In principle, validly paid fees are not refunded except where specifically provided for (see also points 4.3.010, 5.4.002, 5.4.014). There are two conditions for a fee payment to be fully valid:

GL A-X, 5.1.1, 10.1

- (i) the payment must relate to proceedings that are pending; and
(ii) the date of payment must be on or after the due date.

The examination fee is refunded in full if the European patent application is withdrawn, refused or deemed to be withdrawn before substantive examination has begun.

*Art. 11(a) RFees
GL A-VI, 2.5*

The examination fee is refunded at a rate of 50% if the European patent application is withdrawn after substantive examination has begun but before expiry of the time limit for replying to the first invitation under Article 94(3) EPC issued by the examining division proper or, if no such invitation has been issued by the examining division, before the date of the communication under Rule 71(3) EPC (see point 5.4.002).

Art. 11(b) RFees

Similarly, the search fee paid for a European search is refunded in full if the European patent application is withdrawn, refused or deemed to be withdrawn before the EPO has started drawing up the search report.

*Art. 9(1) RFees
GL A-X, 10.2.1*

The European search fee is refunded in full or in part if the European search report can be based on an earlier search report already prepared by the EPO on a national, European or international application whose priority is claimed or, in the case of divisional applications, where the search report is based on an earlier search report prepared by the EPO on the parent application. Refund of the search fee can be requested by crossing the box in section 40 of the request for grant form (see also point 5.8.005).

*Art. 9(2) RFees
GL A-X, 10.2.1
OJ EPO 2019, A4*

The designation fee falls due on the date on which the publication of the European search report is mentioned in the European Patent Bulletin. It can only be refunded if the European patent application is withdrawn, refused or deemed to be withdrawn before that publication date. After that date the designation fee is deemed to have been validly paid and can therefore not be refunded.

*R. 39(3)
GL A-III, 11.2.4
GL A-X, 5.2.2*

As a general rule, the EPO will make refunds to a deposit account held with it if you have instructed it to do so. Otherwise, it will invite you to claim any refund via its website (*fee-payment.epo.org*) and specify a bank account to which the refund is to be credited.

*OJ EPO 2021, A61
OJ EPO 2019, A26*

4.4 Filing other documents

Where and how to file

4.4.001 After you have filed a European patent application, you may file other documents as referred to in Rule 50 EPC with the EPO either electronically (via the EPO Online Filing software, EPO Online Filing 2.0 or the EPO Web-Form Filing service) or by hand or by postal services. However, the EPO Web-Form Filing service cannot be used to file authorisations and priority documents (see also points 5.5.003, 5.6.002 and 5.7.004). For subsequently filed documents, it is recommended that you use the electronic filing tools. The EPO provides forms which serve either as a prepared acknowledgement of receipt (EPO Form 1037) or as a letter accompanying subsequently filed documents (EPO Form 1038).

*R. 50
GL A-VIII, 2.5
OJ EPO 2019, A18*

You may also file documents (other than authorisations and priority documents) by fax. Documents may not be filed by email, on diskette, or by teletex, telegram, telex or similar means.

- 4.4.002** If you filed the application with a national authority, you may likewise file all other documents relating to the application with that authority, subject to any restrictions under national law, but only until the date on which you receive notification that the EPO has received your application. Once you have received this notification, you must file any documents with the EPO directly.
- R. 35(4)
GL A-II, 3.2

Subsequently filed documents replacing parts of the European patent application, i.e. the description, claims, drawings and the abstract, must also meet the formal requirements of Rule 49 and, in the case of drawings, of Rule 46 too, and must be filed in typed form.

R. 46, 49, 50(1)
GL A-VIII, 2.1, 2.2

Signature

- 4.4.003** With the exception of annexes, any documents filed after filing of the European patent application in grant, post-grant or appeal proceedings must be validly signed. In online filings the signature may be in the form of a facsimile signature, a text-string signature or an enhanced electronic signature. In paper filings it may be a handwritten signature or a reproduction of the filer's signature (on faxes). The name and position of that person must be clear from the signature.
- R. 50(3)
R. 2(2)
GL A-VIII, 3.1, 3.3

The signature on documents filed using EPO Online Filing 2.0 or the EPO Web-Form Filing service may take the form of a facsimile signature or a text-string signature.

If the signature is omitted from a document, the EPO will invite the party concerned to sign within a fixed time limit. If signed in due time, the document retains its original date of receipt; otherwise it is deemed not to have been received.

GL A-VIII, 3.1

Confirmation on paper

- 4.4.004** If you file documents electronically, you do not need to supply a paper confirmation. If you are invited to supply a written confirmation of a document filed by fax, you must do so within a non-extendable period of two months. If you fail to comply with the invitation in due time, the document is deemed not to have been received (see point 4.3.006).
- R. 2(1)
GL A-VIII, 2.5

Date of receipt

- 4.4.005** The rules governing the filing of the European patent application set out in point 4.3.007 apply *mutatis mutandis* to the filing of other documents (see point 4.3.007).
- OJ EPO 2021, A20
OJ EPO 2019, A18

Acknowledgement of receipt

- 4.4.006** The EPO acknowledges receipt of subsequently filed items on the forms provided for this purpose and completed by the applicant (EPO Forms 1037 and 1038). In case of electronic filing (see point 4.3.008), an acknowledgement of receipt is generated immediately.
- OJ EPO 2021, A20
OJ EPO 2019, A18

Chapter 5 – The European patent grant procedure

5.1 General survey

5.1.001 The European patent grant procedure is an examination procedure beginning with a formalities examination and a mandatory search.

The first stage ends with the publication of the European patent application and the search report on the EPO publication server.

At the applicant's request this is followed by the second stage, substantive examination.

After the patent has been granted, there may be a further procedure in the form of opposition proceedings or, upon request of the patentee, limitation or revocation proceedings.

5.1.002 The **first stage of the procedure** comprises an examination on filing, formalities examination, preparation of the European search report and a preliminary opinion on patentability, and publication of the application and the search report. Responsibility for this stage rests with the Receiving Section and a search division.

*Art. 16, 17, 90-93
R. 55-69
GL A, B*

5.1.003 The **second stage** comprises substantive examination and grant. Examining divisions are made up of three technically qualified examiners, who may if necessary be joined by a legally qualified examiner. Until a decision has to be taken on the application, its examination is as a rule entrusted to one of the technically qualified examiners. This examiner is responsible for issuing the requisite communications and for discussing the application with the applicant in writing, on the telephone or by videoconference.

*Art. 18, 94-98
R. 71-74
GL C*

If oral proceedings are requested by the applicant or arranged at the EPO's initiative, they are held before the full examining division by videoconference. The final decision on the grant of the patent or refusal of the application is also a matter for the full examining division.

*Art. 116
GL E-III
OJ EPO 2020, A40,
A134, A135*

5.1.004 After the grant of the patent, opposition proceedings may be initiated by third parties. Responsibility for examining oppositions rests with the opposition divisions, which are composed in the same way as the examining divisions, except that only one member of the opposition division may have been involved in the earlier grant proceedings, and that member is not allowed to chair the division. More details about opposition proceedings can be found in points 5.5.001-5.5.011.

*Art. 19, 99-105
R. 75-89
GL D*

5.1.005 After the grant of the patent, patent proprietors themselves may initiate revocation or limitation proceedings. The request for revocation or limitation may be filed at any time after the grant of the patent but not while opposition proceedings in respect of the European patent are pending. Decisions on the revocation or limitation of European patents are taken by the examining divisions. More details about revocation and limitation proceedings can be found in points 5.6.001-5.6.008.

*Art. 105a-105c
R. 90-96
GL D-X*

5.1.006 Appeal proceedings constitute a **special procedure**.⁵ Appeals may be filed against decisions taken by the Receiving Section, the examining divisions, the opposition divisions or the Legal Division. A decision which does not terminate proceedings as regards one of the parties can only be appealed together with the final decision, unless the decision allows separate appeal.

Art. 106-112a
R. 99-103
GL E-XII
Supplementary
publication 1, OJ
EPO 2021

Decisions on appeals are taken by the independent judicial body of the boards of appeal of the EPO.

Art. 21

5.1.007 In certain cases it may be possible to file a petition for review by the Enlarged Board of Appeal. For further details, see point 5.7.012.

Art. 22, 112a
R. 104-110

5.2 Procedure up to publication of the application

Examination on filing

5.2.001 On receiving an application the Receiving Section examines whether it can be accorded a date of filing. This is the case if the application documents contain:

Art. 80, 90(1)
R. 40
GL A-II, 4.1

- an indication that a European patent is sought
- information identifying the applicant
- a description or a reference to a previously filed application.

5.2.002 It is not necessary to file any claims in order to obtain a date of filing. You may file claims after the date of filing on your own initiative or within two months from an invitation requesting you to do so. However, you should take care that the late-filed claims do not contain subject-matter which extends beyond the content of the application as originally filed.

Art. 90(3)
Art. 123(2)
R. 57(c)
R. 58
GL A-III, 15

5.2.003 If any of the requirements mentioned in point 5.2.001 have not been fulfilled, a date of filing cannot be accorded. The Receiving Section will inform you accordingly and invite you to remedy the deficiencies found within a non-extendable time limit of two months. If you file a timely response and remedy the deficiencies, the date of receipt of your response will be the date of filing of the application. If you do not file a (timely) response, the application will not be dealt with as a European patent application. The EPO will notify you under Rule 112(1), and you may then apply for a decision under Rule 112(2) or request re-establishment of rights under Article 122 and Rule 136.

Art. 80, 90(1)
R. 55
GL A-II, 4.1.4, 4.1.5
GL E-VIII, 1.9.3
GL E-VIII, 3

For a date of filing to be accorded, the documents do not have to meet any particular requirements as to form or presentation. It is essential, however, that they be sufficiently legible to enable the information to be discerned.

⁵ The EPO publishes information from the boards of appeal in an annual supplement to the Official Journal.

Examination as to formal and other requirements

- 5.2.004** Once the date of filing has been accorded, the Receiving Section examines whether the filing fee, any additional fees and the search fee have been paid in due time (see points 4.3.011 and 4.3.012). If the filing fee or the search fee has not been paid in due time, the European patent application is deemed to be withdrawn (see point 4.3.014). However, see point 5.10.007 for the possibility of further processing.
- 5.2.005** If the application has been accorded a date of filing and is not deemed to be withdrawn, the Receiving Section checks for compliance with the provisions governing
- translations (see points 4.1.006-4.1.011)
 - the content of the request for grant (see point 4.1.013)
 - the presence of claims (see points 4.2.018-4.2.028, 5.2.002)
 - the filing of the abstract (see points 4.1.012 and 4.2.034-4.2.037)
 - representation (see points 4.1.023- 4.1.031)
 - physical requirements of the application documents including any sequence listings and disclosure of biological material (see points 4.2.004-4.2.005, 4.2.010-4.2.011 and 4.2.012)
 - any priority claimed (see points 4.1.017-4.1.021)
 - the designation of the inventor (see points 4.1.014-4.1.016)
 - the filing of any drawings (see points 4.2.030-4.2.033)
- If the Receiving Section finds any deficiencies, it invites you to remedy them in accordance with the Implementing Regulations; if you fail to do so, the legal consequences provided for in the EPC take effect, i.e. the application is deemed to be withdrawn or is refused.
- 5.2.006** If the file number or the certified copy of the application whose priority is claimed is missing, you will be invited to file the missing item(s) within a specified time limit. If you fail to do so, you will lose your priority right (but see points 5.10.008-5.10.010).
- 5.2.007** If formal examination reveals that parts of the description or drawings referred to in the description or in the claims appear to be missing, the Receiving Section will invite you under Rule 56(1) EPC to file the missing parts within a non-extendable time limit of two months. You can also file any missing parts of the description or drawings of your own motion within two months from the date of filing. In both cases the date of filing will then be re-dated to the day on which the missing parts are received at the EPO. Please be aware that a change of the date of filing may result in losing your priority right, namely if the newly accorded date of filing lies outside the 12-month priority period (see point 4.1.017).

*Art. 78(2), 90(3)
R. 38, 58
GL A-III, 13*

*Art. 14(2), 90(3)-(5)
R. 57-60
R. 30
GL A-III, 14, 16
GL A-IV, 4, 5
GL A-V, 1, 2.2*

*Art. 90(5)
R. 59
GL A-III, 6.5.3*

*R. 56(1), (2)
GL A-II, 5
GL C-III, 1.1.1*

If you do not file a reply to the invitation under Rule 56(1) EPC, all references to the missing parts are deemed to be deleted and the original date of filing will be kept. *R. 56(4)*

The original date of filing will be kept if you declare and provide evidence within the applicable time limit that the late-filed missing parts of the description or drawings are completely contained in the earlier application whose priority is claimed. To this end, a certified copy of the priority application, unless already available to the EPO, and, if required, its translation into one of the EPO's official languages must be filed. You must furthermore specify where in the priority application the missing parts are contained. *R. 56(3)*

The EPO will inform you of the date of filing accorded once the Receiving Section has taken a decision.

The examining division may review the decision of the Receiving Section.

5.2.008 With regard to the requirements governing documents filed after the filing of the European patent application see points 4.4.001-4.4.006 and 5.4.017-5.4.022.

European search report

5.2.009 As soon as the initial formal examination is concluded, the European search is initiated. The EPO normally issues the European search report within five months of the filing of the application. *Art. 92
R. 61
GL B*

The search report serves to provide information on the relevant prior art to the applicant, to the examining division and, by means of its publication, to the public. *R. 68(1)*

The search report is drawn up on the basis of the claims, with due regard to the description and any drawings. It mentions the prior-art documents available to the EPO when it is drawn up which may be taken into consideration in assessing novelty and inventive step. *GL B-X*

The search report is accompanied by an opinion on whether the application and the invention to which it relates meet the requirements of the EPC. *R. 62
GL B-XI*

This opinion will not be issued if you have filed a request for examination, paid the examination fee and waived your right to receive the communication under Rule 70(2) EPC (see point 5.4.004) before the search report has been communicated to you. In this situation you will receive a first communication from the examining division instead. *GL B-XI, 7*

The non-binding opinion is not published together with the search report but is available to the public by way of file inspection after publication of the application. *Art. 128
R. 62(2)*

5.2.010 If the application contains more than one independent claim in the same category (see point 4.2.021) and none of the exceptions listed under Rule 43(2) applies, you will be invited to indicate, within a two-month period, the basis on which the search is to be carried out. If you fail to do so, the search will be carried out on the basis of the first independent claim in each category.

*R. 62a
R. 137(5)
GL B-VIII, 4*

Similarly, if it is impossible to carry out a meaningful search on the basis of all or some of the subject-matter claimed, you will be invited to file, again within a two-month period, a statement indicating the subject-matter to be searched. Should your statement not be sufficient to overcome the deficiency, the EPO will issue a partial search report or a declaration that no meaningful search can be carried out.

*R. 63
GL B-VIII, 3*

You should note that, in response to such an invitation for clarification, you may not amend the application documents.

R. 137(1)

When the examining division assumes responsibility, it will invite you to delete the unsearched subject-matter from the application unless it finds that the objection was unjustified.

R. 137(5)

5.2.011 Immediately after it has been drawn up, the European search report is transmitted to you together with copies of any cited documents. If you require additional copies of the cited documents, you can indicate this in the appropriate box in the request for grant form (refer to section 39 of the request for grant) when filing the application. The request is valid only if the prescribed administrative fee is paid.

*Art. 92
R. 65
GL B-X, 12*

After receiving the search report, you may withdraw the application if you think it has no chance of success. If you decide to pursue the patent grant procedure (see point 5.4.001), you will, in the next step, be invited to pay the examination fee, if you have not yet done so, or to declare that you wish to proceed further with the application. At the same time you are invited to file a reply to any objections raised in the search opinion within the same time limit (see points 5.4.001 et seq.).

*R. 70, 70a
R. 137
GL C-II
GL A-VI, 2*

Lack of unity of invention

5.2.012 If the search division considers that the application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention (see point 4.2.003), it draws up a partial European search report on those parts which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims. It informs you that, if the search report is to cover the other inventions, you must pay a further search fee in respect of each of them within a non-extendable period of two months.

*Art. 82
R. 64
GL B-VII
GL F-V, 6*

If you do not respond to this invitation, and if the examining division considers the search division's objection justified, you are deemed to want the application to proceed in respect of the invention for which the (partial) search report has been drawn up. If you pay further search fees, the European search report is drawn up for those inventions for which further search fees have been paid.

A provisional opinion on the patentability of the invention or unitary group of inventions first mentioned in the claims is provided together with the reasons for any non-unity findings and the invitation to pay further search fees. The provisional opinion is for information only. A reply addressing the points raised in the provisional opinion is not required and is not taken into account when the extended European search report is issued.

GL B-VII, 1.2

The application must not include claims for subject-matter for which a further search fee has not been paid. You may however file divisional applications for such subject-matter (see points 5.8.001-5.8.005).

Any further search fees paid will be refunded on request if it emerges during examination proceedings that the search division's findings concerning lack of unity of invention was not justified.

*GL B-VII, 2.1
GL C-III, 3.1-3.3*

5.2.013 Upon drawing up the European search report, the search division determines the definitive content of the abstract and transmits it to you together with the search report.

*R. 66
GL A-III, 10.2
GL F-II, 2.1-2.6*

5.3 Publication of the European patent application

5.3.001 The European patent application is published as soon as possible after the expiry of eighteen months from the date of filing or the earliest priority date. You may however request that it be published earlier.

*Art. 93(1)
GL A-VI, 1*

The publication contains the description, the claims and any drawings, all as filed, plus the abstract. If the European search report is available in time, it is annexed (A1 publication); if not, it is published separately (A3 publication). If the European patent application was not filed in English, French or German, its translation will be published.

*R. 68(1)
GL A-VI, 1.3
GL A-VI, 1.5*

All European patent applications, European search reports and European patent specifications are published in electronic form only, on the EPO's publication server. The publication server is accessible via the EPO website (*www.epo.org*).

GL A-VI, 1.4

5.3.002 If you amend the claims after receiving the European search report but before completion of the technical preparations for publication (see point 5.4.018), the amended claims will be published in addition to the claims as filed. The technical preparations are deemed to have been completed five weeks before expiry of the eighteenth month after the date of filing or, if priority is claimed, after the date of the earliest priority.

*R. 68(4)
GL A-VI, 1.1, 1.3*

5.3.003 The European patent application is not published if it has been finally refused or withdrawn or is deemed withdrawn before completion of the technical preparations for publication.

*R. 67(2)
GL A-VI, 1.2*

5.3.004 The EPO informs you of the date on which the European Patent Bulletin mentions the publication of the European search report, and it draws your attention to the period for filing the request for examination (paying the fee for examination), which begins on that

*R. 69
GL A-VI, 2.1*

date (see points 5.2.011 and 5.4.001). It also informs you that the designation fee must be paid within six months of the date on which the European Patent Bulletin mentions publication of the European search report and that the same period applies to the payment of any extension and validation fees.

5.3.005 For the provisional protection that the application confers after publication see the fourth paragraph of point 2.2.001. *Art. 67*

A contracting state not having the language of the proceedings as an official language may prescribe that provisional protection does not take effect until a translation of the claims into one of its official languages at your option or, where that state has prescribed the use of one specific official language, in that language: *Art. 67(3)*

- (a) has been made available to the public in the manner prescribed by national law, or
- (b) has been communicated to the person using the invention in that state.

The contracting states may make provisional protection conditional upon a translation of the claims. The same applies to the extension and validation states (see point 2.5.001). For more information you are referred to **National law relating to the EPC** (Table III).

5.3.006 Once the European patent application has been published, files relating to it are available for public inspection by way of the European Patent Register, which can be accessed via the EPO website (*www.epo.org*). *Art. 128(1)-(4)*
R. 143, 144

From that time, too, the public has access to the application's bibliographic data and to information about the state of the proceedings by means of the European Patent Register, which can be accessed via the EPO website (see Annex VI). *Art. 127*
R. 143
GL A-XI
OJ EPO 2014, A86

The European Patent Register also allows you to monitor patent applications for updates using the Register Alert Service.

Additional information about the form in which European patent applications and patents are published and about periodical EPO publications is given in Annex VI. *Art. 129*

5.4 Examination procedure

Request for examination

5.4.001 You need to file the request for examination within six months of the date on which the European Patent Bulletin mentions the publication of the European search report (see point 5.3.004). The request, which you must submit in writing, is contained in the request for grant form (see point 4.1.013), but it is not deemed to be filed until you have paid the examination fee. Once filed, it cannot be withdrawn. *Art. 94*
R. 70
GL A-VI, 2.2
Art. 2(1), item 6,
RFees

If you do not validly file the request for examination within the time limit, the application is deemed to be withdrawn. However, the opportunity to request further processing is available (see point 5.10.007).

Art. 94(2)
GL A-VI, 2.3

5.4.002 You also have the option of paying the examination fee when you file the application. No disadvantages can accrue from this, as the examination fee is refunded in full if the application is withdrawn, refused or deemed to be withdrawn before substantive examination has begun. The examination fee is refunded at a rate of 50% if the application is withdrawn after substantive examination has begun but before expiry of the time limit for replying to the first communication from the examining division (see point 4.3.020).

Art. 11 RFees
GL A-VI, 2.2, 2.5

5.4.003 If you validly file the request for examination before receiving the European search report, pursuant to Rule 70(2) the Receiving Section invites you to indicate, within six months of the date when the European Patent Bulletin mentions the publication of the search report, whether you wish to proceed further with the application. If you do not reply to this invitation in due time, the application is deemed to be withdrawn.

R. 70(2), (3)
GL A-VI, 2.3
GL C-II, 1.1

In this case, too, further processing is available (see point 5.10.007).

5.4.004 To speed up proceedings, you can also, for example in the request for grant form, simply waive your right to the invitation to confirm the request for examination. In that case, when you receive the search report you are deemed to have indicated that you wish to proceed further with the application, and the examining division then assumes responsibility for the procedure (see point 5.2.009).

Art. 18(1)
R. 70(2)
GL C-VI, 3

With a request for accelerated examination under the programme for accelerated prosecution of European patent applications ("PACE") you can speed up the proceedings at the examination stage.

GL E-VIII, 4.2

5.4.005 You will be invited to comment on the extended European search report and/or to correct any deficiencies noted in the opinion accompanying it, and to amend the description, claims and drawings as appropriate, within the same six-month time limit as applies to filing or confirming the request for examination. If you fail to comply with the invitation in due time, the application will be deemed withdrawn (for further processing, see point 5.10.007).

R. 70a
R. 137

However, if no objections were raised in the opinion accompanying the European search report, no invitation will be issued. Instead, you will be informed about the possibility of filing comments or making amendments within the same period (see point 5.4.018).

Stages of the procedure

5.4.006 Once you have filed the request for examination, the EPO examines, in the light of the search report, the preliminary opinion on patentability (search opinion) and your response to them,

Art. 94(1)
GL C-III

whether the application and the invention to which it relates meet the requirements of the Convention, and in particular whether the invention is patentable (see points 3.1.001-3.4.002).

After receiving the search report and before receiving the examiner's first communication, you must file substantive observations on any objections raised in the search opinion; you may also amend the description, claims and drawings (see points 5.4.005 and 5.4.018).

*R. 70a, 137(2), (3)
GL C-III 2*

In exceptional situations where despite your reply to the search opinion no possibility of a grant can be envisaged, the examining division may issue a summons to oral proceedings as the first action in examination, with at least six months' notice. You may take the opportunity to submit any arguments and amendments by expiry of the deadline set with the summons. Should your submissions contain a genuine effort to overcome the examining division's objections, oral proceedings may be cancelled or postponed. Otherwise, a decision will be taken during the oral proceedings, even if you do not attend them.

GL C-III, 5

5.4.007

If the examiner responsible within the examining division has objections to the application, they will send you a first reasoned communication inviting you to file your observations and, if necessary, to submit amendments to the description, claims and drawings (see points 5.4.017-5.4.022).

*Art. 94(3)
R. 71(1), 137(3)
GL C-III, 4
GL H-II*

If you fail to reply in due time to this or any further communication, the application is deemed to be withdrawn (but see point 5.10.007).

Art. 94(4)

You might also be invited to provide information on prior art taken into consideration in the examination of national or regional patent applications and concerning an invention to which the European patent application relates. If you do not provide this information within a specified time limit, the application is deemed withdrawn (but see point 5.10.007). It is recommended that you file any search results relating to a previous application from which priority is claimed as soon as they are available (see point 4.1.019).

*Art. 124
R. 141
GL C-III, 6*

5.4.008

You must try to deal with all the examiner's objections, the guiding principle of the examination procedure being that the decision to grant a patent or refuse the application should be reached in as few actions as possible.

GL C-IV, 3

If, after examining your response, the examiner considers that a patent cannot yet be granted, they will continue with the examination procedure by issuing a further written communication or consulting you by videoconference or, exceptionally, by telephone.

*GL C-IV
GL C-VII, 2
OJ EPO 2020, A40,
A122*

A consultation may also be used as the first action replacing the first communication in examination under Article 94(3) and Rule 71(1), (2), provided that specific requirements are met, namely: (a) minutes are issued, (b) the minutes present the matters discussed with the same level of information and structure as a written communication from the examining division and (c) the time limit

GL C-VII, 2.5

set for reply is not shorter than four months, unless agreed otherwise with the applicant.

You may at any time request oral proceedings. As a rule, oral proceedings before examining divisions are held by videoconference.

*Art. 116
GL E-III
OJ EPO 2020, A134*

Email is an admissible filing means only for the submission of subsequently filed documents during consultations and during oral proceedings. Other than in the aforementioned cases, email has no legal effect in proceedings under the EPC.

*R. 50
GL C-VII, 3
GL E-III, 8.5.2
OJ EPO 2020, A71*

5.4.009 The examiner may seek the advice of other members of the examining division whenever appropriate. The application will be referred to them at the latest when a decision has to be taken.

GL C-VIII

If the examining division is of the opinion that a European patent cannot be granted, it will refuse the application. The decision is issued by the examining division as a whole, and the grounds of refusal must be stated. Refusals may be based only on grounds on which you have had an opportunity to comment.

*Art. 97(2), 113(1)
GL C-V, 14,
C-VIII, 6*

5.4.010 If the application and the invention to which it relates meet the requirements of the Convention, the examining division will proceed to the grant stage.

*Art. 97(1)
R. 71(3)-(7)
GL C-V*

5.4.011 The examining division informs you of the text in which it intends to grant the European patent, and invites you to pay the fee for grant and publishing and any claims fees for claims in excess of 15 which have not yet been paid, as well as to file a translation of the claims into the two official languages of the EPO other than the language of the proceedings within a non-extendable period of four months. You are also invited to verify the bibliographic data at this stage.

*Art. 97
R. 71(3)
GL C-V, 1*

If you pay the prescribed fees and file the necessary translations of the claims in due time, you are deemed to have approved the text intended for grant. If you do not respond to the invitation, the application is deemed to be withdrawn (but see point 5.10.007).

*R. 71(3), (7)
GL C-V, 3*

5.4.012 Upon reviewing the proposed text for grant, you may wish to make minor amendments, and/or you may discover mistakes. In that case you have an opportunity to file amendments or corrections within the period set under Rule 71(3) (see point 5.4.011). If the examining division consents to the amendments or corrections, it will issue a new communication under Rule 71(3). It can then proceed to grant, provided you have filed the translations of the claims and paid the fees for grant and publishing within the time limit set. If you file amendments or corrections and translations of the claims in due time, but do not pay the fees or file the translations, the application is deemed to be withdrawn (but see point 5.10.007).

*R. 71(6), 137(3), 139
GL H-II, 2.5
GL C-V, 4*

5.4.013 If the examining division does not consent to the requested amendments or corrections, it will resume the examination proceedings. Depending on the circumstances of the individual case, the examining division may for example issue a

*R. 71(6)
GL C-V, 4
GL H-II, 2.5*

communication under Article 94(3) and Rule 71(1), (2), summon you to oral proceedings or refuse the application.

- 5.4.014** If you fail to meet the objections raised, the examining division will refuse the application under Article 97(2) because it does not meet the requirements of the Convention. If you fail to pay the fee for grant and publishing or any claims fees due, the application is deemed to be withdrawn (but see point 5.10.007). If you have paid said fees but ultimately no patent is granted, the fee for grant and publishing will be refunded.

Art. 97(2)
R. 71(7)
GL C-V, 4.7, 9

Before a patent can be granted, you must also have paid any renewal fee and, if applicable, any additional fee due (see point 5.9.001 et seq.). If a renewal fee falls due before the expected date of publication of the mention of grant of the European patent, you will be informed accordingly. The mention of grant will not be published until you have paid the renewal fee. If you fail to pay the renewal fee and any additional fee in due time, the application is deemed to be withdrawn.

Art. 86(1)
R. 71a(4)
GL C-V, 2

- 5.4.015** If you overrun the period set under Rule 71, you may request further processing under Article 121 (see point 5.10.007).

Art. 121
R. 135
GL C-V, 8

- 5.4.016** The grant does not take effect until the date on which it is mentioned in the European Patent Bulletin. At the same time as it publishes this mention, the EPO publishes a European patent specification containing the description, the claims and any drawings. The European patent specification and the European Patent Bulletin are published electronically on the EPO's publication server (*www.epo.org*).

Art. 97(3), 98
GL C-V, 10-13

The certificate issued for a European patent is communicated to the proprietor in paper form. Certified copies of the certificate with the specification annexed will be issued to the proprietor upon request and payment of an administrative fee.

R. 74
GL C-V, 12

Amending applications before and during examination proceedings

- 5.4.017** You are not allowed to amend the description, claims or drawings before you receive the European search report. You should always indicate any amendments made and identify their basis in the application as filed.

R. 137(1)
GL A-V, 2
GL H-IV, 2.1, 3
GL H-II, H-III

- 5.4.018** Within the time limit for requesting examination or confirming that request (i.e. when replying to the invitation to comment on the objections raised in the search opinion), you may of your own volition amend the description, claims and drawings (see points 5.3.002, 5.4.005, 5.4.006 and 5.4.021).

R. 137(2)
GL B-XI, 8
GL C-II, 3.1
GL C-III, 2

- 5.4.019** No further amendments are allowed without the examining division's consent. Amended claims may not relate to unsearched subject-matter which does not combine with the originally claimed invention to form a single general inventive concept. In deleting subject-matter from an application, you should avoid any

R. 137(3), (5)
GL H-II, 2
GL H-IV, 2.1, 4.2

statement which could be interpreted as abandonment of that subject-matter. Otherwise the subject-matter cannot be reinstated.

- 5.4.020** The Guidelines for Examination provide information about the limits to the amendments that you can make to the description, claims and drawings after receiving the communication under Rule 71(3). Once you have received the text communicated to you pursuant to Rule 71(3) (including minor amendments and/or corrections of errors, see point 5.4.011), further amendments will only be allowed under the discretionary power given to the examining division by Rule 137(3). *R. 137(3), 71*
GL C-V, 4-5
GL H-II, 2.5, 2.6
- 5.4.021** The application may on no account be amended in such a way that it contains subject-matter which extends beyond the content of the application as filed (which does not include the priority document). However, subsequently filed examples or statements of advantage may be considered by the examiner as evidence in support of the invention's patentability. *Art. 123(2)*
GL H-IV, 2.1, 2.2
- This technical information is generally added to the part of the file that is open to public inspection (see point 5.3.006). From the date on which it is added, it forms part of the state of the art within the meaning of Article 54(2) (see point 3.3.001). A note is printed on the cover page of the patent specification to alert the public that information submitted after the application was filed is not included in the specification (see point 5.4.016). *GL H-V, 2.3*
- 5.4.022** You can make amendments to the European patent application in one of the following ways: *GL H-III*
- (a) by filing replacement pages. You should use this method only if the amendments are extensive and complicated. If it is not immediately clear how or why an amendment is to be made, you should provide explanatory notes in the margin of the replacement pages or on separate sheets. You must comply with the provisions governing application document presentation (see point 4.2.004).
 - (b) by annotating a copy of the relevant page(s) of the application. This is the preferred method if the amendments are not too extensive, as it simplifies checking. The amendments must be typewritten. Amendments should preferably be identified using functions available in a text editor to clearly indicate deletions and insertions in the amended text. Pages with such indications should be submitted in addition to clean copies. If you are asked to identify the amendments and indicate the basis for them under Rule 137(4), the handwritten form is appropriate, provided that clean copies are free from handwritten amendments. *R. 49(8)*
GL A-III, 3.2
 - (c) by indicating the changes in a letter. This method is suitable if, for example, you wish to delete whole pages, paragraphs or drawings.

National requirements governing translations of European patents

- 5.4.023** Any contracting state may make the protection conferred by a European patent granted (or amended or limited) in a language that is not one of its official languages contingent upon your filing a translation into one of its official languages or its prescribed official language. It may also require you to bear some or all of the cost of publishing the translation. The same applies to extension and validation states.

Art. 65
OJ EPO 2008, 123
OJ EPO 2001, 549

For more details on the legal position in the contracting states, see **National law relating to the EPC** (Table IV) and the key points of the London Agreement, which can be found on the EPO website at www.epo.org/law-practice/legal-texts/london-agreement.html.

Art. 65(3)

You should take great care to comply with these requirements, especially those governing time limits for filing translations, so as not to undermine the protection conferred by the patent in the designated contracting states. The same applies to extension and validation states.

Note: all those states which require a translation of the European patent specification have prescribed that, in the event of failure to observe the relevant national provisions, the European patent will be deemed to be void from the beginning.

5.5 Opposition procedure

Opposition period

- 5.5.001** Up to nine months after publication of the mention that a European patent has been granted, anyone may give the EPO notice of opposition to the patent, except for the proprietor, who is not allowed to oppose their own patent.

Art. 99
GL D-I, 4

Notice of opposition is not deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid.

Grounds for opposition

- 5.5.002** Opposition may only be filed on the grounds that:

Art. 100
GL D-III, 5

- the patent's subject-matter is not patentable within the terms of Articles 52-57
- the patent does not disclose the invention clearly and completely enough for it to be carried out by a person skilled in the art
- the patent's subject-matter extends beyond the content of the application as filed.

Form and content of the notice of opposition

5.5.003 Notice of opposition must be filed in one copy only within the opposition period in a reasoned statement. That means that the opponent must state at least one ground for opposition under Article 100 and indicate the facts, evidence and arguments presented in support of the ground(s). Otherwise the notice of opposition will be rejected as inadmissible. It is advisable to use the EPO opposition form (EPO Form 2300), which provides all the information needed to ensure that an opposition is admissible. This form is available on the EPO website (www.epo.org).

Art. 99(1)
R. 76
GL D-III, 3, 6

Notice of opposition may be filed electronically via the EPO Online Filing software or EPO Online Filing 2.0, but not via the EPO Web-Form Filing service (see points 4.4.001-4.4.006). It may also be filed by post, by hand or by fax.

R. 2
GL D-III, 3.2

Examination of the notice of opposition for admissibility

5.5.004 Immediately after receiving the notice of opposition, the EPO will forward it to the proprietor. Then the admissibility of the opposition is checked. Deficiencies in the notice are communicated to the opponent. Deficiencies under Rule 77(1) must be remedied within the opposition period. Other remediable deficiencies must be corrected within a period specified by the EPO (generally two months). If the deficiencies noted are not corrected in due time, the notice of opposition is rejected as inadmissible.

R. 77
GL D-IV, 1.2

Documents cited in support of the opposition or as evidence must be specified in the notice of opposition and should be filed at the same time. If not filed with the initial notice of opposition, all cited documents will be requested from the opponent within an additional time limit of two months. If the opponent fails to do so in due time, the opposition division may decide not to take any arguments based on them into account.

R. 83
GL D-IV, 1.2.2.1
OJ EPO 2016, A42

5.5.005 Immediately after expiry of the opposition period or the period laid down for remedying deficiencies or presenting evidence, the patent proprietor is invited to file observations and, where appropriate, amendments within a period specified by the EPO (generally four months). Amendments are allowed only if they are occasioned by grounds for opposition under Article 100, including grounds not invoked by the opponent.

R. 79
GL D-IV, 5.2
R. 80
GL D-IV, 5.3

Substantive examination of the opposition

5.5.006 Once these preliminaries have been completed, the opposition division examines whether the grounds for opposition prejudice the maintenance of the European patent. If necessary it will invite the parties to file observations on its or other parties' communications within a period which it specifies.

Art. 101
R. 81
GL D-V, VI
GL E-VIII, 1.2

Upon receipt of a communication sent in this way, the proprietor may file the description, claims and drawings in amended form

R. 81(3)
GL D-VI, 4.2
GL H-III

where necessary. Late-filed proposals for amendment might not be considered.

If oral proceedings have to be arranged at the request of a party or at the instance of the EPO where it considers them expedient, the summonses are issued as soon as possible. Oral proceedings in opposition are held by videoconference.

Art. 116(1)
R. 115
GL D-VI, 1
OJ EPO 2021, A41
OJ EPO 2020, A41,
A42, A121
R. 116
GL D-VI, 3.2
GL E-III, 8.6

In a note annexed to the summons, the opposition division lists and explains the points that in its view need to be discussed for the purpose of the decision that has to be taken. The note generally also includes the opposition division's provisional and non-binding opinion on the positions adopted by the parties, and in particular on amendments to the patent filed by its proprietor. At the same time, the opposition division fixes a final date for filing written submissions or amendments in preparation for the oral proceedings. New facts and evidence presented after that date might not be considered, unless admitted on the grounds that the subject of the proceedings has changed.

5.5.007 If the opposition division finds that the grounds for opposition prejudice the maintenance of the European patent, it revokes the patent. If it finds that the grounds do not prejudice the maintenance of the patent as granted, it rejects the opposition.

Art. 101
R. 81
GL D-VIII

5.5.008 If the opposition division finds that the patent can be maintained in amended form, it delivers an interlocutory decision stating that, with the amendments made by the proprietor, the patent and the invention to which it relates meet the requirements of the EPC. A separate appeal is allowed against such an interlocutory decision.

Art. 101(3)(a)
R. 82
GL D-VI, 7.2

5.5.009 Once the interlocutory decision under point 5.5.008 becomes final, the proprietor is given three months in which to pay the fee for publishing a new specification and file a translation of any amended claims in the two official languages other than the language of the proceedings.

R. 82(2)
GL D-VI, 7.2.3

If the proprietor has filed handwritten amendments during oral proceedings, they will be invited to file the amended text in a form compliant with Rule 49(8) within the above-mentioned three-month period.

R. 82(2)
GL D-VI, 7.2.3

5.5.010 If these acts are not performed in due time, they may still be validly performed within two months of notification of a communication pointing out the failure to observe the time limit, provided that a surcharge is paid within this period.

R. 82(3)

If either of the acts is not performed within this period either, the patent is revoked.

5.5.011 The contracting states make the amended text subject to the same translation requirements as the patent specification (see point 5.4.023).

Art. 65

5.6 Limitation and revocation procedure

- 5.6.001** As patent proprietor you may request the revocation or limitation of your own patent. You can file the request at any time after grant, after opposition proceedings or even after expiry of the patent. However, a request for revocation or limitation filed while opposition proceedings in respect of the European patent are pending is deemed not to have been filed, since the opposition proceedings have precedence. In case of revocation, the requester will be informed that the request will be handled in the pending opposition proceedings without payment of a fee. Subsequently, the Article 105a proceedings will be terminated. If a revocation request is pending at the time of filing an opposition, the revocation procedure will be continued for reasons of procedural efficiency. If limitation proceedings are pending at the time of filing an opposition, the limitation proceedings are terminated and the limitation fee is reimbursed. Opposition proceedings will be continued.
- Art. 105a
R. 93
GL D-X, 2.1.
- 5.6.002** Requests must be filed direct with the EPO. Requests may be filed electronically via the EPO Online Filing software or EPO Online Filing 2.0, but not via the EPO Web-Form Filing service (see points 4.4.001-4.4.006). They may also be filed by post, by hand and by fax. The general provisions for filing a European patent application (see Rules 35 ff) and the need for professional representation for non-resident patent proprietors apply (see points 4.1.023-4.1.024). Furthermore, the request is deemed to be filed only when the limitation or revocation fee is paid.
- Art. 105a(1)
R. 35 ff
Art. 2(1), item 10a,
RFees
- 5.6.003** The subject of limitation or revocation proceedings is the European patent as granted or as amended in opposition or (earlier) limitation proceedings. Since limitation is effected by means of amendment of the claims, the request must include a complete set of the amended claims (and the description and drawings if applicable). If these or the general requirements regarding languages and representation (see points 4.1.006-4.1.010 and 4.1.023-4.1.031) are not met, the EPO invites you to correct any deficiencies within a period to be specified, normally of two months. If you do not correct the deficiencies within this period, the request is rejected as inadmissible. Re-establishment of rights is however available. The decision rejecting the request is open to appeal.
- R. 90
R. 92(2)
R. 94
GL D-X, 2
Art. 122
- 5.6.004** If the request is for **revocation** and is admissible, then the examining division revokes the patent and communicates this to the requester.
- Art. 105b(2)
R. 95(1)
GL D-X, 3
- The decision takes effect on the date on which it is published in the European Patent Bulletin.
- Art. 105b(3)
- It applies *ab initio* to all contracting states in respect of which the patent was granted. It is not possible for the patent to be revoked for some contracting states and not for others.
- Art. 64
Art. 67

- 5.6.005** If the request for **limitation** is admissible, the examining division proceeds with its examination of the request. The basis for the examination is the patent as granted or amended in opposition or limitation proceedings. Where there have already been both opposition and limitation proceedings, then the basis for the examination is the patent as amended in the most recent of the procedures. The examining division only examines whether the amended claims constitute a limitation with respect to the claims as granted or amended and whether they are clear and concise and supported by the description and do not contain subject-matter which extends beyond the application as filed.
- 5.6.006** The term 'limitation' means a reduction in the scope of protection of the claims. Clarifications or changes made simply to protect different subject-matter are not considered to be limitations. If there are any deficiencies, you will be invited to correct them within a period generally set to two months.
- 5.6.007** If the request for limitation is allowable, you will be informed accordingly and invited to pay the prescribed fee for publishing an amended specification and to file a translation of the amended limited claims into the other two official languages within a non-extendable period of three months. If considered necessary, the description and drawings have to be adapted additionally. If these acts are not performed in due time, they may still be validly performed within two months of notification of a communication pointing out the failure to observe the time limit, provided that a surcharge is paid within this period.
- The procedure for this is the same as in opposition proceedings. If you pay the fees and file the translations as set out above in due time, then the examining division will limit the patent. Subsequently an amended specification as limited will be published and a new certificate will be issued. If not, the request will be refused.
- 5.6.008** The decision to limit the European patent takes effect on the date on which it is published in the European Patent Bulletin. Its effect is to limit the patent *ab initio*.

Art. 84
Art. 123(2), (3)
R. 90
GL D-X, 4

Art. 105b(1)
R. 95
GL D-X, 4.3-4.5

Art. 105b(2)
R. 95(3), (4)
R. 82(3)
Art. 2(1), item 8,
RFees
GL D-X, 5

Art. 105c
R. 96, 74

Art. 105b(3)
Art. 68

5.7 Appeals procedure

Filing an appeal

- 5.7.001** Appeals may be filed against decisions of the Receiving Section, the examining divisions, the opposition divisions and the Legal Division. An appeal has suspensive effect, which means that the contested decision is not yet final (no formal *res judicata*) and its effects are suspended.
- 5.7.002** Notice of appeal must be filed in written form within two months after the date of notification of the contested decision. It is not deemed to have been filed until the appeal fee has been paid. Within four months after the date of notification of the decision, a written statement setting out the grounds of appeal must be filed.

Art. 106

Art. 108
R. 126
Art. 2(1), item 11,
RFees

The above time limits cannot be extended. Further processing under Article 121 is excluded.

- 5.7.003** As from 1 April 2018 a reduced fee for appeal applies to appeals filed by natural persons and by small and medium-sized enterprises, non-profit organisations, universities and public research organisations. *R. 6(4)
GL E-XII, 6*
- 5.7.004** The notice of appeal and the statement of grounds may be filed in electronic form using the EPO Online Filing software or EPO Online Filing 2.0 but not via the EPO Web-Form Filing service. They may also be filed by post, by hand and by fax. The Registry of the boards of appeal as a rule requests written confirmation only if the quality of the document filed is deficient. A valid electronic signature may take the form of a facsimile signature, a text string signature or an enhanced electronic signature (see point 4.4.003). *R. 2
OJ EPO 2018, A45*
- 5.7.005** The notice of appeal must contain:
- (a) the name and address of the appellant
 - (b) an indication of the appealed decision, and
 - (c) a request defining the subject of the appeal.
- 5.7.006** In the statement of grounds the appellant should indicate the reasons why the decision should be set aside, or the extent to which it is to be amended. Similarly, the facts and evidence on which the appeal is based should also be filed. All arguments should be presented in writing and not reserved for possible oral proceedings. *R. 99(2)*
- The Registry gives each appeal its own reference number, which must be used throughout the appeal proceedings.

Interlocutory revision

- 5.7.007** If the department whose decision is contested considers an appeal to be admissible and well founded, it must rectify its decision within three months of receiving the statement of grounds. If the appeal is not allowed within that period, it must be remitted to the board of appeal without delay. *Art. 109
GL E-XII, 7*

Interlocutory revision is not possible where the appellant is opposed by another party to the proceedings (in particular in opposition proceedings).

Stages of the procedure before the boards of appeal

- 5.7.008** The boards of appeal of the EPO decide on appeals as a judicial and final instance. The members of the boards are independent in their decision-making and bound to comply with the EPC. The Rules of Procedure of the Boards of Appeal are published in the Official Journal and on the EPO website. *Art. 23(3)
Supplementary
publication 1, OJ
EPO 2021*

The technical boards of appeal are responsible for appeals against decisions of the examining divisions concerning the refusal of European patent applications or the granting of European patents and for appeals against decisions of the opposition divisions.

Art. 21(3), (4)

The technical boards normally consist of three members (two technically qualified and one legally qualified). This is increased to five (three technically qualified and two legally qualified) if a legally qualified member was involved in taking the decision or if the board considers that the nature of the appeal so requires (enlarged composition).

Art. 21(3)(a), (b)

Where the technical boards of appeal are not competent – particularly in the case of appeals against decisions of the Receiving Section or the Legal Division – a legal board of appeal consisting of three legally qualified members deals with such procedures.

Art. 21(2), (3)(c)

5.7.009 To ensure uniform application of the law or if an important point of law arises, referrals may be submitted to the Enlarged Board of Appeal. During proceedings on a case and either of its own motion or following a request from a party, a board of appeal may refer any question to the Enlarged Board if it considers that a decision is required for the above purposes. The Enlarged Board's decision is binding on the referring board. The President of the EPO may refer a point of law to the Enlarged Board if two boards of appeal have given different decisions on the issue.

Art. 22
Art. 112

5.7.010 The provisions relating to proceedings before the department which took the appealed decision are essentially applicable *mutatis mutandis* to appeal proceedings and proceedings for petition for review. In the examination of the appeal, the board of appeal invites the parties to file, within a specified period, observations on communications issued by itself or observations submitted by another party.

Art. 110
R. 100

Oral proceedings may be held at the request of a party or at the instance of the board of appeal.

Art. 116

5.7.011 In deciding on the appeal, the board may either exercise any power within the competence of the department which took the appealed decision or remit the case to that department for further prosecution. In the latter case, the department is bound by the board's decision, in so far as the facts are the same.

Art. 111

Petition for review

5.7.012 Any party to appeal proceedings adversely affected by the decision of the board of appeal can file a petition for review of the decision by the Enlarged Board of Appeal. Such petitions may be filed on the grounds either that the composition of the board was not correct, or that a fundamental violation of the right to be heard or any other fundamental procedural defect had occurred, or that a criminal act may have had an impact on the decision. The objections must have been brought up during the appeal proceedings.

Art. 112a
R. 104-107
Art. 113

As a rule, petitions must be filed within two months of notification of the decision of the board of appeal. A petition is not deemed to be filed until the prescribed fee has been paid.

Art. 112a(4)
Art. 2(1), item 11a,
RFees

If a petition for review is admissible and allowable, the Enlarged Board sets aside the decision of the board of appeal and orders re-opening of the proceedings before the responsible board of appeal as well as the reimbursement of the fee for petition for review.

Art. 112a(5)
R. 108
R. 110

5.8 **Divisional applications**

5.8.001 The usual reason for filing a European divisional application is that the parent application does not satisfy the requirements as to unity of invention (see point 4.2.003) and the applicant wishes to obtain a patent for all the inventions.

Art. 82
Art. 76
R. 36
GL A-IV, 1
GL C-IX, 1

5.8.002 A divisional application may be filed only for subject-matter which does not extend beyond the content of the parent application as filed. If it complies with this provision and with the formal requirements for according a date of filing (see point 5.2.001 et seq.), it is deemed to have the same date of filing as the parent application. A valid divisional application also enjoys the priority right(s) of the parent application.

Art. 76(1), 2nd sentence
Art. 80
GL A-IV, 1.2
GL C-IX, 1.1

All the states designated in the parent application at the time of filing of the divisional application are deemed to be designated in the latter. However, contracting states the designations of which have been withdrawn or are deemed to be withdrawn in respect of the parent application at the time of filing the divisional application cannot be designated in respect of the divisional application. The same applies to extension and validation states.

Art. 76(2)
GL A-IV, 1.3.4

5.8.003 A divisional application may be filed in respect of any pending earlier European patent application. An application is pending up to (but not including) the date on which the European Patent Bulletin mentions the grant of the European patent. It ceases to be pending if it is finally refused or if it is withdrawn or deemed to be withdrawn. If an application has been refused, a divisional application may still be validly filed until the expiry of the appeal period, regardless of whether an appeal has been filed or not.

R. 36(1)
GL A-IV, 1.1.1

5.8.004 Divisional applications must be filed direct with the EPO in Munich, The Hague or Berlin. They can be filed in electronic form (see point 4.3.001). The language of the proceedings is always the same as for the earlier (parent) application. If the parent application was filed in a language other than the language of the proceedings, the divisional application may also be filed in this other language. Then, however, a translation into the language of the proceedings of the parent application must be filed within two months.

R. 36(2)
R. 57(a)
GL A-IV, 1.3

5.8.005 For the fees payable in respect of a European divisional application, and also for the time limits for payment and the legal consequences of missing them, see points 4.3.016-4.3.019.

The search fee is refunded in full or in part, depending on the extent to which the search can be based on the search report for the parent (or, in the case of a sequence of applications, any preceding) application.

Art. 9 RFees

If the divisional application is filed more than two years after the date of filing of the parent application, the accumulated renewal fee(s) (see points 5.9.001-5.9.004) are due on filing of the divisional application but can be validly paid without any additional fee within four months of this filing. If not paid within this period, the accumulated renewal fees may still be validly paid within six months of the due date, provided they are paid together with an additional fee (see point 5.9.003).

*R. 51(3)
Art. 86(1)*

After filing, each divisional application is treated as an independent patent application.

5.9 Renewal fees

5.9.001 You are required to pay renewal fees to the EPO in respect of your European patent application. These are due in respect of the third and each subsequent year, calculated from the date of filing.

*Art. 86
Art. 2(1), item 4,
RFees
R. 51*

5.9.002 Renewal fees in respect of the coming year are due on the last day of the month in which the anniversary of the date of filing falls. For fee amounts and payment methods see points 4.3.018 and 4.3.019.

R. 51(1)

5.9.003 Payment may still be validly made up to six months after the due date, provided that an additional fee equal to 50% of the belated renewal fee is paid within the same period. The EPO will normally send you an information letter if the renewal fee has not been paid by the due date; however, you are not entitled to base any claims on the omission of this courtesy service. Renewal fees may not be validly paid more than three months in advance of the date on which they fall due. The sole exception is the renewal fee for the third year, which may not be validly paid more than six months before it falls due.

*R. 51(2)
Art. 2(1), item 5,
RFees
GL A-X, 5.2.4*

5.9.004 If you fail to pay the renewal fee and any additional fee in due time, the application is deemed to be withdrawn. As a means of redress you may request re-establishment of rights under Article 122 (see also point 5.10.008). Further processing under Article 121 is not available.

*Art. 86(1)
R. 135
R. 136*

5.9.005 The last renewal fee payable to the EPO in respect of a European patent application covers the patent year in which the mention of the grant of the patent is published (see point 5.4.014 ff).

Art. 86(2)

5.9.006 Renewal fees falling due between the date of grant of the European patent and the expiry of its term are payable to the central industrial property offices of the designated states in which you have validated it (see point 2.2.001, last paragraph). For more details refer to **National law relating to the EPC** (see point 2.1.004).

*Art. 63
Art. 141*

5.10 General provisions governing periods

5.10.001 Annex IV contains charts illustrating actions applicants have to take within periods laid down in the EPC.

Art. 120-122
R. 131-136
GL E-VIII
R. 131, 134
GL E-VIII, 1.4

A period is calculated from the day after the date on which the relevant event occurred. In the case of a notification, the event considered is the receipt of the document notified, subject to the provisions governing notification. The generally applicable procedure for notifications is indicated below. Period expiry is regulated in Rule 131(3) to (5). Under Rule 134(1) a period expiring on a day on which the EPO is closed or on which mail is not delivered is extended to the next day on which it is open and on which mail is delivered (for example, if a period expires on a Saturday or Sunday, the next day on which it is open is Monday). The provisions in Rule 134(2) and (5) also permit extension of a period in certain special cases.

A period will be deemed to have been observed if a document received late was posted, or delivered to a delivery service recognised by the President of the EPO (Chronopost, DHL, Federal Express, flexpress, TNT, SkyNet, UPS or Transworld), at least five calendar days before the relevant period expired, unless the document was received later than three months after the period expired.

R. 133
OJ EPO 2015, A29

5.10.002 A period set by the EPO may also be extended provided that a request for extension is submitted before that period expires. However, a request for extension which would make the total period over six months long will be allowed only in exceptional cases.

R. 132(2)
GL E-VIII, 1.2, 1.6

If an extension of a time limit is requested in applications which, at the request of the applicant, are being processed under the programme for accelerated prosecution of European patent applications (PACE), the application(s) will be removed from the PACE programme.

GL E-VIII, 4

In opposition proceedings, requests to extend time limits over and above the normal period of four months for communications from an opposition division raising matters of substance or two months for other communications will be granted only in exceptional, duly substantiated cases.

GL E-VIII, 1.2, 1.6

5.10.003 All decisions, summonses, notices and communications from which a period is calculated are delivered as notifications.

Art. 119
R. 125-129

If you have agreed to receive communications electronically, notification may be effected by means of electronic communication. The electronic document is deemed to be delivered to the addressee on the tenth day following its transmission, unless it fails to reach the addressee or reaches them at a later date.

R. 127
GL E-II, 2.4

Notification may be effected by registered letter, which is deemed to be delivered on the tenth day following its posting, unless it fails to reach the addressee or reaches them at a later date.

R. 126
GL E-II, 2.3

Missed time limits

- 5.10.004** If you miss a time limit, **legal sanctions** are applied, such as refusal of the application, deemed withdrawal of the application or a (partial) loss of rights, for example a loss of the right of priority due to late filing of the priority document. *GL E-VIII, 1.8*
- 5.10.005** Where the sanction applied is the refusal of the European patent application, this is communicated to you in a decision by the competent department. Whenever the EPO finds that rights have been lost, it will inform you in a communication noting this loss of rights. *Art. 15
R. 112(1)
GL E-VIII, 1.9.1,
1.9.2
GL E-X, 1*
- If you consider that the EPO's finding is inaccurate, you may, within two months after receiving the communication noting the loss of rights, file a request for a decision on the matter. A decision will be taken only if the EPO stands by its opinion. Any such decision is open to appeal. If the request is allowed, no decision will be taken and the EPO will inform you that the loss of rights has been set aside. *R. 112(2)
GL E-VIII, 1.9.3*

Completion of an omitted act

- 5.10.006** The EPC makes provision for omitted acts to be completed, depending on the nature of the missed time limit.
- 5.10.007** If you miss a time limit vis-à-vis the EPO, it is in most cases sufficient to request further processing of the application. Further processing must be requested within two months of the date on which the communication concerning either the failure to observe a time limit or a loss of rights is notified. Further processing must be requested by payment of the prescribed fee. The omitted act must be completed within the period for making the request. No reasons for failing to observe the time limit need to be given. Further processing is ruled out in respect of certain time limits as listed in Article 121(4) and Rule 135(2). *Art. 121
R. 135
Art. 2(1), item 12,
RFees
GL E-VIII, 2*
- 5.10.008** Re-establishment of rights (*restitutio in integrum*) is available for those time limits for which further processing is ruled out. However, a request for re-establishment of rights can be granted only if you were unable to meet the time limit despite taking all due care required by the circumstances. *Art. 122
R. 136
GL E-VIII, 3*
- If you act through a representative, your application for re-establishment can be granted only if the representative has also exercised all due care demanded of the applicant under Article 122(1).
- 5.10.009** Re-establishment of rights is excluded in respect of those time limits for which further processing is available and in respect of the period for requesting re-establishment of rights. Re-establishment of rights is however available if you missed the time limit for requesting further processing. Further processing and re-establishment of rights are not available if you missed the time limit for paying extension and/or validation fees, as these are not EPC periods (see, however, point 4.3.017). *Art. 122(4)
R. 136(3)
GL E-VIII, 3.1.1*

- 5.10.010** Requests for re-establishment of rights must be filed within two months from the removal of the cause of non-compliance with the time limit, but at the latest within one year of expiry of the unobserved time limit. The omitted act must be completed within the same period. Requests for re-establishment of rights in respect of any of the periods specified in Article 87(1) and in Article 112a(4) must however be filed within two months of expiry of that period.
- R. 136
GL E-VIII, 3.1.3*
- The request must state the grounds on which it is based and must set out the facts on which it relies. It must set forth the precise cause of non-compliance with the time limit concerned (i.e. the fact or obstacle which prevented the required action from being taken within the time limit), specify how and when it was removed, and present the core facts.
- R. 136(2)
GL E-VIII, 3.1.4*
- The request is not deemed to have been filed until the fee for re-establishment of rights has been paid. Where several independent procedural acts have been omitted, each resulting in the application being deemed withdrawn, a fee for re-establishment is due for each omitted act.
- R. 136(1)
Art. 2(1), item 13,
RFees
GL E-VIII, 3.1.3*
- Where re-establishment of rights has to be requested in respect of the time limit(s) for requesting further processing, the number of unobserved time limits, each resulting in the application being deemed withdrawn and requiring a request for further processing, determines the number of requests for re-establishment and the corresponding number of fees for re-establishment.
- 5.11 How to register transfers, changes of name, licences and other rights**
- Transfer of rights**
- 5.11.001** A European patent application or patent may be assigned as a whole or in part for one or more of the designated contracting states.
- Art. 71-72, 74
R. 22, 85*
- 5.11.002** On request, the EPO will register the transfer of rights in respect of a pending European patent application in the European Patent Register, upon fulfilment of certain requirements. The transfer of a European patent can only be registered during the opposition period or as long as opposition proceedings are pending before the EPO.
- R. 143(1)(w)
GL E-XIV, 3, 4
R. 22
R. 85*
- 5.11.003** In order for a transfer of rights to be entered in the European Patent Register, the following requirements have to be met:
- (a) Filing of a request for registration of a transfer of rights in respect of one or more European patent applications or patents. For this purpose, you can use EPO Form 5050, which is available on the EPO website (www.epo.org).
- R. 22(1)*

(b) Payment of the corresponding administrative fee for each European patent application or patent concerned. The request is not deemed to have been filed until this fee has been paid. The amount of the fee is determined by the latest schedule of fees and expenses of the EPO. R. 22(2)

(c) Filing of documents providing evidence of the transfer. R. 22(3)

5.11.004 Any kind of written evidence suitable for proving the transfer is admissible. This includes formal documentary proof such as the instrument of transfer itself (the original or a copy thereof) or other official documents or extracts from them, provided that they immediately verify the transfer. The signatures of the parties to the contract must appear on the documents submitted as evidence. Where the request is filed electronically with the EPO (see point 4.3.001), the assignment document may, instead of handwritten signatures, bear qualified electronic signatures as defined in the Notice from the EPO dated 22 October 2021. Where the original document is not in one of the EPO's three official languages, the EPO may require a certified translation in one of those languages. A declaration signed by the parties to the contract verifying the transfer is also sufficient, e.g. EPO Form 5055, which is available on the EPO website (www.epo.org). Art. 72
GL E-XIV, 3
R. 5
OJ EPO 2021, A86

5.11.005 Where a document is signed on behalf of a legal person, only such persons as are entitled to sign by law, by the legal person's articles of association or equivalent or by a special mandate may do so. National law applies in that respect. GL E-XIV, 3

5.11.006 If the evidence is found to be unsatisfactory, the EPO will inform the party requesting the transfer accordingly and invite it to remedy the stated deficiencies. If the request complies with the requirements of Rule 22, the transfer will be registered with effect from the date on which the request, the supporting evidence or the fee was received at the EPO, whichever is the latest. In case of a minor deficiency, i.e. if all requirements were complied with but not to the full extent required (e.g. the request was signed but the name and/or position of the person signing were missing), the date of receipt of the original request for registration will be considered the effective date once the deficiency has been rectified.

Changes of name

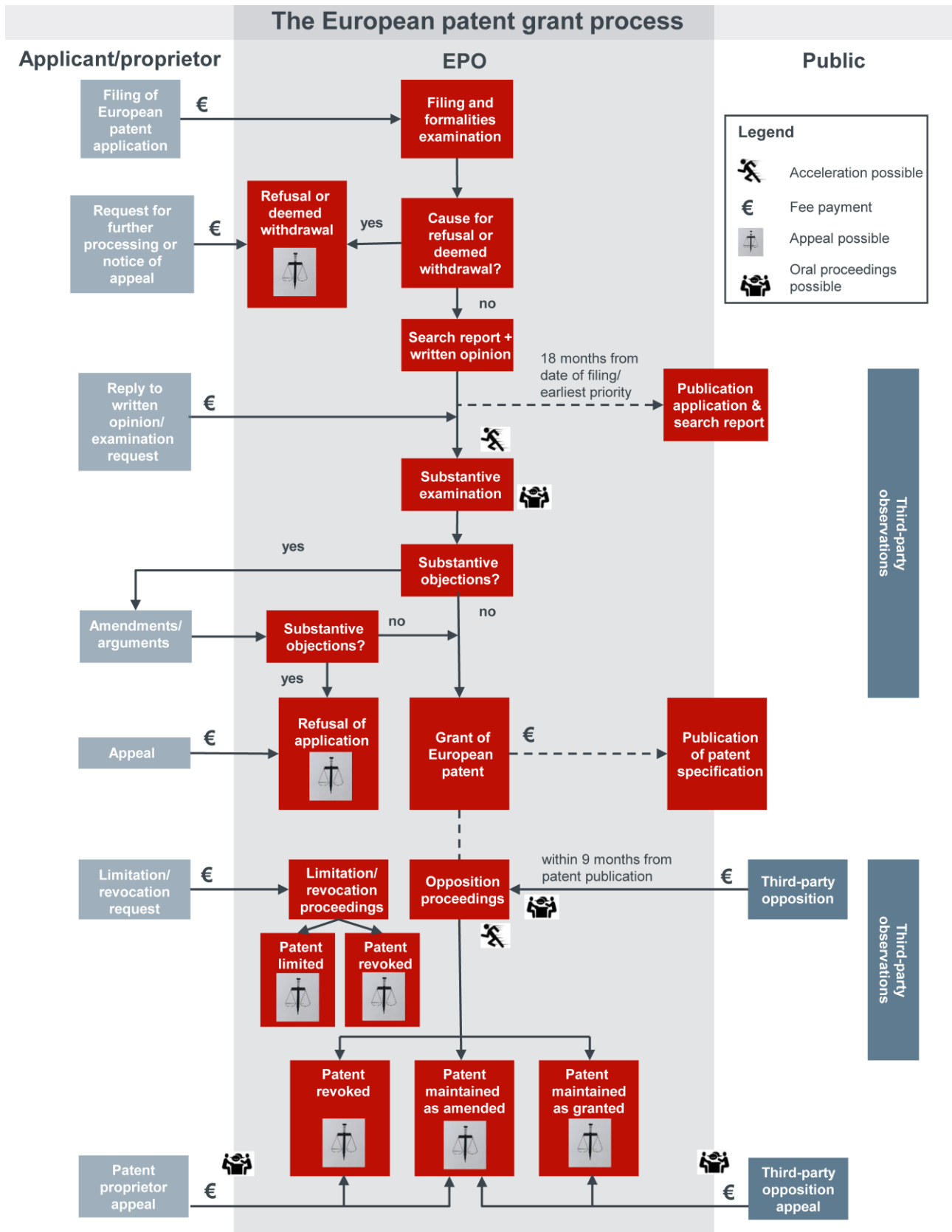
5.11.007 On request, a change of the applicant's name will be entered in the European Patent Register as long as the European patent application or the proceedings before the EPO are pending and so long as it does not involve any change to the applicant's legal identity. Relevant documentary evidence enabling the EPO to verify the change must be produced. Registration of a change of name is free of charge. R. 143(1)(f)
GL E-XIV, 5

Licences and other rights

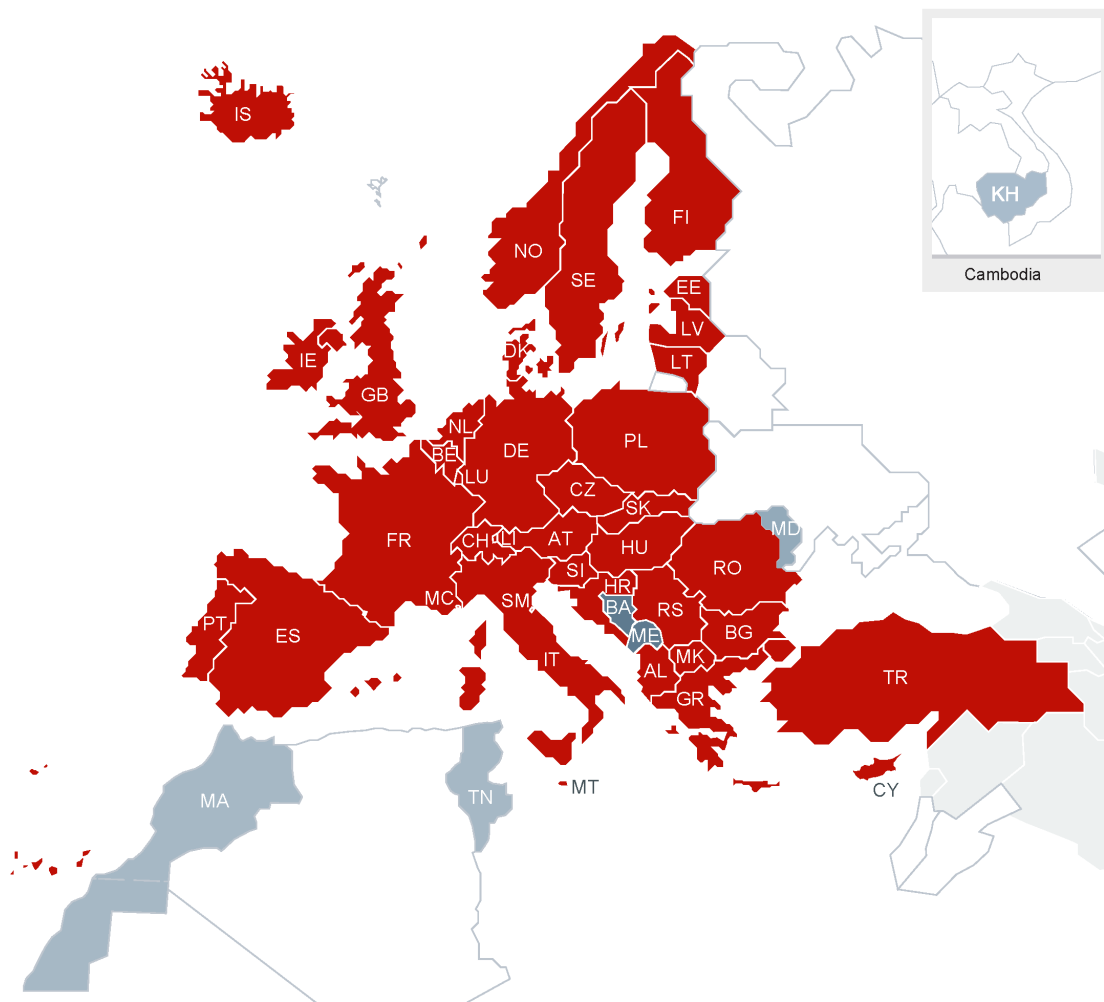
- 5.11.008** A European patent application may be licensed or give rise to rights in rem and may be the subject of legal means of execution in respect of the whole or part of the territories of the designated contracting states. *Art. 73-74
R. 23, 24*
- 5.11.009** Rule 22 applies to the registration of the grant or transfer of a licence, the establishment or transfer of a right in rem and any legal means of execution affecting such an application (see point 5.11.003). The above standard of proof applies to the registration of licences and rights in rem. For the registration of legal means of execution, however, the instrument itself (the original or a copy thereof) must be filed. *GL E-XIV, 6
R. 23(1)*
- 5.11.010** Licences, rights in rem and legal means of execution are registered only in respect of pending European patent applications. No such rights are entered in the European Patent Register after a European patent has been granted. *GL E-XIV, 6.1
Art. 64(1)*
- 5.11.011** A licence will be recorded as an exclusive licence if the applicant and the licensee so request. A licence will be recorded as a sub-licence where it is granted by a licensee whose licence is recorded in the European Patent Register. The terms and conditions of the licences are governed by the national law applicable in each case. *R. 24*
- 5.11.012** Upon request and subject to payment of the prescribed administrative fee, a registration of a licence or other right will be cancelled, subject to submission of documents providing evidence that the right has lapsed or of a declaration by the proprietor of the right that they consent to its cancellation. *R. 23(2)
GL E-XIV, 6.2*

Annex I

Overview of the procedure for the grant of a European patent



Schematic overview of the main procedural steps in the EP direct proceedings. For a complete guide to every stage of the grant procedure, please consult the Guidelines for Examination in the EPO.



Member states of the European Patent Organisation (38)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| AL Albania | IT Italy |
| AT Austria | LI Liechtenstein |
| BE Belgium | LT Lithuania |
| BG Bulgaria | LU Luxembourg |
| CH Switzerland | LV Latvia |
| CY Cyprus | MC Monaco |
| CZ Czech Republic | MK North Macedonia |
| DE Germany | MT Malta |
| DK Denmark | NL Netherlands |
| EE Estonia | NO Norway |
| ES Spain | PL Poland |
| FI Finland | PT Portugal |
| FR France | RO Romania |
| GB United Kingdom | RS Serbia |
| GR Greece | SE Sweden |
| HR Croatia | SI Slovenia |
| HU Hungary | SK Slovakia |
| IE Ireland | SM San Marino |
| IS Iceland | TR Turkey |

Extension states (2)

- BA Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ME Montenegro

Validation states (4)

- KH Cambodia
- MA Morocco
- MD Republic of Moldova
- TN Tunisia

Annex II

Examples of European patent applications

This section contains three sample European patent applications (description, claims, drawings and abstract), one for each of the following technical fields:

- chemistry
- mechanics
- computers

These examples comply with the provisions governing European patent applications. However, because of the need to include explanatory notes, the margins could not be left blank (see point 4.2.005). For the requirements governing disclosure of the invention see points 4.2.001 and 4.2.002. The content of these examples is not necessarily patentable.

Chemistry

Art. 78, 83
R. 42
*Description of
invention*

5 Method for chemical synthesis of oligonucleotides

*Title of invention
(designation in
request for grant
suffices)*

Field of the Invention

10 The present invention relates to a method for
chemical synthesis of oligonucleotides. In
particular, the present invention relates to a novel
method capable of chemically synthesizing a long-
chain DNA or RNA fragment easily and reliably from a
base moiety-unprotected nucleotide phosphoroamidite
as a unit, as well as to a novel compound used in
15 said method.

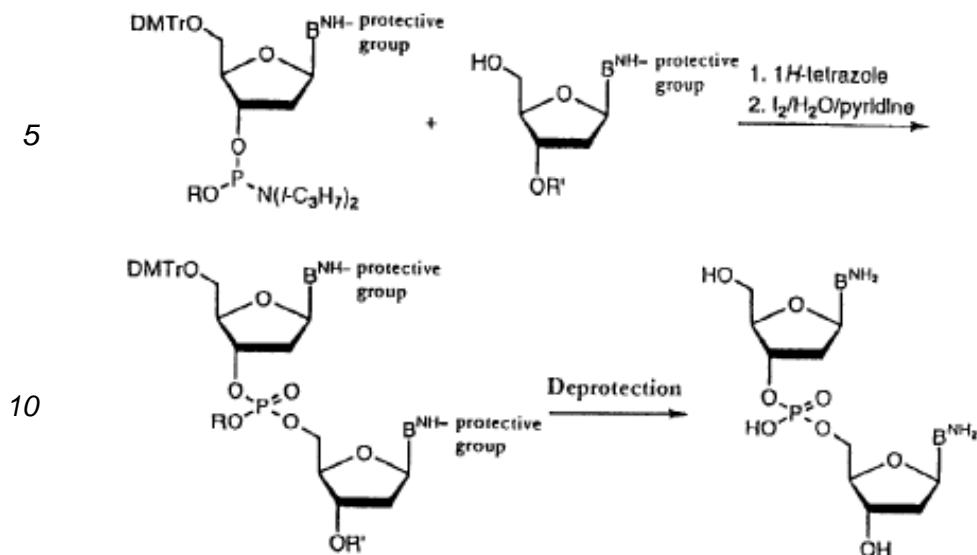
*R. 42(1)(a)
Technical field to
which invention
relates*

Background of the Invention

20 The phosphoroamidite method is used most widely at
present as a method of chemically synthesizing
oligonucleotides such as DNA fragments and RNA
fragments (Nucleic Acids Research, 17:7059-7071,
1989). In general, this phosphoroamidite method makes
25 use of a condensation reaction between a nucleoside
phosphoroamidite and a nucleoside as a key reaction
using tetrazole as an accelerator. Because this
reaction usually occurs competitively on both the
hydroxyl group in a sugar moiety and the amino group
in a nucleoside base moiety, the selective reaction
30 on only the hydroxyl group in a sugar moiety is
required to synthesize a desired nucleotide.
Accordingly, the side reaction on the amino group was
prevented in the prior art by protecting the amino

*R. 42(1)(b)
Relevant prior art*

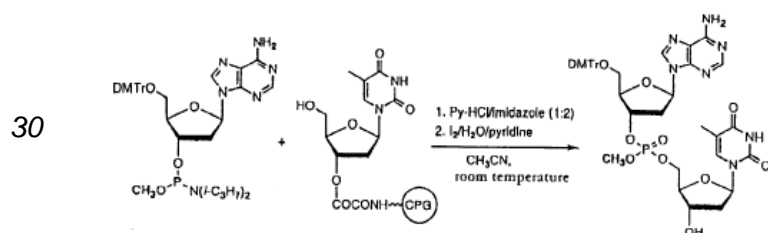
group, as illustrated in the following reaction scheme:



15 However, the protective group should be removed when synthesis was finished, and operationally complicated organic reactions and a large amount of expensive and harmful reagents are required to introduce and remove said protective group, which in view of practical usability, economical efficiency, environmental protection etc., is a great problem in carrying out this prior method. Accordingly, there is demand for a method of chemically synthesizing an oligonucleotide from an amino group-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite as a unit, and the method of

20 Letsinger et al., as shown in the following reaction scheme, is known as a pioneering method (Nucleic Acids Research, 20:1879-1882, 1992):

Assessment of prior art



However, the method of Letsinger et al. is not practical, not universal and is not used in practice since there are following disadvantages:

- 5 (1) condensation yield in each step is low
(about 97%: at least 99% yield is required for
synthesis of a 50-mer or more long-chain
oligonucleotide) and a commercial automatic DNA
synthesizer cannot be used for this method, so a
10 long-chain oligonucleotide consisting of 50 to
100 nucleotides generally required in chemical
synthesis of DNA etc. cannot be synthesized;
(2) highly reactive, specific nucleoside
phosphoroamidites only can be used, and thus
15 this method has a limited scope of application
and is not practical; and
(3) pyridine hydrochloride used as an
accelerator is an unstable compound with very
high moistureproofness, and thus its handling is
20 difficult.

Summary of the Invention

25 The present invention was made in view of the prior
art described above, and the object of the present
invention is to provide a practical method capable of
chemically synthesizing a 100-mer or more long-chain
oligonucleotide easily and reliably as well as a
novel compound used in said method.

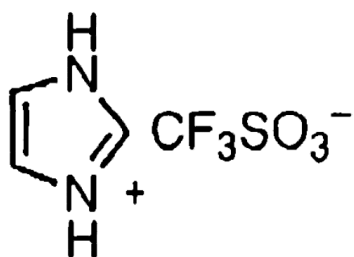
*R. 42
Technical problem*

30 To solve the problem, the present invention provides
a method for chemical synthesis of an oligonucleotide
by the phosphoroamidite method, which comprises
preparing a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside

*R. 42(1)(c)
Disclosure of
invention
R. 42(1)(c)
Advantageous
effects of invention*

phosphoroamidite from a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside by use of an imidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate represented by the following chemical formula, and coupling said base moiety-unprotected nucleotide phosphoroamidite in a predetermined order in the presence of said imidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate to chemically synthesize an oligonucleotide consisting of a specific nucleotide sequence.

10



15 In a preferable embodiment of the method of this invention, the coupled, base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite is treated with a benzimidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate solution.

20 That is, the present inventors found that a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite prepared by use of the compound, imidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate (referred to hereinafter as imidazolium triflate) in place of the conventionally used tetrazole as an accelerator for condensation
25 reaction between nucleoside phosphoroamidite and nucleotide is free of the side reaction on the amino group in the nucleotide base moiety thereof, and as a result, they found that complicated procedures such
30 as, for example, introduction and removal of a protective group are not required, and also that its synthesis can be conducted by a commercial synthesizer, thereby completing this invention. Further, the present inventors found that the side

Advantageous effects of invention

reaction on the amino group in the base moiety can be completely inhibited by treating the above-described coupled, base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite with a methanol solution of a benzimidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate (referred to hereinafter as benzimidazolium triflate) whereby a more perfect oligonucleotide is synthesized, and the present invention was thereby completed.

10 Brief Description of the Drawings

*R. 42(1)(d)
Brief description of
drawings*

Fig. 1 is a schematic drawing of each reaction step in the method of this invention.

15 Fig. 2 is a schematic drawing of each reaction step in the method of the present invention where ammonia treatment was performed.

Fig. 3 is a HPLC profile of DNA fragments synthesized in the method of this invention.

20 Detailed Description of the Invention

Hereinafter, the best mode for carrying out the present invention is described in detail.

*R. 42(1)(e)
Description of at
least one way of
carrying out the
invention with
reference to
drawings*

25 The imidazolium triflate of the present invention can be prepared by mixing imidazole with trifluoromethanesulfonic acid in 1 : 1 equivalents in dichloromethane, as illustrated below in its preparation example in Example 1.

The imidazolium triflate thus obtained does not absorb moisture as also shown in Example 1 and is

extremely stable under usual conditions for use, so it can be easily handled.

In the chemical synthetic method of this invention, a
5 base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite
is prepared from a base moiety-unprotected nucleotide
by use of the imidazolium triflate as described
above, and this base moiety-unprotected nucleoside
phosphoroamidite is used as a unit and each
10 nucleoside phosphoroamidite is coupled in a
predetermined order thereby chemically synthesizing
an oligonucleotide consisting of a specific
nucleotide sequence.

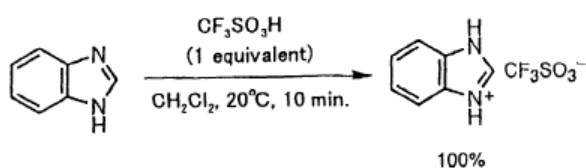
The base moiety-unprotected nucleoside
15 phosphoroamidite can be prepared by reacting the base
moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite with
cyanoethyl-bis-amidite in the presence of the
imidazolium triflate as a catalyst as illustrated
e.g. in Example 2 below. In this case, the reaction
20 occurs selectively on the hydroxide group in the
sugar moiety of the nucleoside, so four kinds of N-
unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidites used in DNA
synthesis, that is, deoxyadenosine, deoxythymidine,
deoxyguanosine and thymidine phosphoroamidites can be
25 obtained quantitatively.

The four kinds of N-unprotected nucleoside
phosphoroamidites thus obtained are used as units to
synthesize an oligonucleotide consisting of a desired
30 nucleotide sequence by the solid-phase synthetic
method etc. known in the art. Further, this synthetic
reaction can also be conducted in a commercial DNA
synthesizer by a method according to its protocol.

In the method of this invention, each coupled N-
unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite is preferably
subjected after each coupling to treatment with a
solution (e.g. an ethanol solution) of

5 benzimidazolium triflate. By this treatment, the side
reaction on the amino group in the base moiety is
completely inhibited, and a more perfect
oligonucleotide is thus synthesized.

10 The benzimidazolium triflate can be synthesized in
the following reaction scheme:



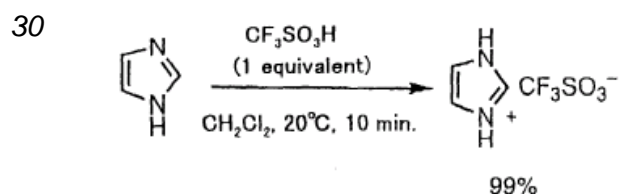
Examples

Hereinafter, the present invention is described in
more detail and specifically with reference to the

20 Examples, which however are not intended to limit the
present invention.

Example 1: Preparation of imidazolium triflate

25 Imidazole and trifluoromethanesulfonic acid were
mixed in 1 : 1 equivalents in dichloromethane and
reacted at 25° C for 10 minutes as shown in the
reaction scheme below, whereby the imidazolium
triflate of this invention was prepared.



As a result of analysis in conventional methods, the resulting imidazolium triflate had the characteristics shown in Table 1.

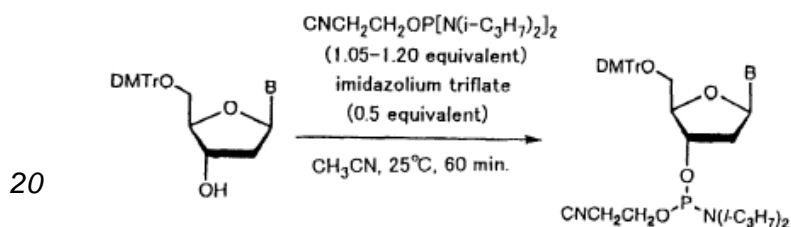
Table 1

5

Colorless crystal
Melting point: 197-198 °C
Elementary analysis
Theoretical: C ₄ H ₅ F ₃ N ₂ O ₃ S: C, 22.02; H, 2.31; N, 12.84
Found: C, 21.96; H, 2.30; N, 12.74
No moistureproofness

10 Example 2: Preparation of base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite

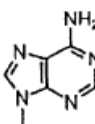
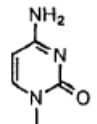
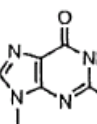
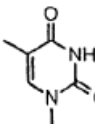
The imidazolium triflate obtained in Example 1 was used as the catalyst so that a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside was reacted with cyanoethyl-
15 bis-amidite, as shown in the following reaction scheme:



By this reaction, the four kinds of N-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidites shown in Table 2, that is, deoxyadenosine, deoxythymidine, deoxyguanosine
25 and thymidine phosphoroamidites were prepared respectively. As also shown in Table 2, the respective nucleoside phosphoroamidites were obtained almost quantitatively.

30

Table 2

B:				
yield, %:	96	98	97	99
purity, %:	>96	>98	>96	>99
³¹ P NMR, ppm:	149.0, 149.1	149.2, 149.3	149.1, 149.2	149.0, 149.1

Example 3: Synthesis of DNA fragment

10 From the 4 kinds of N-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidites as units obtained in Example 2, a 60-mer DNA fragment consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 was synthesized by the solid-phase synthetic method using a commercial DNA
 15 synthesizer. The reaction cycle was as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Step	Operation	reagents(s)	time, min
1	washing	CH ₃ CN	0.50
2	ditritylation	3 % CCl ₃ COOH/CH ₂ CH ₂	1.0×3
3	washing	CH ₃ CN	2.0
4	coupling	0.1 M amidite/CH ₃ CN + 0.1 M IMT/CH ₃ CN	0.25
5	wait		1.0
6	N-P cleavage	0.3 M BIT/CH ₃ CN	0.50
7	wait		2.0
8	washing	CH ₃ CN	0.50
9	oxidation	1 M t-C ₄ H ₉ OOH/CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.25
10	wait		1.0

BIT = benzimidazolium triflate; IMT = imidazolium triflate

20 In this synthetic reaction, each step (condensation reaction) in the chain-elongation shown in Table 1 proceeded in almost 100% yield, and a phosphate moiety-protected 60-mer oligonucleotide was obtained
 30 usually in 100% yield. This yield was extremely high in considering that the yield of a 60-mer oligonucleotide by generally conducted conventional methods is about 20 to 40%.

Further, as shown in Fig. 2, deprotection and elimination by treatment with an ammonia solution (25° C, 60 minutes) were carried out whereby the unprotected 60-mer DNA was obtained in quantitative yield.

Analysis of the resulting crude unprotected 60-mer DNA by high performance liquid chromatography under the conditions shown in Table 4 indicated that its purity was 95% or more as shown in Fig. 3.

Table 4

Analytical conditions	
Column	DEAE-2.5 μ (250 mm)
Flow rate	0.5 mL/min
Temperature	25 °C
Eluent: A	20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 9.0)
B	A + 1 M NaCl
Gradient	A : B (100 : 0) \rightarrow (50 : 50) linear gradient

As described above in detail, the method of synthesizing oligonucleotides by use of this imidazolium triflate have the following advantages:

(1) condensation yield in each step is as high as 100%, and the present method can also be applied to an automatic synthesizer by merely changing a program for synthesis and reagents used, so synthesis of a long-chain oligonucleotide consisting of 50 to 100 nucleotides generally required in chemical synthesis of DNA etc. is feasible in 1/10 or less costs as compared with those of conventional methods;

(2) because unspecified nucleotide phosphoroamidites can be used, the present method has a broad scope of application and is practical; and

(3) the imidazolium triflate of this invention used as an accelerator is a stable compound

which does not absorb moisture, so its handling under usual conditions for use is very easy.

SEQUENCE LISTING

5 **SEQ ID NO: 1**

LENGTH: 60 bases

TYPE: nucleic acid

STRANDEDNESS: single

TOPOLOGY: linear

10 **MOLECULAR TYPE: synthetic DNA**

SEQUENCE:

TATGGGCCTT TTGATAGGAT GCTCACCGAG CAAAACCAAG AACAACCAGG AGATTTTATT 60

15

20

25

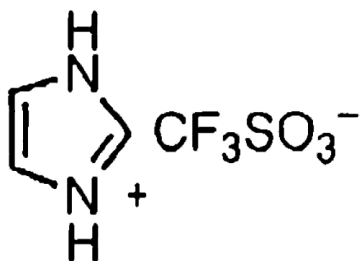
30

Claims

1. A method for chemical synthesis of an oligonucleotide by the phosphoroamidite method, which
5 comprises preparing a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite from a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside by use of an imidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate represented by the following chemical formula, and coupling said base
10 moiety-unprotected nucleotide phosphoroamidite in a predetermined order in the presence of imidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate to chemically synthesize an oligonucleotide consisting of a specific nucleotide sequence.

R. 43(1)(a)
Independent claim

15



20 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the coupled base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite is treated with a benzimidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate solution.

R. 43(3), (4)
Dependent claim

25

30

Abstract

Art. 85

Method for chemical synthesis of oligonucleotides

R. 47(1)
Title of invention

5

The present invention provides a practical method capable of chemically synthesizing a 100-mer or more long-chain oligonucleotide easily and reliably and a novel compound used in said method. The present

R. 47(2), (3), (5)
Content of abstract

10

invention relates to a method for chemical synthesis of an oligonucleotide by the phosphoroamidite method, which comprises preparing a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside phosphoroamidite from a base moiety-unprotected nucleoside by use of an imidazole

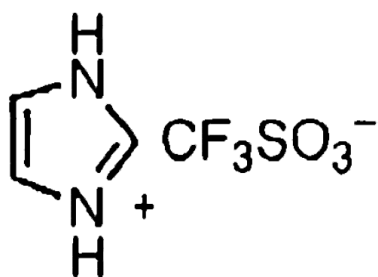
15

trifluoromethanesulfonate represented by the following chemical formula, and coupling said base moiety-unprotected nucleotide phosphoroamidite in a predetermined order to chemically synthesize an oligonucleotide consisting of a specific nucleotide

20

sequence, as well as to an imidazole trifluoromethanesulfonate represented by the chemical formula.

25



30

Mechanics

Art. 78, 83
R. 42
*Description of
invention*

Pedalling device for bicycle

*Title of invention
(designation in
request for grant
suffices)*

The present invention relates to a pedalling device and, more particularly, to a pedalling device for a bicycle.

*R. 42(1)(a)
Technical field to
which invention
relates*

A conventional pedalling device for a bicycle in accordance with the prior art shown in Fig. 10 comprises a crank 60, two pedals 61, a chainwheel 62, and a chain 64. Thus, when the crank 60 is driven by the pedals 61, the chainwheel 62 is rotated by the crank 60 to drive the chain 64 so as to move the bicycle. However, the force arm defined between the center of the chainwheel 62 and each of the pedals 61 has a smaller length, so that the rider has to exert a larger stepping force on the pedals 61 so as to move the bicycle, thereby greatly wasting the rider's energy and manual work.

*R. 42(1)(b)
Indication of
background art*

The objective of the present invention is to provide a pedalling device, and more particular a pedalling device for a bicycle, wherein the rider can step the pedals in an energy-saving manner.

*R. 42(1)(c)
Technical problem to
be solved*

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a pedalling device, comprising a support seat, a rotation shaft rotatably mounted on a first end of the support seat, a chainwheel secured on and rotated by the rotation shaft, two opposite oneway

*R. 42(1)(c)
Disclosure of
invention*

ratchet wheels each mounted on the rotation shaft to rotate the rotation shaft, two opposite drive members each having a first end formed with a ratchet socket mounted on a respective ratchet wheel to rotate the respective ratchet wheel in a oneway manner and a second end formed with on elongate slide track, a crank pivotally mounted on a second end of the support seat, two opposite drive shafts secured on two opposite sides of the crank to rotate the crank, two pedals each rotatably mounted on a respective drive shaft, and two opposite slide seats each pivotally mounted on a respective drive shaft to move therewith and each slidably mounted in the slide track of a respective drive member.

Advantageously, the drive members have a longer force arm between the crank and the chainwheel so as to increase the force moment of the pedalling device, thereby saving the rider's energy and manual work.

Further benefits and advantages of the present invention will become apparent after a careful reading of the detailed description with appropriate reference to the accompanying drawings.

In the drawings:

R. 42(1)(d)
Brief description of
drawings

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a pedalling device in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is an exploded perspective view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the pedalling device for a bicycle as shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is a plan cross-sectional view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 5 is a plan cross-sectional view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 6 is a plan cross-sectional operational view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 7 is a locally enlarged view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 6.

Fig. 8 is a schematic operational view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 6.

Fig. 9 is a schematic operational view of the pedalling device as shown in Fig. 7.

Fig. 10 is a perspective view of a conventional pedalling device for a bicycle in accordance with the prior art.

Referring to the drawings and initially to Figs. 1-7, a pedalling device 20 for a bicycle 10 in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises a support seat 13, a rotation shaft 111 rotatably mounted on a first end of the support seat 13, a chainwheel 11 secured on and rotated by the rotation shaft 111, two opposite oneway ratchet wheels 40 each mounted on the rotation shaft 111 to rotate the rotation shaft 111, two opposite drive members 30 each having a first end formed with a ratchet socket 31 mounted on a respective ratchet wheel 40 to rotate the respective ratchet wheel 40 in a oneway manner and a second end formed with an elongate slide track 35, a crank 12 pivotally mounted on a second end of the support seat 13, two opposite drive shafts 141 secured on two opposite sides of the crank 12 to rotate the crank 12, two pedals 14 each rotatably mounted on a

*R. 42(1)(e)
Description of at
least one way of
carrying out the
invention*

respective drive shaft 141, and two opposite slide seats 50 each pivotally mounted on a respective drive shaft 141 to move therewith and each slidably mounted in the slide track 35 of a respective drive member 30.

The rotation shaft 111 has two opposite ends each formed with 5 hexagonal fixing stud 112 and a threaded rod 113.

Each of the ratchet wheels 40 includes an inner part 45 formed with a hexagonal fixing hole 42 secured on the fixing stud 112 of the rotation shaft 111 to rotate the rotation shaft 111, an outer part 43 rotatably mounted on the inner part 45 and having an outer wall formed with a driven gear 41 and an inner wall formed with a plurality of locking grooves 430, and a plurality of oneway detents 44 each having a first end pivotally mounted on the inner part 45 and a second end engaged in the respective locking groove 430 of the outer part 43.

The ratchet socket 31 of each of the drive members 30 has an inner wall formed with a drive gear 311 meshing with the driven gear 41 of the respective ratchet wheel 40 to rotate the respective ratchet wheel 40. The ratchet socket 31 of each of the drive members 30 is combined with the respective ratchet wheel 40 by two opposite seal rings 32 which are located at two opposite sides of the ratchet socket 31 of each of the drive members 30 and are fastened by a plurality of rivets 33.

The pedalling device 20 further comprises two washers 37 each mounted on a respective threaded rod 113 of the rotation shaft 111 and each rested on a respective ratchet wheel 40, and two nuts 34 each screwed onto a respective threaded rod 113 of the rotation shaft 111 and each rested on a respective washer 37.

The second end of the support seat 13 is formed with a pivot hole 131. The crank 12 is pivotally mounted in the pivot hole 131 of the support seat 13. Each of the two sides of the crank 12 has a distal end formed with a screw bore 121. Each of the two drive shafts 141 has a threaded distal end screwed into the respective screw bore 121 of the crank 12 to secure each of the drive shafts 141 to the crank 12.

Each of the two slide seats 50 has a first end provided with two first bearings 51 slidably mounted in the slide track 35 of the respective drive member 30 and a second end provided with a sleeve 52 for mounting two second bearings 53 which are pivotally mounted on the respective drive shaft 141. The first bearings 51 of each of the two slide seats 50 are limited in the slide track 35 of the respective drive member 30 by an end cap 36 which is mounted on an opened end of the slide track 35 to prevent the first bearings 51 of each of the two slide seats 50 from being detached from the slide track 35 of the respective drive member 30.

In operation, referring to Figs. 1-9, when the pedals 14 are stepped by the rider, the crank 12 is rotated to move the two slide seats 50 which are moved upward

and downward to drive the drive members 30 to pivot upward and downward as shown in Fig. 6, so that the ratchet socket 31 of each of the drive members 30 is rotated to rotate the respective ratchet wheel 40.

As shown in Fig. 7, when one of the drive members 30 is pivoted downward, the respective ratchet wheel 40 is rotated clockwise to rotate the outer part 43. At this time, the oneway detents 44 of each of the ratchet wheels 40 are engaged in the locking grooves 430 of the outer part 43, so that the inner part 45 is driven and rotated by the outer part 43 to rotate the fixing hole 42 which rotates the fixing stud 112 of the rotation shaft 111 so as to rotate the rotation shaft 111. Thus, when the ratchet wheel 40 is rotated clockwise, the rotation shaft 111 is rotated to rotate the chainwheel 11 so as to move the bicycle.

On the contrary, when one of the drive members 30 is pivoted upward as shown in Fig. 8, the respective ratchet wheel 40 is rotated counterclockwise to rotate the outer part 43 as shown in Fig. 9. At this time, the oneway detents 44 of each of the ratchet wheels 40 are disengaged from the locking grooves 430 of the outer part 43, so that the inner part 45 is not rotated by the outer part 43, and the outer part 43 performs an idle rotation. Thus, when the ratchet wheel 40 is rotated counterclockwise, the rotation shaft 111 stops rotating, so that the chainwheel 11 stops rotating.

In such a manner, when one of the drive members 30 is pivoted upward as shown in Fig. 8, the other one of the drive members 30 is pivoted downward as shown in

Fig. 6, so that the chainwheel 11 is rotated successively so as to move the bicycle successively.

Accordingly, the drive members 30 have a longer force arm between the crank 12 and the chainwheel 11 so as to increase the force moment of the pedalling device 20 so that the rider can step the pedals 14 in an energy-saving manner, thereby saving the rider's energy and manual work.

Although the invention has been explained in relation to its preferred embodiment(s) as mentioned above, it is to be understood that many other possible modifications and variations can be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. It is, therefore, contemplated that the appended claim or claims will cover such modifications and variations that fall within the true scope of the invention.

1. A pedalling device, comprising:
 - a support seat (13);
 - a rotation shaft (111) rotatably mounted on a first end of the support seat (13);
 - a chainwheel (11) secured on and rotated by the rotation shaft (111);
 - two opposite oneway ratchet wheels (40) each mounted on the rotation shaft (111) to rotate the rotation shaft (111);
 - two opposite drive members (30) each having a first end formed with a ratchet socket (31) mounted on a respective ratchet wheel (40) to rotate the respective ratchet wheel (40) in a oneway manner and a second end formed with an elongate slide track (35);
 - a crank (12) pivotally mounted on a second end of the support seat (13);
 - two opposite drive shafts (141) secured on two opposite sides of the crank (12) to rotate the crank (12);
 - two pedals (14) each rotatably mounted on a respective driveshaft (141);
 - two opposite slide seats (50) each pivotally mounted on a respective drive shaft (141) to move therewith and each slidably mounted in the slide track (35) of a respective drive member (30).

2. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

*R. 43 (3), (4)
Dependent claim*

the rotation shaft (111) has two opposite ends each formed with hexagonal fixing stud (112) and a threaded rod (113);

each of the ratchet wheels (40) includes an inner part (45) formed with a hexagonal fixing hole (42) secured on the fixing stud (112) of the rotation shaft (111) to rotate the rotation shaft (111), and an outer part (43) rotatably mounted on the inner part (45) and having an outer wall formed with a driven gear (41);

the ratchet socket (31) of each of the drive members (30) has an inner wall formed with a drive gear (311) meshing with the driven gear (41) of the respective ratchet wheel (40) to rotate the respective ratchet wheel (40).

3. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 2, further comprising two washers (37) each mounted on a respective threaded rod (113) of the rotation shaft (111) and each rested on a respective ratchet wheel (40), and two nuts (34) each screwed onto a respective threaded rod (113) of the rotation shaft (111) and each rested on a respective washer (37).

4. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 2, wherein the ratchet socket (31) of each of the drive members (30) is combined with the respective ratchet wheel (40) by two opposite seal rings (32).

5. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 4, wherein the seal rings (32) are located at two opposite sides of the ratchet socket (31) of each of

the drive members (30) and are fastened by a plurality of rivets (33).

6. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the each of the two slide seats (50) has a first end provided with two first bearings (51) slidably mounted in the slide track (35) of the respective drive member (30) and a second end provided with a sleeve (52) for mounting two second bearings (53) which are pivotally mounted on the respective drive shaft (141).

7. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 6, wherein the first bearings (51) of each of the two slide seats (50) are limited in the slide track (35) of the respective drive member (30) by an end cap (36) which is mounted on an opened end of the slide track (35) to prevent the first bearings (51) of each of the two slide seats (50) from being detached from the slide track (35) of the respective drive member (30).

8. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the second end of the support seat (13) is formed with a pivot hole (131), and the crank (12) is pivotally mounted in the pivot hole (131) of the support seat (13).

9. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 1, wherein each of the two sides of the crank (12) has a distal end formed with a screw bore (121), and each of the two drive shafts (141) has a threaded distal end screwed into the respective screw bore (121) of

the crank (12) to secure each of the drive shafts (141) to the crank (12).

10. The pedalling device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the outer part of each of the ratchet wheels (40) has an inner wall formed with a plurality of locking grooves (430), and each of the ratchet wheels (40) further includes a plurality of oneway detents (44) each having a first end pivotally mounted on the inner part and a second end engaged in the respective locking groove (430) of the outer part (43).

Abstract

Art. 85

Peddalling device for bicycle

R. 47(1)
Title of invention

A pedalling device for a bicycle includes a support seat (13), a rotation shaft (111), a chainwheel (11), two opposite oneway ratchet wheels (40), two opposite drive members (30), a crank (12), two opposite drive shafts (141), two pedals (14), and two opposite slide seats (50). Thus, the drive members have a longer force arm between the crank and the chainwheel so as to increase the force moment of the pedalling device so that the rider can step the pedals in an energy-saving manner, thereby saving the rider's energy and manual work.

R. 47(2), (3), (5)
Content of abstract

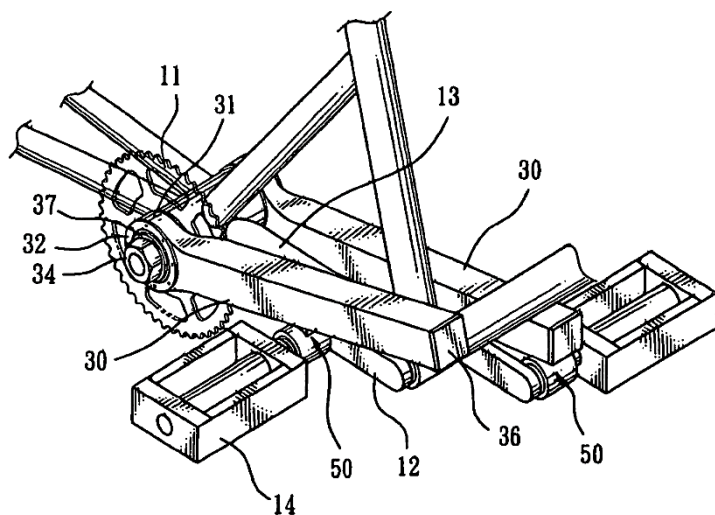


FIG. 1

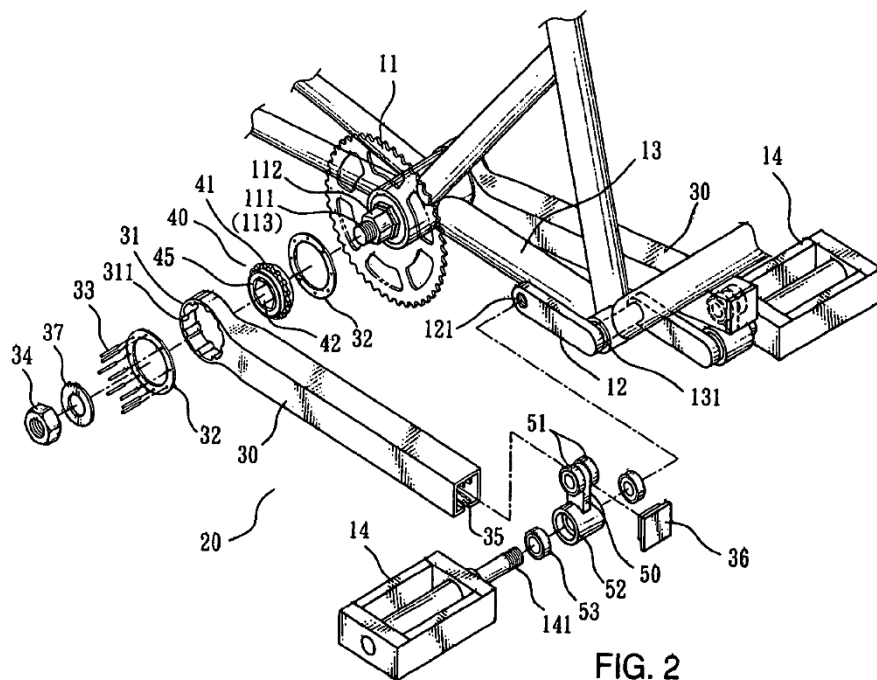


FIG. 2

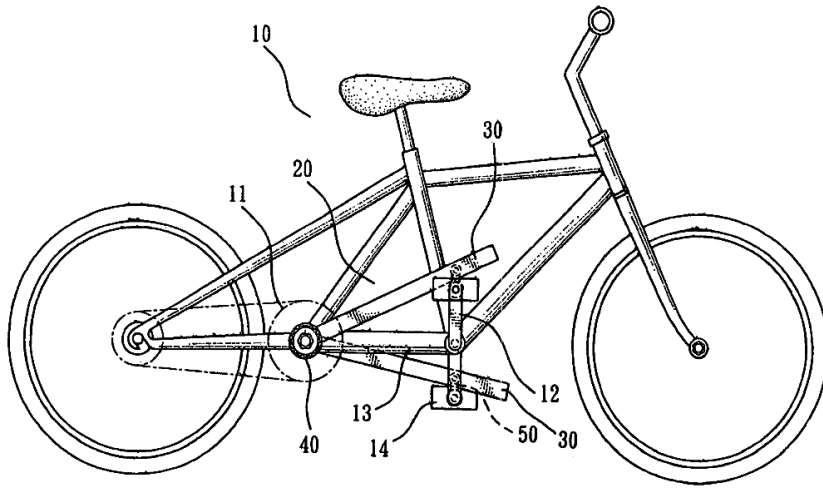


FIG. 3

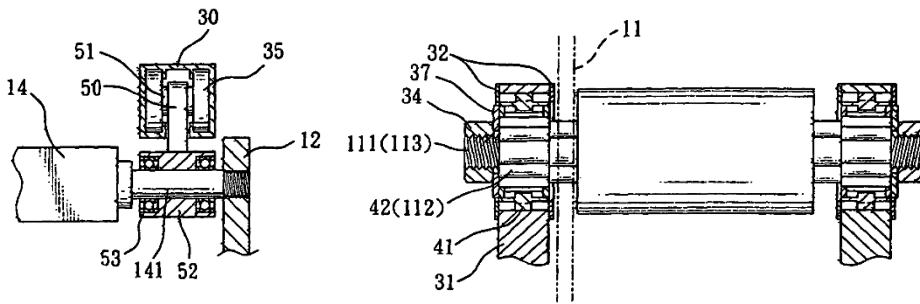


FIG. 4

FIG. 5

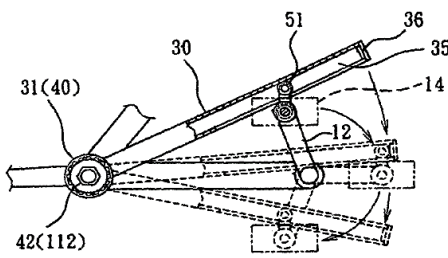


FIG. 6

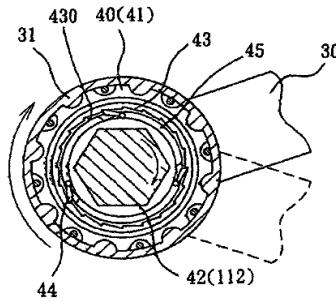


FIG. 7

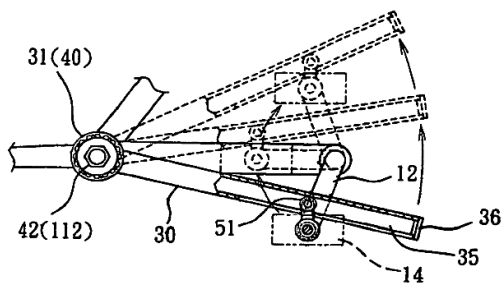


FIG. 8

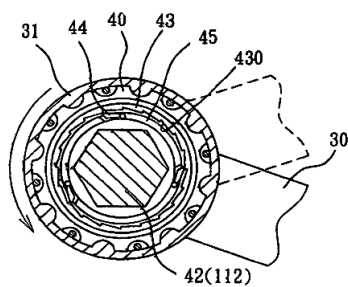


FIG. 9

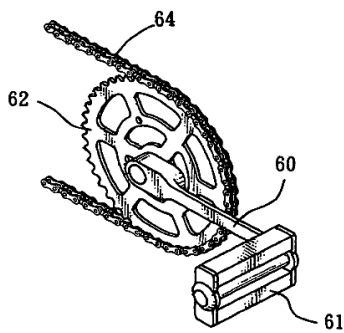


FIG. 10
PRIOR ART

Computers

Art. 78, 83
R. 42
Description of
invention

Directional touch remote

Title of invention
(designation in
request for grant
suffices)

The present technology is related to remote controls and specifically touch device remote controls.

R. 42(1)(a)
Technical field to
which invention
relates

INTRODUCTION

As devices become more complex so do the remotes that control them. The earliest remotes were effective for their simplicity, but as technology progressed they lacked in the way of functionality. Today it is common to find remotes with upwards of fifty buttons, each often having multiple functions. Such remotes often require close study to learn the function of a button and frequently have buttons so small that accidental commands are too often given.

Buttons are convenient because they provide tactical feedback of giving a command and in some cases a select few buttons can even have a different feel or shape to facilitate the ability to operate the remote with minimum visual confirmation that the correct button is being selected. Even with shapes or textures, too often a user's focus is taken off of the remotely controlled device and focused on the remote - an undesirable consequence of a complicated interface.

Touch screen remotes attempt to solve some of these problems but can create others. While touch screen

R. 42(1)(b)
Indication of
background art

remotes are able to display less options on the screen at one time by having the user navigate menus to find the appropriate command, touch screens always have required the user to view the remote. Since touch screens do not have tactile feedback that allows the user to confirm which selection is made, the user must visually confirm the selection, which is undesirable.

Other touch screen remotes are application specific and require two-way communication wherein the remotely controlled device instructs the remote to display a certain graphical user interface. The user must view the remote to make selections because the interface on the controller changes according to the context of the display of the remotely controlled device. Further these remotes have the drawback that they can sometimes operate too slowly for a remote application owing to the back and forth communication between the remote and the remotely controlled device.

Still other touch screen remotes control a cursor displayed on the remotely controlled device. While these remotes can be operated by viewing the remotely controlled device instead of the remote itself, they can require too much user effort to enter a command. The user must undergo the cumbersome steps of navigating a cursor to a menu and selecting the command. This type of interaction is removed from the simple click and control benefits of earlier remotes.

Accordingly, a simple remote that is capable of operation without viewing a display of the remote,

*R. 42(1)(c)
Technical problem to
be solved*

and which operates quickly and efficiently while minimizing accidental command inputs is desirable.

US2008/0284726 describes an apparatus for sensory based media control including a media device having a controller element to receive from a media controller a first instruction to select an object in accordance with a physical handling of the media controller, and a second instruction to control the identified object or perform a search on the object in accordance with touchless finger movements.

US2008/0059578 relates to a gesture-enabled electronic communication system that informs users of gestures made by other users participating in a communication session. The system captures a three-dimensional movement of a first user from among the multiple users participating in an electronic communication session, wherein the threedimensional movement is determined using at least one image capture device aimed at the first user. The system identifies a three-dimensional object properties stream using the captured movement and then identifies a particular electronic communication gesture representing the three-dimensional object properties stream by comparing the identified three-dimensional object properties stream with multiple electronic communication gesture definitions.

US2007/0152976 discloses a method for rejecting an unintentional palm touch. In at least some embodiments, a touch is detected by a touch-sensitive surface associated with a display. Characteristics of the touch may be used to generate a set of parameters

related to the touch. In an embodiment, firmware is used to determine a reliability value for the touch. The reliability value and the location of the touch is provided to a software module. The software module uses the reliability value and an activity context to determine a confidence level of the touch. In an embodiment, the confidence level may include an evaluation of changes in the reliability value over time. If the confidence level for the touch is too low, it may be rejected.

US2004/0218104 relates to a user interface for multimedia centers which utilizes handheld inertial-sensing user input devices to select channels and quickly navigate the dense menus of options. Extensive use of the high resolution and bandwidth of such user input devices is combined with strategies to avoid unintentional inputs and with dense and intuitive interactive graphical displays.

SUMMARY

The invention is defined by the appended independent claims. Additional features and advantages of the concepts disclosed herein are set forth in the description which follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by practice of the described technologies. The features and advantages of the concepts may be realized and obtained by means of the instruments and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. These and other features of the described technologies will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be

*R. 42(1)(c)
Disclosure of
invention*

learned by the practice of the disclosed concepts as set forth herein.

The present disclosure describes methods and arrangements for remotely controlling a device with generic touch screen data by displaying a Graphical User Interface (GUI) comprising a plurality of contexts on a display device for controlling at least some functions of a device. Data characterizing a touch event can be received and interpreted or translated into a list of available commands. These commands can effect an action by the device in response to the touch data as interpreted in view of the context of the GUI.

The present disclosure further includes a computer-readable medium for storing program code effective to cause a device to perform at least the steps of the method discussed above, and throughout this description.

In some instances the same touch event can affect the same action in multiple GUI contexts, but in other instances, the same touch can affect different actions in different interface contexts.

Any portable electronic device is useful to act as the remote including a cell phone, smart phone, PDA or portable media player.

Likewise any number of devices can be controlled by the remote include a multimedia management program and a player or a digital video recorder or a

television-tuning device such as a television, or cable box.

Also disclosed is a multiple function device running an application causing the multiple function device to act a remote control. A touch screen device displaying a graphical user interface comprising an unstructured touch sensitive area is provided. The touch screen can be configured to receive a variety of inputs in the form of touch gestures in the unstructured touch sensitive area and to interpret the gestures into electronic signals, the unstructured touch sensitive area comprising at least a region having no individually selectable features. The device also comprises a processor for receiving the electronic signals from the touch sensitive area and translating the signals into at least position, movement, and durational parameters. Additionally, a communications interface is provided for receiving the parameters from the processor and sending the parameters to a device to be remotely controlled for interpretation. The communications interface can use at least a protocol that can be used in a substantially unidirectional fashion, to send the parameters to the remotely controlled device, whereby no input confirmation is received on the remote control device.

In some embodiments a method of remotely controlling an application, selected from a plurality of possible applications on the same or a plurality of different remote devices is disclosed. Data representative of touch inputs can be received into an unstructured portion of a touch screen interface. The data can be

received by a remotely controlled device or device hosting a remotely controlled application and interpreted into a set of available events recognizable by the remotely controlled device or application. Based on a set of available events a GUI associated with a context can be updated. The update can be in response to a selection of an event from the set of available events recognizable by the remotely controlled application that is selected based on the context associated with the displayed GUI.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order to best describe the manner in which the above-described embodiments are implemented, as well as define other advantages and features of the disclosure, a more particular description is provided below and is illustrated in the appended drawings. Understanding that these drawings depict only exemplary embodiments of the invention and are not therefore to be considered to be limiting in scope, the examples will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

R. 42(1)(d)
Brief description of drawings

FIG. 1 illustrates an example computing device;

FIG. 2 illustrates an example interface embodiment for a remote control device;

FIG. 3 illustrates an example functional diagram system embodiment;

FIG. 4 illustrates an example flow diagram of a focused UI controller function embodiment;

FIG. 5 illustrates an example flow diagram of a focused UI controller function embodiment;

FIG. 6 illustrates an example flow diagram of a focused UI controller function embodiment;
FIG. 7 illustrates an example menu graphical user interface embodiment;
FIG. 8 illustrates an example media playback graphical user interface embodiment;
FIG. 9 illustrates an example method embodiment; and
FIG. 10 illustrates an example interface embodiment for a remote control device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Various embodiments of the disclosed methods and arrangements are discussed in detail below. While specific implementations are discussed, it should be understood that this is done for illustration purposes only. A person skilled in the relevant art will recognize that other components, configurations, and steps may be used without parting from the spirit and scope of the disclosure.

*R. 42(1)(e)
Description of at
least one way of
carrying out the
invention*

With reference to FIG. 1, a general-purpose computing device 100 which can be portable or stationary is shown.

The general-purpose computing device can be suitable for carrying out the described embodiments or in some embodiments two or more general-purpose computing devices can communicate with each other to carry out the embodiments described below. The general purpose computing device 100 is shown including a processing unit (CPU) 120 and a system bus 110 that couples various system components including the system memory such as read only memory (ROM) 140 and random access memory (RAM) 150 to the processing unit 120. Other

system memory 130 may be available for use as well. It can be appreciated that the system may operate on a computing device with more than one CPU 120 or on a group or cluster of computing devices networked together to provide greater processing capability. The system bus 110 may be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures. A basic input/output (BIOS) stored in ROM 140 or the like, may provide the basic routine that helps to transfer information between elements within the computing device 100, such as during start-up. The computing device 100 further includes storage devices such as a hard disk drive 160, a magnetic disk drive, an optical disk drive, tape drive or the like. The storage device 160 is connected to the system bus 110 by a drive interface. The drives and the associated computer readable media provide nonvolatile storage of computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules and other data for the computing device 100. In one aspect, a hardware module that performs a particular function includes the software component stored in a tangible computer-readable medium in connection with the necessary hardware components, such as the CPU, bus, display, and so forth, to carry out the function. The basic components are known to those of skill in the art and appropriate variations are contemplated depending on the type of device, such as whether the device is a small, handheld computing device, a desktop computer, or a large computer server.

Although the exemplary environment described herein employs a hard disk, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types of computer readable media which can store data that is accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital versatile disks, cartridges, random access memories (RAMs), read only memory (ROM) may also be used in the exemplary operating environment.

To enable user interaction with the computing device 100, an input device 190 represents any number of input mechanisms, such as a microphone for speech, a touch-sensitive screen for gesture or graphical input, keyboard, mouse, motion input, speech and so forth. The device output 170 can also be one or more of a number of output mechanisms known to those of skill in the art. For example, video output or audio output devices which can be connected to or can include displays or speakers are common.

Additionally, the video output and audio output devices can also include specialized processors for enhanced performance of these specialized functions. In some instances, multimodal systems enable a user to provide multiple types of input to communicate with the computing device 100. The communications interface 180 generally governs and manages the user input and system output. There is no restriction on the disclosed methods and devices operating on any particular hardware arrangement and therefore the basic features may easily be substituted for improved hardware or firmware arrangements as they are developed.

For clarity of explanation, the illustrative system embodiment is presented as comprising individual functional blocks (including functional blocks labeled as a "processor"). The functions these blocks represent may be provided through the use of either shared or dedicated hardware, including, but not limited to, hardware capable of executing software. For example the functions of one or more processors presented in FIG. 1 may be provided by a single shared processor or multiple processors. (Use of the term "processor" should not be construed to refer exclusively to hardware capable of executing software.) Illustrative embodiments may comprise microprocessor and/or digital signal processor (DSP) hardware, read-only memory (ROM) for storing software performing the operations discussed below, and random access memory (RAM) for storing results. Very large scale integration (VLSI) hardware embodiments, as well as custom VLSI circuitry in combination with a general purpose DSP circuit, may also be provided.

The logical operations of the various embodiments can be implemented as: (1) a sequence of computer implemented steps, operations, or procedures running on a programmable circuit within a general use computer, (2) a sequence of computer implemented steps, operations, or procedures running on a specific-use programmable circuit; and/or (3) interconnected machine modules or program engines within the programmable circuits.

The present system and method is particularly useful for remotely controlling a device having one or more menus via a remote touch interface having at least an

unstructured primary input area. A user can provide inputs to a touch interface without needing to view the interface and yet still achieve the desired response from the remotely controlled device. The primary input area of the touch interface may or may not have a background display, such as on a typical touch screen, but the primary input area of the touch interface should be unstructured. In other words, in preferred embodiments, the primary input area of the touch interface should not have independently selectable items, buttons, icons or anything of the like. Since the touch interface is unstructured, the user does not have to identify any selectable buttons. Instead the user can input a gesture into the interface and watch the device respond. In some embodiments, the system does not provide any other visual confirmation.

FIG. 2 illustrates an example remote embodiment. A remote 200 is shown running an application or other software routine providing the interface. While in the displayed embodiment, remote 200 is shown having a touch screen interface 202, the interface could be any touch sensitive interface, such as, for example, a capacitive sensing touch pad. Further, the remote device itself can be a dedicated remote device or a portable electronic device having other functions such as a smart phone or portable music playing device or a PDA.

The touch sensitive interface 202 comprises a primary touch sensitive area 204, which can receive the majority of the user touch inputs. In the displayed embodiment, the touch sensitive interface also

comprises other touch sensitive areas including a menu area 206, a navigation bar 207, a tab bar 208, and a status bar 209.

The primary touch sensitive area 204 is an unstructured area, having no individually selectable items such as buttons or icons. Further, since area 204 is unstructured, there are no selectable items to select or avoid and therefore the primary touch sensitive area is especially conducive to providing input to the remote without needing to view the remote itself. Instead a user can view the remotely controlled device for feedback.

Starting with the navigation bar 207, two independently selectable buttons are displayed. Back button 226, shown here labeled "Settings" because in this example illustration a user can return to the settings menu, can be selected to return the user to the previous screen. The button's label can change to display the name of the screen that the user will be returned to if the button is selected. Button 224 acts as a forward button, but in most cases takes the user to a "Now Playing Screen" (abbreviated as NP) which is present when the remotely controlled device is playing audio or video. It should be appreciated here and throughout the document that that while many of the buttons in the remote interface as indicated as having a specific name, the labeling is not intended to be limiting.

The entire menu area 206 is a touch sensitive area which records inputs to return to the previous menu by receiving taps in the menu area, or to return to

the top-level-menu by receiving and detecting a press and hold action. In the illustrated embodiment two other buttons are present. Keyboard button 222 and information button 220 can be displayed when they are needed and not displayed when they are not needed. For example, when a keyboard is present on the user interface of the remotely controlled device, the keyboard button 222 can appear. Selecting the keyboard button 222 can cause a keyboard to appear on the remote interface for easier typing into the remotely controlled device's interface. Similarly, information button 220 can be displayed when an item is displayed on the remotely controlled device's interface for which information is available.

Buttons 220 and 222 are located near the outer edges of the menu area 206 and of the screen 202 in general. Locating buttons 220 and 222 in the corner of the interface helps avoid accidental selections, as it is expected that a user would rarely hit one of the corners of the device accidentally.

In some embodiments, the remote device 200 can be a mobile phone, smart phone, portable multimedia player, PDA or other portable computing device capable of a diverse set of functions. In these embodiments a tab bar 208 can be useful to navigate between other functions on the remote device. The tab bar 208 can be a structured touch sensitive area with selectable buttons for this purpose. For example button 218 can instruct the remote device 200 to switch to the albums menu, or button 216, the artists menu, button 212, a search screen. Button 210 can provide additional options. Remote button 214 can

return the remote device back to the remote interface.

In some embodiments one or all of areas 206, 207, 208, and 209 may not be present as part of the remote interfaces. In some other embodiments area 206, 207, 208, and 209 can ignore inputs in various contexts so as to avoid accidental selection. For example, when the remote device is held in a substantially horizontal fashion, all individually selectable inputs can be made unselectable, and in complimentary fashion, when the device is held at a substantially vertical angle, the individually selectable inputs can be active to be selected.

In some embodiments, one method to prevent accidental selection requires a selection action to both start and end within the individually selectable area. For example, to activate the menu area, the touch must start and end within the menu area 206. If a touch were to either begin or end outside of the menu area but in the primary touch sensitive area 204, then the input can be considered to be an input of the type usually given and detected in the primary touch sensitive area 204.

As illustrated in FIG. 3 touch device 200 receives touch events from the user as they are input using a Responder Touch Events Module 250 which passes the touch events to a Touch Event Handler 252. Touch Event Handler 252 interprets the touch events received by the Responder Touch Events Module 250 to identify information about the touch event. For example Touch Event Handler can identify the pixel

location of the touch start, the pixel of the touch end, and identify touch movement. It also interprets the duration of the touch event. The Touch Event Handler 252 can interpret whether the touch event resulted in a menu input, a selection action, context menu input or top menu input. This information is formatted into packets and encrypted by the Touch Packer Encryption and Formatter module 254 and sent by the TCP Client 256 to the remotely controlled device 300.

While FIG. 3 illustrates a TCP Client 256 for transferring data from the remote 200 to the remotely controlled device 300, any protocol can be used to send data from device 200 to 300. However, in this embodiment TCP is discussed for speed benefits. TCP can be configured work in a substantially unidirectional fashion without requiring handshakes or other unnecessary communication that can increase latency in the transmission of data from the remote to the remotely controlled device. It will be appreciated that whatever technology, whether a direct device-to-device connection or over a local area network is chosen, it should allow relatively fast and reliable delivery of the information sent by the touch device 200.

Additionally, for purposes of speedy transmission of commands from the touch device 200 to the remotely controlled device 300 the amount of data sent should be kept to minimum. In some embodiments the amount of data transferred comprises around 20 bytes up to about 50 bytes per packet. While it can be appreciated that the touch interface of the touch

device 200 is a versatile instrument and is capable of recording and interpreting data into more complex instructions for the remote device, complexity is not beneficial. Instead simple information is recorded and transmitted by touch device 200.

In the remote context it is important that the commands from the remote 200 are transmitted and received by the remotely controlled device 300 quickly. Therefore, in embodiment illustrated FIG. 3, the remote sends largely generic touch device data and leaves the interpretation of the data to the remotely controlled device 300. For example, TCP server 302 receives the TCP data transmission from a TCP client 256 and the data is decrypted with module 304.

The generic touch data, (touch start, move, end, time/ velocity) can be interpreted by an interpreter such as Touch Event Interpreter 306 that interprets the generic touch event data into events that can be understood and used by the remotely controlled device 300. In this example, the information such as touch start, move and end that was recorded by the remote 200 can be interpreted into events, left, right, up, down, swipe left, swipe right, swipe up, swipe down or interpreted in a generic way as touch start, move or end.

Also illustrated is an Event Handler 308, which can receive inputs and pass them onto a controller for a graphical user interface. As illustrated, the Event Handler 308 can receive events originating from a standard remote control 330 that have been received

and interpreted by the Human Interface Event Manager 310, and can also receive events that originate from the touch device 200 that have been interpreted by the Touch Event Interpreter 306.

One or more UI controllers control each graphical user interface of the remotely controlled device. As illustrated in FIG. 3, the UI controller is labeled as a Focused UI controller 312 because it represents the UI controller that is associated with the GUI that is currently being displayed by the remotely controlled device. While there can be many UI controllers, the focused UI controller is the controller that is associated with the GUI screen currently displayed.

The focused UI controller 312 receives events from the event handler 308. The focused UI controller 312 receives all of the possible inputs and reacts to whichever input the focused UI controller is configured to accept.

FIGS. 4-6 illustrate how different focused UI controllers handle the same set of touch events. At 340 a user enters a gesture that begins at an arbitrary point X on the touch interface and ends a point X-10, which is left of X and the touch gesture has some velocity. The touch input is received, processed, and sent to the remotely controlled device as described above. At the remotely controlled device, the touch event interpreter 346 receives the data descriptive of the touch input and can interpret the data into events 342 that can be recognized by the remotely controlled device. In this example, the

touch event interpreter outputs a swipe left event and a left event.

The event handler 348 passes the left event and swipe left event to the UI controller that is currently "in focus." A UI controller is said to be "in focus" when it is controlling at least a portion of the currently displayed user interface screen. The focused UI controller receives the events from the event handler 348. In FIGs. 4-6, three different focused UI controllers exist. A movie menu focused UI controller 315, a slide show focused UI controller 317, and a media playback focused UI controller 319. In FIG. 4, the movie menu focused UI controller 315 receives the touch events 342 from the event handler 348 and recognizes the left swipe event at 344 and causes the UI to appear to scroll through the selections and ease out of the scroll operation at 350. In FIG. 5, the slide show focused controller 317 is the active controller and it recognizes the left event at 352, which results in the user interface returning to the previous slide in the slide show at 354. In FIG. 6, the media playback focused UI controller 319 is the active controller and it recognizes the swipe left event at 356, which results in the user interface returning to the previous slide in the slide show at 358. Together FIGs. 4-6 illustrate how the same touch input can be recognized as several different events and the focused UI controllers choose from the events to cause an action in the user interface.

While in the examples illustrated in FIGs. 4-6, the focused UI controllers only recognized one of the two input events, it can be possible that the focused UI

controller can recognize multiple events as being tied to actions. For example, the movie menu controller could have recognized both the swipe event and the left event, but in such cases, the focused UI controller can be configured to choose one event over the other if multiple events are recognized.

At this point it is informative to compare how the currently described technology works in comparison to a standard remote 330 in FIG. 3. One way to conceptualize the remote 200 is as a universal remote that can output the same data regardless of the device it is communicating with. It is a remote that has an unstructured interface and therefore any gesture or command can be input. In contrast, remote 330 is specific to the remotely controlled device. For the purposes of this discussion, the remote is a simple remote having only a menu button, up, down, left and right. The remotely controlled device is configured to accept inputs from remote 330 and each input is tied to a function in the remotely controlled device. Even a traditional universal remote is programmed to work in the same matter as remote 330 outputting commands that are specific to the remotely controlled device.

Inputs from the touch device 200 are received by the touch event interpreter 306 which can interpret the touch data into touch events that can potentially be used by the remote device. The event handler 308 forwards the events to the focused UI controller 312. An input from the standard remote 330 can be received by the human interface device event manager 310 and interpreted into an event that can be used by the

touch device. Just as with the events received from the touch device 200, the event handler 308 can forward the command from the standard remote 330 to the focused UI controller 312.

In some embodiments the focused UI controller 312 can be configured to accept additional inputs beyond that which is possible using the standard remote 330. In such embodiments, the focused UI controller 312 can choose from among the inputs that it wants to accept. In these embodiments the focused UI controlled 312 is configured to make this choice. For example the focused UI controller 312 can be informed that it is receiving events from the touch device 200 and consider those commands more preferable than the simplistic inputs, such as a left event, given by the standard remote 330. In such a case, if the focused UI controller 312 were to receive events from the touch device 200 it would need to choose from the simple event or the higher-level event, such as a swipe, since both are represented. The focused UI controller 312 can learn that the data is from the touch device 200 and choose to a fast forward a movie based on the swipe input as opposed to skipping a movie chapter based on a left event.

Just as the focused UI controller 312 can be configured to accept different commands based on which device is receiving the commands it can also interpret the commands based on the context of the interface that is currently displayed. As mentioned above, each focused UI controller is specific to a different context. There can be many more UI controllers each responsible for their own function.

Since each UI controller is responsible for a different part of the UI or different screen having a different context, each focused UI controller can perform different functions given the same input.

As discussed above, a user can provide a variety of inputs into the primary touch sensitive area 204, but the result of the inputs can vary depending on the context in which the input is given. The focused UI controller that is specific to a particular GUI can be programmed to interpret inputs based on elements or characteristics of its context. For example in the case of a remote controlling a multimedia application running on a remote device, there can be at least a menu context (FIG. 7) and a media playback context (FIG. 8) each having their own focused UI controller governing their behavior. While controlling an multimedia application remotely is discussed as one exemplary embodiment, many other devices can be controlled according to the concepts discussed herein including, but not limited to, televisions, cable boxes, digital video records, digital disc players (DVD, CD, HD-DVD, blu ray etc.).

Returning to the example of a multimedia application running on a remote device - in a menu context, a user can potentially browse media, by title, artist, media type, playlists, album name, genre (it should be understood that some of these categories for browsing media are more or less applicable to different media types such as movies or songs). In FIG. 7, a user can browse the menu interface by movie titles arranged in a list. In the menu context various inputs can be entered into the primary touch

sensitive area to navigate the menu and make a selection. For example, and as shown in the table below, a user can swipe the interface in a desired direction, which can result in a scroll operation. As is known in the art, the speed of the gesture and the scrolling operation can be related. For example, a faster swipe gesture can result in a faster scroll operation and/or longer scroll duration. Additionally the primary touch sensitive area can also receive tap gestures, which can select an item. Further, dragging a user's finger across the primary touch sensitive area 204 can move a selected or highlighted item.

TABLE 1

Menu Navigation Context	
Touch Action	Result
Single digit drag in the desired direction	Move selection
Single digit swipe in the desired direction	Scroll selection and ease out
Single digit tap in main selection area	Select item

Many of the same actions can result in different outcomes or actions performed on or by the remotely controlled device in other contexts. For example, and as seen in the chart below, some of the same actions described above cause different results in the media playback context which is illustrated in FIG. 8. A single digit tap in the primary touch sensitive area can cause a media file to play or pause in the playback context as opposed to a selection in the menu context. Similarly, a drag action can result in

a shuttle transport operation of shuttle 367. Swipes right and left can result in a fast forward right and left respectively as opposed to the scroll operation in the menu context. An upward swipe can cause an information display 365 to cycle through various information that a media player might have available to show. A downward swipe can show a chapter selection menu.

TABLE 2

Media Playback Context	
Touch Action	Result
Single digit tap in the selection area	Toggle Play/Pause
Single digit drag left/right	Shuttle transport to left/right
Swipe digit swipe left	Skip backwards 10 seconds
Swipe digit swipe right	Skip forwards 10 seconds
Swipe digit swipe up	Cycle Info Display
Swipe digit swipe down	Show Chapter selection Menu

Other inputs do not need to vary by context. For example, a tap in the menu area 206 returns to the previous menu screen. Holding a finger in the menu area returns to the top menu. Also some inputs into the primary touch sensitive area 204 will always result in the same action - a two-digit press and hold in the primary touch sensitive area 204 will return to the menu for the context that the device is currently displaying.

TABLE 3

Any Context	
Touch Action	Result
Single digit tap in menu area	Menu
Single digit Press & hold in menu area	Top Menu
Two digit press & hold in main selection area	Context Menu

In addition to the various touch inputs described above many more inputs are also possible. Nothing in the above discussion should be seen as limiting the available touch inputs or gestures that can be used with the described technology. For example, in addition to the one or two finger inputs described above, three or four finger inputs are also contemplated. Additionally, more complex gestures such as separating two or more fingers and providing inputs relative to each finger can also be useful. Such gestures are already known in the art such as rotating one finger around the other to rotate an onscreen image, or moving two fingers away from each other or towards each other can result in a zoom out or in operation. Many others are considered within the level of skill in the art.

Furthermore, while the term digit is referred to above and throughout the specification it is also not meant to be limiting. While in some embodiments a digit refers to a finger of a human hand, in some embodiments digit can refer to anything that is capable of being sensed by a capacitive device. In some embodiments, digit can also refer to a stylus or

other object for inputting into a display-input device.

After the focused UI controller accepts an input it affects the UI of the remotely controlled device. In many cases this may be the first feedback that the user will receive that the proper command was given. Such a feedback loop increases the responsiveness of the system and allows the remote interface to be less complicated. However, in other embodiments, other types of feedback can be supplied. For example, audible feedback can be supplied to the user so she can at least know a command was issued. Alternatively the remote can vibrate or provide any other desirable type of feedback. The feedback can also be command specific, a different sound or vibration for each command is possible.

In some embodiments, the remotely controlled device may not have an event interpreter. In these embodiments, the remote would send the data representative of touch inputs to the remotely controlled device and the focused UI controller can be configured to interpret the data.

In some embodiments it can be useful to allow the remote to learn about changing menus or displays of the remote device. In such embodiments, a separate communications channel can be opened, for example using a hypertext transfer protocol for transferring information between the devices. To maintain remote performance most communications can be single direction communications for faster speed, but bidirectional communications can be used when needed.

For example, even though most of the communications from the remote to the remotely controlled device are transferred using TCP, HTTP or DAAP can be used to inform the remote of special cases such as when additional information is available or that a keyboard is being displayed on the remotely controlled device. In such instances, a keyboard for example can be displayed on the remote and inputs into the keyboard can be transferred using the HTTP protocol. Similarly, when information such as that shown in FIG. 8 is available, and information button can be displayed on the remote to bring up information window 365.

FIG. 9 illustrates the method for controlling the remote device. In step 418, a remote application provides an unstructured touch sensitive area for receiving touch inputs from a user. The touch inputs are received and interpreted into at least touch start, touch end, move and duration data in step 422. The data is formatted and sent to the remotely controlled device in step 424.

In step 426, the remotely controlled device interprets the received data with knowledge of the context of the screen that is currently being displayed by the remotely controlled device. Depending on the inputs received and the context of the current display, the remotely controlled device interprets the data received from the remote and accepts the command in step 428 which causes the remotely controlled device to perform the command and display the result in step 430.

It will be appreciated that while the above description uses a media playback device with associated software, the technology is equally applicable to other remotely controlled devices such as televisions, DVR, DVD players, Bluray, cable boxes etc. For example, either the remotely controlled device can be programmed to accept and interpret generic touch screen interface data and respond to those inputs. Alternatively, the remote itself can be provided with instructions on how to communicate with almost any remotely controlled device. As long as either the remote or the remotely controlled device can interpret the touch data based on the context of what is currently being displayed or caused to be displayed by the remote device, the principles of the described technology can apply.

In some embodiments less or more touch sensitive areas are possible. However, additional touch sensitive areas having structured interfaces increase the possibility of accidental commands being input into the remote. The best interfaces provide an overall user experience wherein the user does not need to look at the remote to make a selection in most instances. However, it will be appreciated that if the user is not looking at the remote, in a touch environment wherein the entire device feels similar to the user, accidental inputs are possible and may even become likely if too many individually selectable items are available.

Several methods can be used to prevent accidental inputs. One of which, as described above, uses an accelerometer device to determine the devices

orientation and based on that orientation determine what type of command the user is trying to enter. If the device is horizontal the user is probably not looking at the device and gestures are likely intended to control the remotely controlled device. However, if the device is more vertical, or angled so that the user can view the screen, the user is probably viewing the screen and inputs are more likely into the structured interface buttons. Another alternative is illustrated in FIG. 5 wherein the remote device 500 is rotated in a landscape orientation. In this orientation, the entire interface is unstructured and only the primary selection area 502 and the menu selection area 504 are present. This embodiment would eliminate accidental inputs by removing the structured portion of the interface when the user desired to only use the unstructured interface to enter touch gestures to control the remotely controlled device. When the device is rotated into the portrait orientation a structured interface can become available. Still yet another way to reduce unwanted inputs is to turn the display portion of the touch screen completely off regardless of the orientation of the device. In these embodiments only unstructured input into the primary selection area and menu area would be available. If the user wanted one of the structured options the screen could be turned back on by some actuation mechanism like a hardware button, shaking the device, or a touch gesture.

Additionally, and as described above, accidental inputs can be avoided by configuring the touch interface to accept any input that drifts into or out

of a structured input as a input into the unstructured interface. In this way, only deliberate selections are registered.

Embodiments within the scope of the present invention may also include computer-readable media for carrying or having computer-executable instructions or data structures stored thereon. Such computer-readable media can be any available media that can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer. By way of example, and not limitation, such tangible computer-readable media can comprise RAM, ROM, EEPROM, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to carry or store desired program code means in the form of computer-executable instructions or data structures. When information is transferred or provided over a network or another communications connection (either hardwired, wireless, or combination thereof) to a computer, the computer properly views the connection as a computer-readable medium. Thus, any such connection is properly termed a computer-readable medium. Combinations of the above should also be included within the scope of the tangible computer-readable media.

Computer-executable instructions include, for example, instructions and data which cause a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or special purpose processing device to perform a certain function or group of functions. Computer-executable instructions also include program modules that are executed by computers in standalone or

network environments. Generally, program modules include routines, programs, objects, components, and data structures that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. Computer executable instructions, associated data structures, and program modules represent examples of the program code means for executing steps of the methods disclosed herein. The particular sequence of such executable instructions or associated data structures represent examples of corresponding acts for implementing the functions described in such steps.

Those of skill in the art will appreciate that other embodiments of the invention may be practiced in network computing environments with many types of computer system configurations, including personal computers, hand-held devices, multi-processor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. Embodiments may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by local and remote processing devices that are linked (either by hardwired links, wireless links, or by a combination thereof) through a communications network. In a distributed computing environment, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage devices.

Communication at various stages of the described system can be performed through a local area network, a token ring network, the Internet, a corporate intranet, 802.11 series wireless signals, fiber-optic network, radio or microwave transmission, etc.

Although the underlying communication technology may change, the fundamental principles described herein are still applicable.

The various embodiments described above are provided by way of illustration only and should not be construed to limit the invention. For example, the principles herein may be applied to any remotely controlled device. Further, those of skill in the art will recognize that communication between the remote the remotely controlled device need not be limited to communication over a local area network but can include communication over infrared channels, Bluetooth or any other suitable communication interface. Those skilled in the art will readily recognize various modifications and changes that may be made to the present invention without following the example embodiments and applications illustrated and described herein, and without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

Claims

Art. 84
R. 43

1. A **method** for remotely controlling a device (300), comprising:

R. 43(1)(a)
*Prior art portion of
independent claim
wherever appropriate*

receiving touch input data at a **remotely controlled device** (300) from a **remote controller** (200) comprising a touch screen (202) and a processing unit, the touch input data comprising information including positional, movement and durational input parameters, wherein the touch input data can be interpreted by the remotely controlled device (300) as one of a plurality of potential commands in a first context of a graphical user interface (GUI) of the remotely controlled device (300) and as another of the plurality of potential commands in a second context of the GUI, interpreting the touch input data in combination with a current context of the GUI to determine an appropriate command for the current context of the GUI; and updating the GUI in response to the appropriate command, *characterised in that* the method further comprises sending from the remotely controlled device (300) information via a bidirectional communication protocol to the remote controller (200) informing the remote controller to display a keyboard on the touch screen, at least partially in response to the information received via the bidirectional communication protocol.

2. A **system** comprising:

a remote controller (200) comprising:

a touch screen (202) configured to receive touch input,

a processing unit for receiving the electronic signals from the touch screen and translating the signals into touch input data, and

a communication interface configured for:

sending the touch input data to a remotely controlled device (300), the data including at least positional, movement and durational input parameters, and

receiving information from the remotely controlled device (300) via a bidirectional communication protocol informing the remote controller to display a keyboard, wherein the remote controller is configured to display a keyboard on the touch screen, at least partially in response to the information received via the bidirectional communication protocol,

a remotely controlled device (300) configured to present a graphical user interface (GUI) in a plurality of contexts,

the remotely controlled device comprising:

a display for displaying a graphical user interface (GUI),

a communication interface configured for:

receiving the touch input data, wherein the touch input data can be interpreted by the remotely controlled device (300) as one of a plurality of potential commands in a first context of a graphical user interface (GUI) of the remotely controlled device (300) and as another of the plurality of

potential commands in a second context of the GUI,
and
a processing unit configured for interpreting the
touch input data in combination with a current
context of the GUI to determine an appropriate
command for the current context, and updating the GUI
in response to the appropriate command,
characterized in that
the communication interface is further configured
for:
sending information via a bidirectional communication
protocol informing the remote controller to display a
keyboard on the touch screen at least partially in
response to the information received via the
bidirectional communication protocol.

3. A **device** configured with an application causing
the device to function as a **remote controller** (200)
for a remotely controlled device, comprising:
a touch screen (202) configured to receive touch
input,
a processing unit for receiving the electronic
signals from the touch screen and translating the
signals into touch input data, and
a communication interface configured for:
sending the touch input data to a remotely controlled
device (300), the data including at least positional,
movement and durational input parameters, wherein the
touch input data can be interpreted by the remotely
controlled device (300) as one of a plurality of
potential commands in a first context of a graphical
user interface (GUI) of the remotely controlled
device (300) and as another of the plurality of
potential commands in a second context of the GUI,

wherein the remotely controlled device is configured for interpreting the touch input data in combination with a current context of the GUI to determine an appropriate command for the current context, and updating the GUI in response to the appropriate command,

characterized in that

the communication interface is further configured for:

receiving information from the remotely controlled device (300) via a bidirectional communication protocol informing the remote controller to display a keyboard on the touch screen, at least partially in response to the information received via the bidirectional communication protocol.

4. A **device** configured with an application causing the device to function as a **remotely controlled device** (300) being controlled by a remote controller (200), comprising:

a display for displaying a graphical user interface (GUI),

a communication interface configured for:

receiving touch input data from a remote controller (200), the data including at least positional, movement and durational input parameters, wherein the touch input data can be interpreted by the remotely controlled device (300) as one of a plurality of potential commands in a first context of a graphical user interface (GUI) of the remotely controlled device (300) and as another of the plurality of potential commands in a second context of the GUI, a processing unit configured for interpreting the touch input data in combination with a current

context of the GUI to determine an appropriate command for the current context, and updating the GUI in response to the appropriate command, *characterized in that*

the communication interface is further configured for:

sending information via a bidirectional communication protocol informing the remote controller to display a keyboard on the touch screen, at least partially in response to the information received via the bidirectional communication protocol.

5. A **computer program product** comprising instructions which, when the program is executed by the system of claim 2, to carry out the method of claim 1.

6. A **computer program product** comprising instructions which, when the program is executed by a computing device comprising a touch screen, a processing unit for receiving electronic signals from the touch screen and a communication interface, cause the computing device to function as a **remote controller** (200) for a remotely controlled device, in that the instructions cause the computing device to:

translate the touch input signal from the touch screen into touch input data,
send the touch input data to a remotely controlled device (300), the data including at least positional, movement and durational input parameters, wherein the touch input data can be interpreted by the remotely controlled device (300) as one of a plurality of potential commands in a first context of a graphical user interface (GUI) of the remotely controlled

device (300) and as another of the plurality of potential commands in a second context of the GUI, wherein the remotely controlled device is configured for interpreting the touch input data in combination with a current context of the GUI to determine an appropriate command for the current context, and updating the GUI in response to the appropriate command,

characterized in that the instructions further cause the computing device to:

receive information from the remotely controlled device (300) via a bidirectional communication protocol informing the remote controller to display a keyboard on the touch screen, at least partially in response to the information received via the bidirectional communication protocol.

7. A **computer program product** comprising instructions which, when the program is executed by a computing device comprising a display, a processing unit and a communication interface, cause the device to function as a **remotely controlled device** (300) being controlled by a remote controller (200),

in that the instructions cause the computing device to:

display a graphical user interface (GUI), receive touch input data from a remote controller (200), the data including at least positional, movement and durational input parameters, wherein the touch input data can be interpreted by the remotely controlled device (300) as one of a plurality of potential commands in a first context of a graphical user interface (GUI) of the remotely controlled

device (300) and as another of the plurality of potential commands in a second context of the GUI, interpret the touch input data in combination with a current context of the GUI to determine an appropriate command for the current context, and update the GUI in response to the appropriate command,

characterized in that the instructions further cause the computing device to:

send information via a bidirectional communication protocol informing the remote controller to display a keyboard on the touch screen, at least partially in response to the information received via the bidirectional communication protocol.

Abstract

Art. 85

Directional touch remote

R. 47(1)
Title of invention

The present system and method is particularly useful for remotely controlling a device having one or more menus via a remote touch interface having at least an unstructured primary input area. A user can provide inputs to a touch interface without needing to view the interface and yet still achieve the desired response from the remotely controlled device. The primary input area of the touch interface may or may not have a background display, such as on a touch screen, but the primary input area of the touch interface should be unstructured and should not have independently selectable items, buttons, icons or anything of the like. Since the touch interface is unstructured, the user does not have to identify any selectable buttons. Instead the user can input a gesture into the interface and watch the remotely controlled device respond. The system does not provide any other visual confirmation.

R. 47(2), (3), (5)
Content of abstract

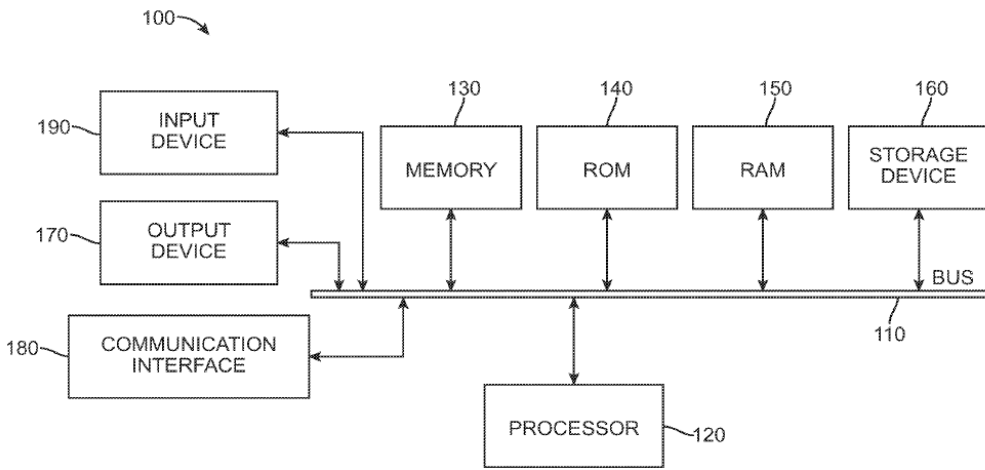


FIG. 1

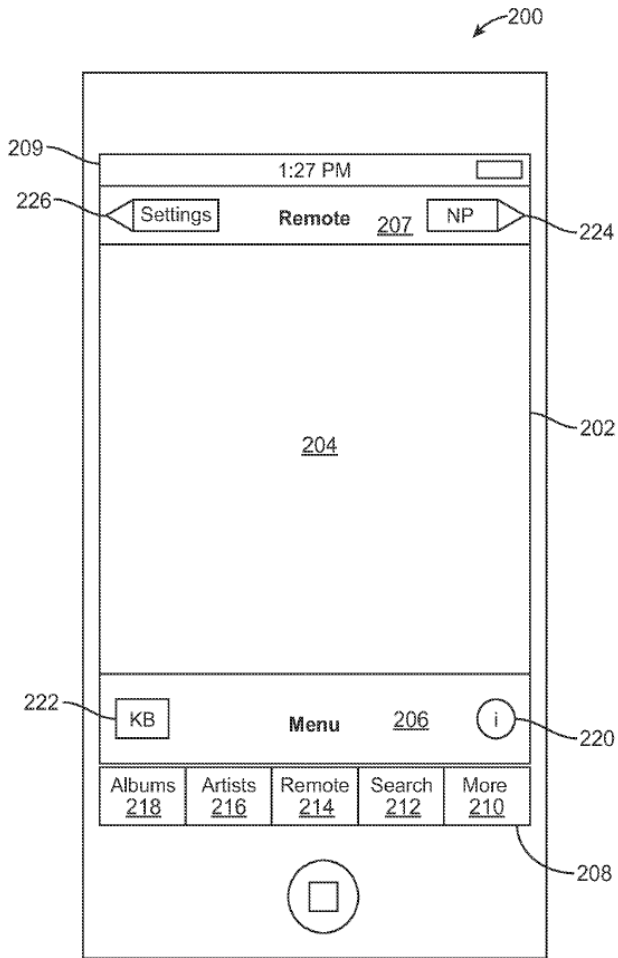
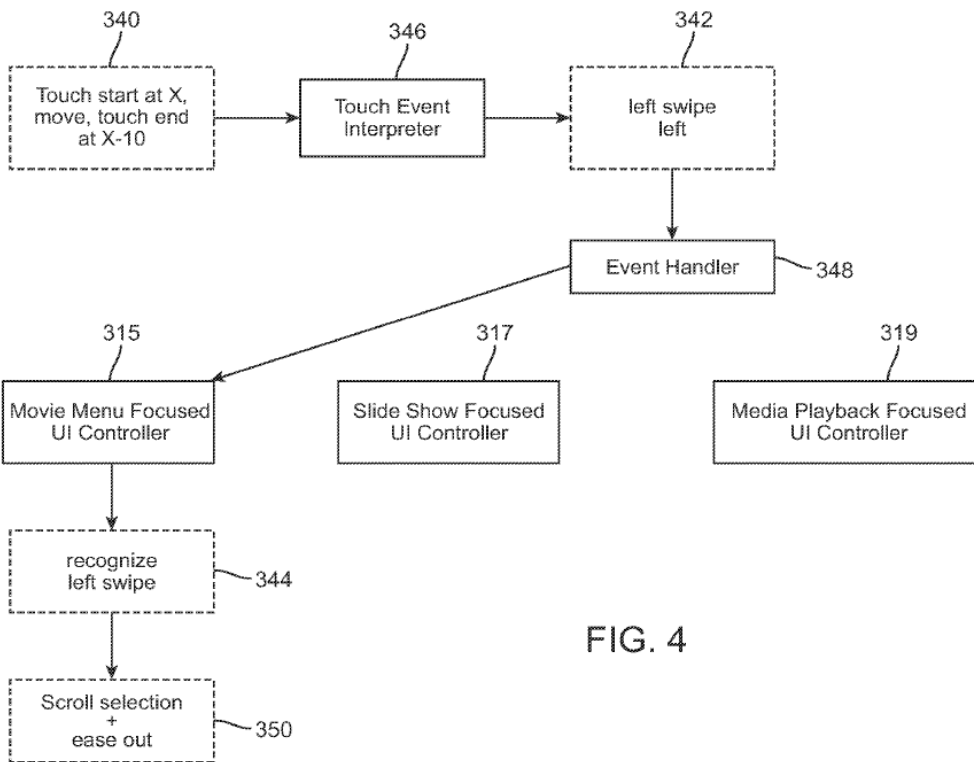
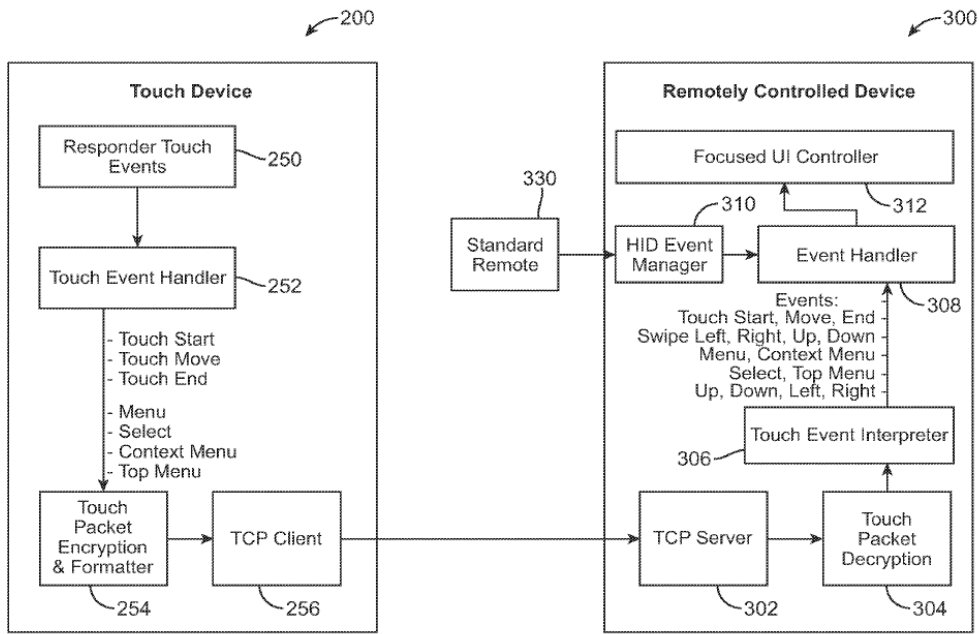
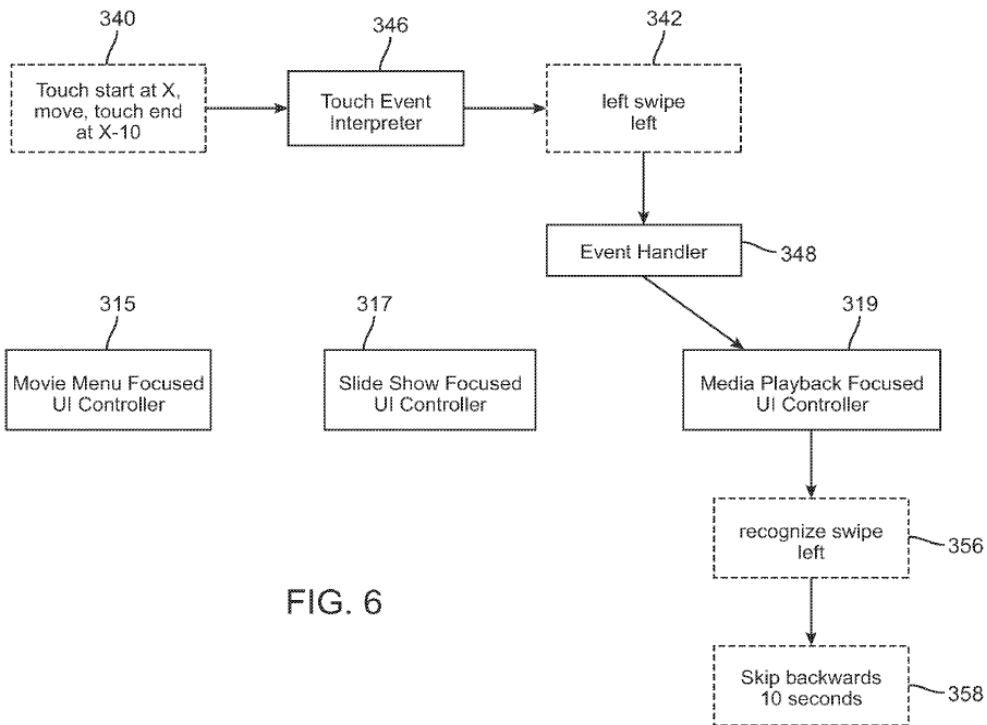
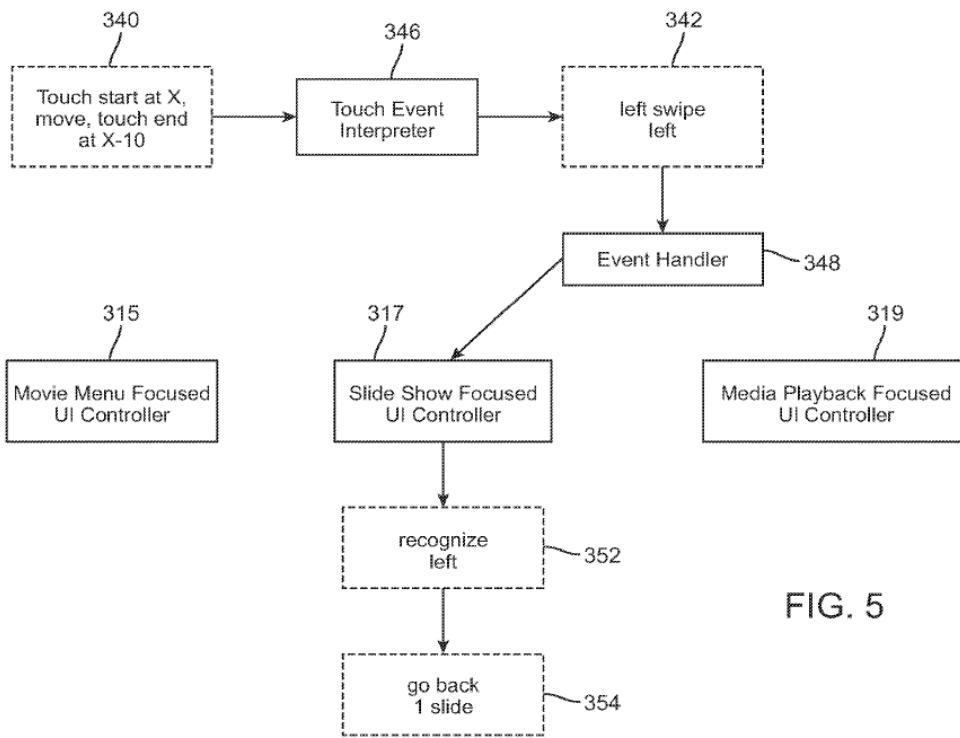


FIG. 2





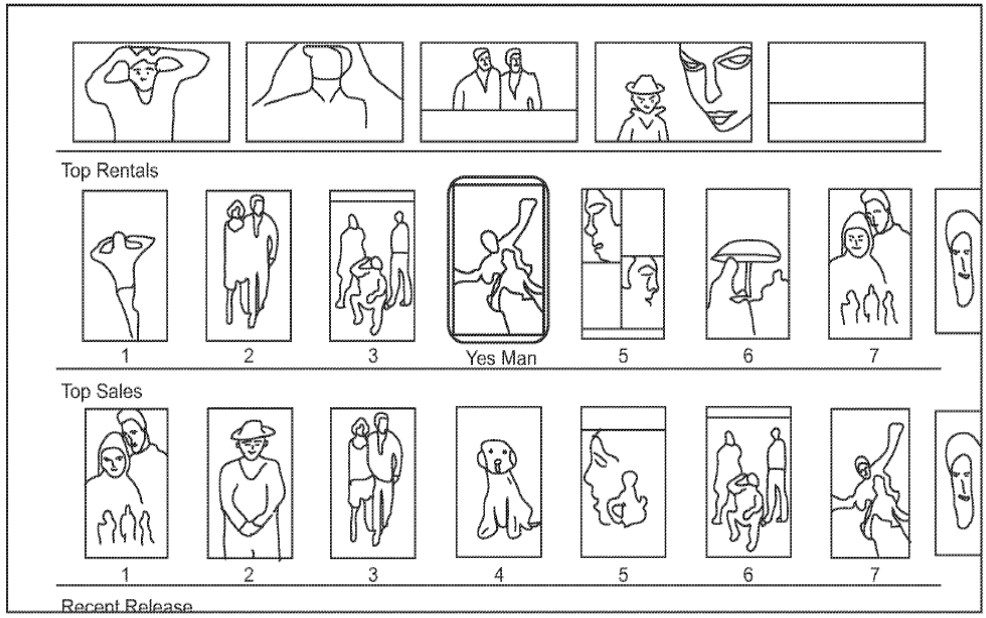


FIG. 7

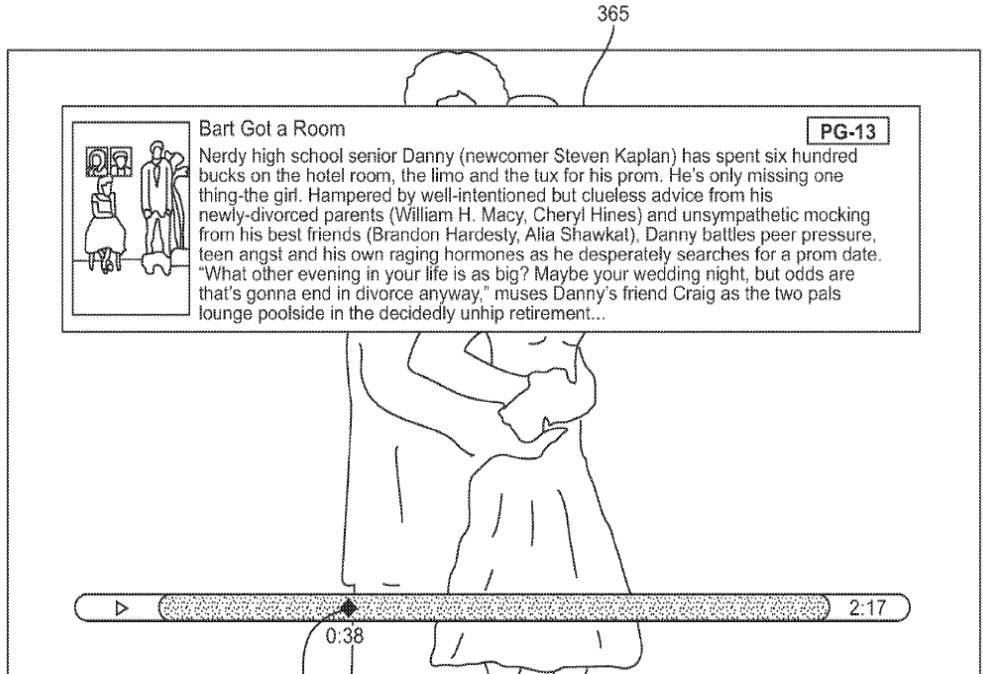


FIG. 8

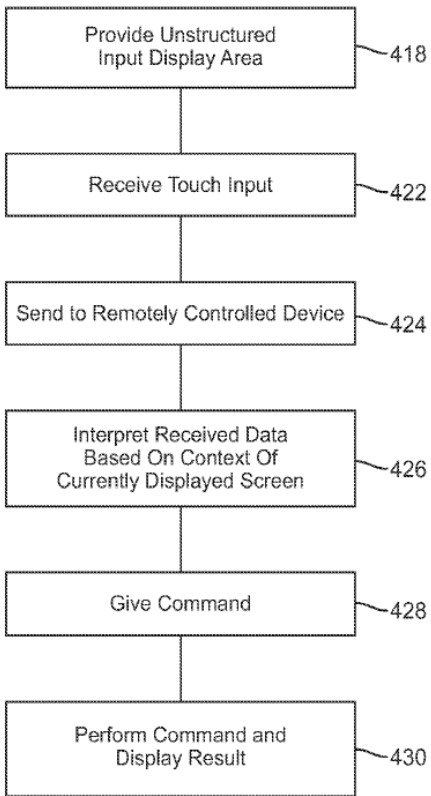


FIG. 9

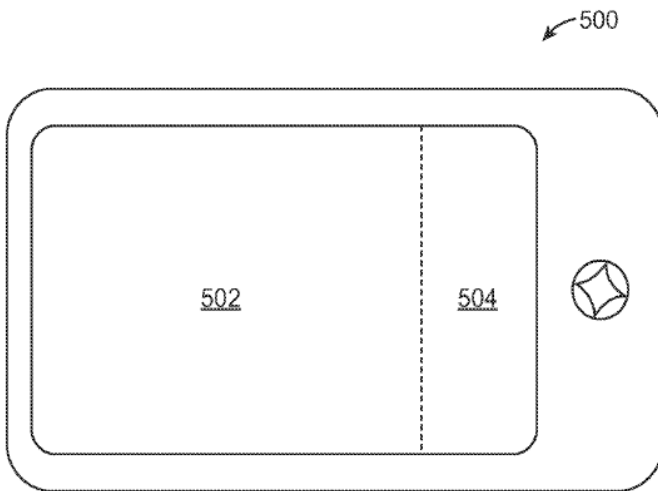


FIG. 10

Annex III

Authorities with which European patent applications may be filed

I. European Patent Office

(a) *Online*

Online Filing (OLF)
(www.epo.org/applying/online-services/online-filing)

Online Filing 2.0
(www.epo.org/applying/online-services/online-filing-20.html)

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II. **National authorities**

For a summary of the contracting states' chief national provisions governing compulsory and optional filing of patent applications with central industrial property offices and other competent authorities, see Table II in **National law relating to the EPC** (see point 2.1.004). This table also contains the addresses of the central industrial property offices (see www.epo.org/law-practice/legal-texts/html/natlaw/en/ii/index.htm).

Note: European divisional applications must always be filed with the EPO (see point 5.8.001 ff).

Annex IV

Time limits

Charts showing time limits to be met by applicants

The EPC provides for three types of time limit:

1. Time limits computed from the actual or deemed date of filing or the date of priority
2. Time limits of a duration laid down in the EPC which are computed from an event other than the date of filing or priority
3. Time limits laid down by the EPO in the course of the grant procedure

The EPO reminds applicants of all time limits of types 2 and 3 above, apart from those for further processing (see point 5.10.007) and re-establishment of rights (see points 5.10.008-5.10.009).

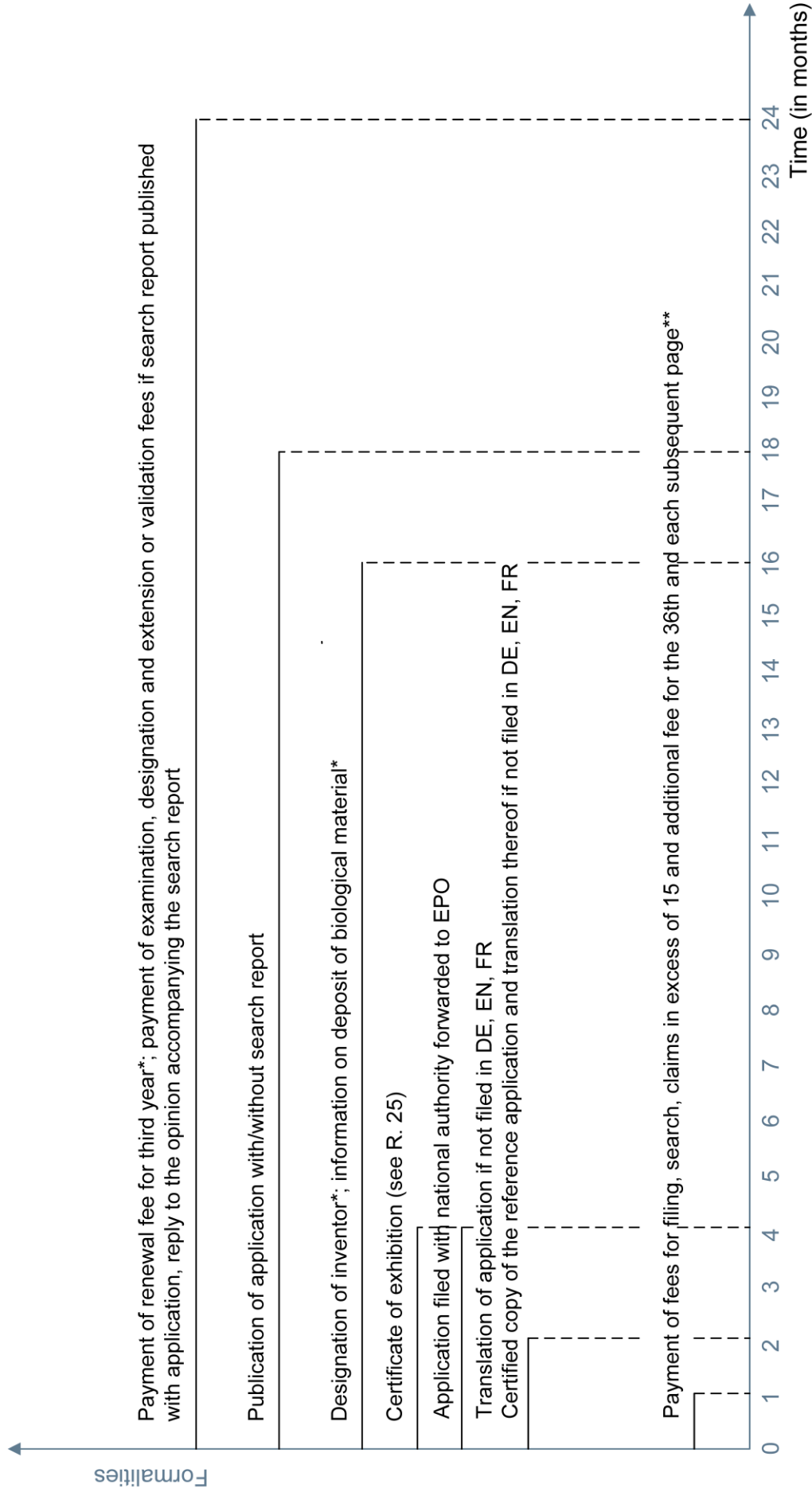
The charts below are particularly designed to help applicants keep track of time limits of type 1.

Chart A relates to a European patent application which is a first filing.

Chart B relates to a European patent application which claims the priority of an earlier application and is assumed to have been filed ten months after the earlier application.

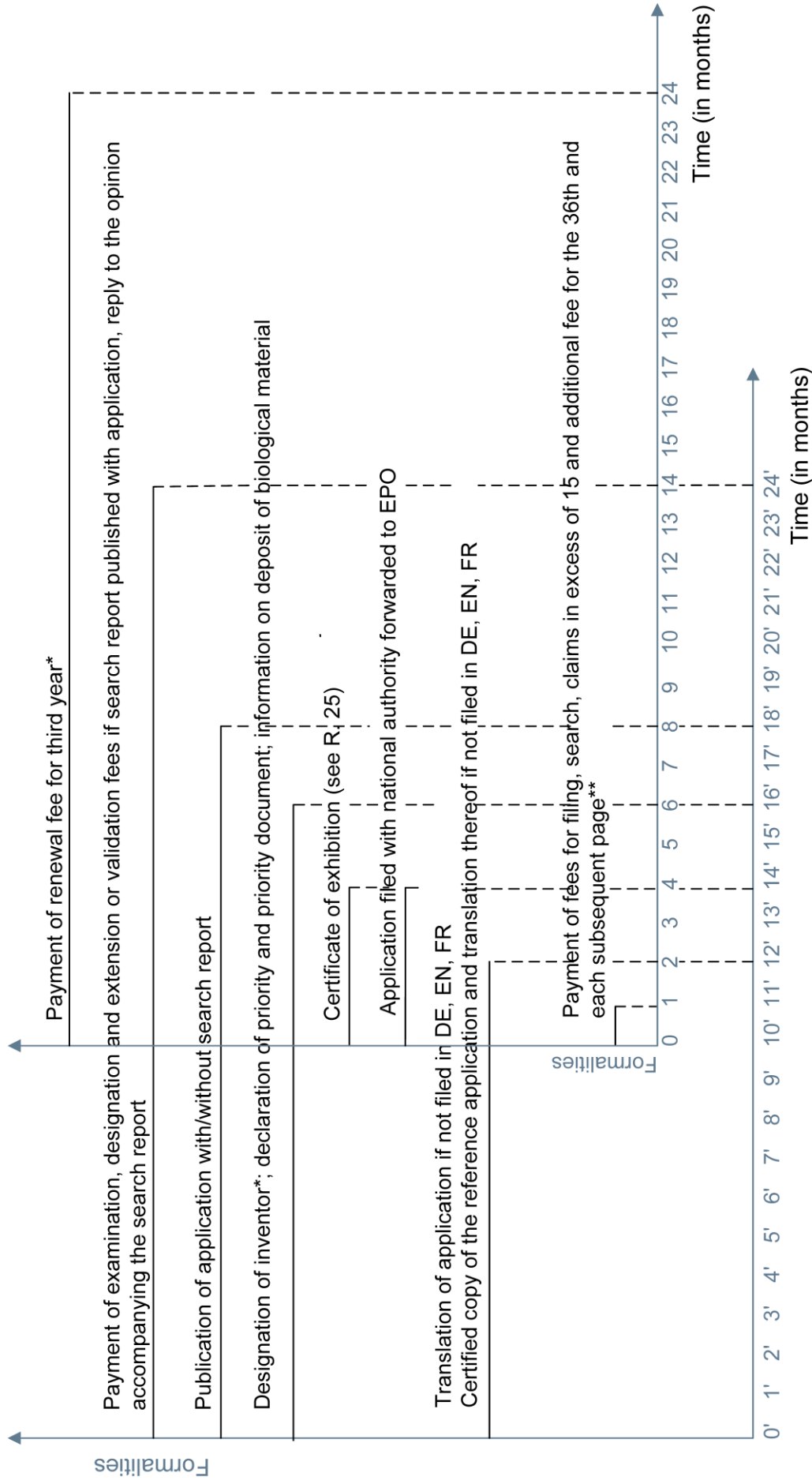
The charts do not take into account the special time limits which apply to European divisional applications and new European patent applications filed in accordance with Article 61(1)(b) (see Rules 16(2), 51(6) and 60(2)).

Chart A Important time limits laid down in the EPC where **no priority** is claimed in the European patent application



0 Filing of European patent application
 * Time limit computed from date of filing, possibly later than date on which application was actually received (see Art. 80, R. 55 and 56)
 ** If claims filed with application

Chart B Important time limits laid down in the EPC where **priority is claimed** in the European patent application



- 0 Filing of European patent application
- 0' Filing of earlier application
- * Time limit computed from date of filing, possibly later than date on which application was actually received (see Art. 80, R. 55 and 56)
- ** If claims filed with application

Annex V

Fees

I. Fees provided for in the EPC

The guidance for the payment of fees published periodically in the Official Journal enables you to find out at any time which rules relating to fees are currently applicable and whether any information given in this Guide has changed since it was published. You are advised to check the latest information on fee payment, which is available on the EPO website at www.epo.org/applying/fees/payment.

OJ EPO 2020, A33

II. Further information on fees

Further information on fees, such as the schedule of fees and expenses of the EPO and the bank account of the European Patent Organisation for payments in euros, is also published on the EPO website (www.epo.org).

III. Arrangements for deposit accounts

The Arrangements for deposit accounts (ADA) and their annexes are published as a supplementary publication of the EPO's Official Journal. They contain detailed information on the opening, debiting and replenishing of deposit accounts, as well as the automatic debiting of fees. You are advised to check the Official Journal for updates and amendments.

*GL A-X, 4.2
Supplementary
publication 4, OJ
EPO 2019*

Annex VI

Patent information services

File inspection and communication of information from files

1. The files relating to published European patent applications and patents can be inspected online via the European Patent Register at www.epo.org/searching-for-patents/legal/register.
Paper copies of files are available in exceptional cases only, subject to submission of a duly substantiated request.

Art. 128(4)
R. 145
GL A-XI

OJ EPO 2019, A15

European Patent Register and European Patent Bulletin

2. The European Patent Register offers users both bibliographic and procedural data on European patents and patent applications.
The procedural data includes information from the date of publication to the grant of the patent, plus any data concerning opposition and appeal proceedings, as well as post-grant information.

Art. 127
R. 143
OJ EPO 2014, A86

Access to the European Patent Register is free of charge.

3. Data from the European Patent Register is published weekly in the European Patent Bulletin, where the bibliographic data relating to published European patent applications and granted European patents is arranged according to a number of reference criteria, including:
 - the International Patent Classification
 - the European publication number
 - the name of the applicant/proprietor.

Art. 129(a)

The European Patent Bulletin is available online at www.epo.org/searching-for-patents/legal/bulletin.

Patent documents

4. The EPO also publishes:
 - European patent applications (A documents)
 - European patent specifications (B documents)

Art. 93
Art. 98, 103
OJ EPO 2007,
Special edition No.
3, D.3, D.4

Published documents are available online via the European Publication Server at www.epo.org/searching-for-patents/technical/publication-server.

Information on other EPO data products can be found at www.epo.org/searching-for-patents/data.

Official Journal and Guidelines for Examination

5. Two of the EPO's other major publications are:
- the Official Journal (OJ EPO), which contains the decisions of the Administrative Council, the decisions and notices of the President of the EPO, information about fees and costs, and selected decisions of the boards of appeal, and
 - the Guidelines for Examination in the European Patent Office.

Art. 129(b)
Art. 10(2)(a)

These publications are available online at www.epo.org/law-practice/legal-texts.

Products and services

6. The EPO's sub-office in Vienna is responsible for all patent information products and services.

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Further information

Further information about the European Patent Office and the procedures involved in applying for a European patent is available on the EPO website at www.epo.org:

- Applying for a patent at www.epo.org/applying/basics
- Patent search at worldwide.espacenet.com
- European Patent Register at register.epo.org
- Online filing services at www.epo.org/applying/online-services
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