

Latest News on European Patents

Europe has been bustling with recent news and development from the Unified Patent Court Preparatory Committee and the European Patent Office. Here is a short summary of the main highlights:

New Draft UPC Rules of Procedure and UPC Status

The Preparatory Committee of Europe's Unified Patent Court (UPC) has published the [17th Draft Rules of Procedure](#), with a digest that highlights the latest changes. The changes are incremental and largely technical, with added clarification regarding languages that will be permitted in the new court. An oral hearing is scheduled to be held November 26, 2014, by invitation only. Details can be found [here](#).

In general, the UPC continues to progress toward implementation. A new prototype case management [website](#) was recently launched for testing. Judges have been approved and preparations are being made for training. We all await the preliminary opening of the CJEU on the Spanish challenge, due before the end of 2014. (See [Here](#)).

To date, five European member states have ratified the UPC agreement, which can be tracked [here](#). At least 13 member states must ratify for it to take effect, including France (already ratified), the UK and Germany. The latest estimate is that the new UPC will be in operation by [late 2016](#) or [January 1, 2017](#).

New EPO Guidelines for European Patents

The EPO has implemented new Guidelines for Examination as of November 1, 2014. The new EPO Guidelines are based on recent decisions by the EPO Boards of Appeal. The changes will likely have a mixed impact on patent applicants – some changes will make it more difficult to get claims through the EPO, while others will make it easier. See [here](#) for a more detailed summary. See [here](#) for a link to the current and complete set of EPO Guidelines.