

## **EUROPEAN PATENT ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATION (EPAC) : feedback on EPAC 2022 and information about EPAC 2023**

Last year, the EPO introduced a new certification for paralegals, patent administrators and formalities officers: the European patent administration certification (EPAC). The EPAC tests professional knowledge and skills to manage filing, prosecution, grant and maintenance associated processes for European and international patent applications before the EPO.

The first time I have heard about this examination was probably about 7 years ago, and I knew it would be challenging for me. I was very excited to sit and undertake this exam as soon as I heard it was open.

The first exam ever took place on 12 December 2022 and the EPO published the following statistics: “157 candidates passed the exam”. Only 35% of total candidates were successful. “Overall, the vast majority of candidates came from industry or a private patent attorney practice (85%) and were women (also 85%). Registrations were received from 23 EPC member states and 10 non-member states, including the United States, P.R. China, Canada and Mexico.”<sup>1</sup>

Currently, the EPAC Board is preparing the EPAC 2023, which will be held on 12 October 2023. Enrolment opened on 18 April 2023 and runs until 14 August 2023. Should you wish to enrol, please visit EPO EPAC enrolment webpage ([here](#)).

In the 2023 edition, the EPO provides not only training material, as it was already the case on 2022 edition, but also offers online dedicated seminars (in English only) covering each of 5 modules of the syllabus. The next online sessions starts on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 and you can register in the E-learning centre of the European Patent Academy, or click [here](#).

To share my personal experience and feeling about the EPAC :

I took the 2022 EPAC exam and even with 8 years of experience in handling EP cases, some of the questions asked were very challenging. I dare to say that the 2022 edition was on the edge between Attorney- and Paralegal knowledge, and even experienced paralegals had difficulties. A lot of paralegals complained that the time was not sufficient to write full replies. I personally felt that material provided before the exam was not sufficient to be well prepared for all the questions asked and that without additional materials I would not have been able to complete and pass the exam.

Nevertheless, I am very glad that I took the first exam, as it was a great opportunity and even bigger challenge. Beside the new title (Certified European Patent Administrator), I (re)built confidence in myself, shaped and strengthened relationships with my direct colleagues who took the exam with me and created a network of paralegals across Europe (and not only) that I can trust, and in case of need contact for support. Should you be looking for a tutor, there are several possibilities and BELAIPA can put you in contact with some of them.

It is a big challenge that requires time and dedication, but in my opinion, it is worth trying. Even if you don't succeed, you will learn new proceedings, or correct some ways of doing the work and most definitely it is time spent and invested in your expertise; and that is never lost time.

Congratulations to all successful 2022 candidates and good luck to the 2023 candidates!

Monika Mihalcinova Coelho (Kirkpatrick)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epo.org/news-events/news/2023/20230403a.html>