

## **Communication regarding COVID-19**

Dear Sir or Madam,

The spread of the COVID-19 virus and the implementation of the measures against it are having an unprecedented impact on our society. They also have an impact on the activities of the users of the Belgian system for the protection of intellectual property.

The Intellectual Property Office is fully aware of the difficult working conditions this entails for all concerned.

In this context, the Office will take all possible measures and use all flexibility within the framework of the applicable legislation in order to mitigate or eliminate possible negative consequences of the current circumstances for the users.

I would like to inform you about two aspects relating to the procedures before the Office with regard to patents, supplementary protection certificates and plant variety rights.

Firstly, the current situation may affect the ability of applicants or holders to comply with certain time limits. Where the legislation allows it, the Office is prepared to consider any requests for extension of time limits as favourably as possible, on a case by case basis.

Secondly, the current situation affects the use of certain channels made available for users to communicate with the Office. In view of the current situation, the Office invites you to give preference, where possible, to electronic communication channels. To this end, eOLF and fax (+32 2 277 52 62) are recommended, as well as, insofar as it does not concern formal acts, e-mail. The use of electronic communication channels enables the Office to continue its activities as well and as fully as possible.

Additionally, we are investigating possible further measures. We will keep you informed in due course.

As already indicated, the Office will continue to guarantee the continuation of service until further notice and we are at your disposal to assist you the best we can during this period.

Should you have any questions, you may contact us during opening hours. In view of the current circumstances in which the Office's staff mainly works remotely, we would be grateful if you would contact

us by e-mail at the following addresses:

- [piie.register@economie.fgov.be](mailto:piie.register@economie.fgov.be) : for any matter relating to the patent register or to representation;
- [piie.accountancy@economie.fgov.be](mailto:piie.accountancy@economie.fgov.be) : for any matter relating to fees or payments;
- [opridie-tech@economie.fgov.be](mailto:opridie-tech@economie.fgov.be) : for any matter relating to (applications for) patents, (applications for) supplementary protection certificates and (applications for) plant variety rights;
- [piie.contact@economie.fgov.be](mailto:piie.contact@economie.fgov.be) : for general information.

Kind regards,

Alain LAMBERMONT  
Responsible for the section 'Information'  
Intellectual Property Office