



**Brussels, 13 May 2020 - Communication concerning COVID-19**

Madam, Sir,

To complement the previous communications concerning COVID-19 sent by the Intellectual Property Office on 23 March 2020 and 30 March 2020, we would like to inform you of the following.

With the measures for the partial and gradual lifting of containment, which are being implemented from 4 May, the Office will continue to ensure in this framework service continuity to the users of the industrial property systems managed by the Office.

As you have noted following our communication of 30 March 2020, the Office have decided not to send since mid-March, as far as possible, any legal notifications that would have the effect of setting a new binding deadline on your behalf that would be sanctioned by a loss of rights in the event of non-compliance.

With the partial and gradual lifting of the containment measures, we will start again to send you notifications with binding deadlines on your behalf that would be sanctioned by a loss of rights in the event of non-compliance, as from 25 May 2020.

We invite you to pay particular attention to the processing of these notifications in view of the legal effects they may have. As far as possible, the Office will send you a courtesy copy by e-mail of such notifications, which set a binding deadline on your behalf that would be sanctioned by a loss of rights in the event of non-compliance. This is an exceptional and temporary practice scheduled until 30 June 2020, after which it will be reassessed.

This is all the more important because, as we have already indicated to some of you, the Office does not currently have a legal basis for granting an extension of the deadlines to be respected in proceedings before the Office in the event of a crisis.

For our part, we will endeavor to use as much as possible the flexibility offered by the current legal framework.

If you have any questions regarding these notifications, however, please do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail at the address mentioned on the notifications, or by telephone. The documents and acts prescribed by law to respond to these notifications must be made by one of the authorized means of communication (e-mail, fax, eOLF electronic filing or, if unavoidable, by personal appointment).

In addition, the (informal) search service "EPOQUE" provided by the IPO Information Section and suspended since the beginning of the containment will be resumed from 25 May 2020.

These searches, which are carried out via the patent databases of the European Patent Office and only accessible via the Brussels offices, will, however, only be carried out in limited numbers as a first step.

Requests for searches must be submitted exclusively via the email address:  
[piie\\_doc@economie.fgov.be](mailto:piie_doc@economie.fgov.be)

With kind regards,

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