

Communication from the Supervisory Board of the EQE:

The Supervisory Board of the EQE – which is composed of an equal number of representatives of the EPO and the epi– met virtually in the following composition: Fritz Schweinzer epi (Chair), Christoph Ernst EPO (Deputy Chair), Michael Liebetanz epi (member), Telmo Vilela EPO (deputy member). On the agenda were the EQE exams and pre-exams in 2020 and 2021.

On 4 March, the Board had unanimously decided to cancel the exams and pre-exams scheduled to take place in Munich and ten additional European cities from 16 to 19 March 2020. It did so after thoroughly analysing the information publicly available at the time about the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe. The main driver of such decision was the need to safeguard not only the health and safety of the nearly 3.000 people that participate and are involved in the organisation of the Exams, but also to preserve the health and safety of the public in general. At the time, the Supervisory Board also informed the interested parties that it would continue to follow-up closely the developments of the COVID-19 and that a final decision on the 2020 Exams and Pre-Exam would be taken and communicated.

Since then, the members of the Supervisory Board, the Examination Board, the EPO and the epi have been actively discussing solutions that would strike the right balance between the legitimate expectations of candidates for the 2020 exams and the above-mentioned prevailing need to protect health and safety of all candidates, organisers and the public in general.

In this context and considering that:

- a considerable number of European countries are currently on lock-down;
- all European countries have implemented strict measures to minimise social contact, and that it is currently impossible to predict when they will be lifted;
- European and international health authorities cannot forecast how the pandemic will evolve in the coming months;
- major events scheduled for 2020 have been cancelled or postponed to 2021;
- the EPO and the epi need to ensure adequate health and safety conditions to allow the EQE exams and pre-exam to take place; and
- the EPO and the epi need to guarantee the same basic conditions for candidates from all EPO member states, i.e. that they can all travel to one of the exam venues,
- the EPO and the epi need to guarantee a fair examination with high quality and to avoid jeopardizing the EQE 2021.

The Supervisory Board has unanimously adopted the following decisions:

1. No European qualifying examination (pre-examination or main examination consisting of papers A, B, C and D) will be held in 2020.

2. Given the prevailing, exceptional circumstances, and pursuant to Article 3(1) REE, anyone who so wishes will be allowed to enrol for the 2021 main examination, provided that the conditions laid down in Article 11 REE are fulfilled.
3. Candidates who had enrolled for 2020 main examination papers will be considered to be enrolled for those papers in 2021. The respective fees will be carried over to 2021. Candidates will be able to enrol for additional examination papers subject to the payment of the respective fees. Candidates will be given a deadline by which they can withdraw from the examination or particular papers; if they do so, the respective fees will be reimbursed.
4. For the 2021 main examination only, candidates' answers will be marked either on the basis of the legal texts and document versions in force on 31 October 2019, or on the basis of those in force on 31 October 2020, depending on which of the two dates would give the candidate the higher mark.

It is also the intention of the Supervisory Board to give certainty to all involved persons at an early stage and allow for a proper planning of the preparation for EQE 2021.

The EQE Supervisory Board furthermore welcomed and endorsed the proposal presented by the EPO concerning the engagement by the office and epi in a project towards the development and preparation on an e-EQE envisaging the maximum possible use of new technologies applied to the EQE Exams and Pre-Exam. A working group will be set-up for that effect in order to develop proposals and define a plan identifying clear steps, milestones and deliverables towards a full digitalisation of the Exams. In 2021, the Exams will be organised according to the current format.

The Supervisory Board of the EQE.