

Save 30% on EPO patent fees: a win for SMEs and innovators

17 December 2024, 13:01

Katrien Meuwis

Patent filing in the EU has become significantly more affordable for small and innovative entities.

In April 2024, the European Patent Office (EPO) implemented a 30% reduction in key fees for micro-enterprises, natural persons, non-profits, universities, and public research organisations. This new reduction comes on top of existing reductions, such as discounts for filings in any official EU language and a lump sum for translation costs.

These fee reductions make the whole patent process cheaper, especially for small to medium-sized applicants. They're designed to help you protect and commercialise your inventions without breaking the bank. This initiative builds on the EPO's efforts to make the patent system accessible to small and medium-sized applicants, fostering innovation and growth. About a third of all Unitary Patent requests made by European applicants are from SMEs.

Am I considered a micro-entity?

Who can apply for this reduction?

- Micro-enterprises with fewer than 10 employees with an annual turnover or balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 2 million.
- Universities and public research institutions.
- Innovative non-profits and natural persons.
- And importantly, applicants who have filed fewer than 5 European Patent applications in the last five years.

Which fees are reduced?

This 30% reduction can be applied to all major payable patent fees, such as filing, examination, search, designation, grant, and renewal fees.

There's already a "language-related fee reduction" in place for smaller entities. Many of these businesses are cash-strapped, and translating patent applications (sometimes with limited time) is just not feasible financially. This scheme allows those who file their European patent application in an official state language that is not English, French, or German to get a 30 percent reduction in filing and/or examination fees.

> *By means of example: You can combine the previous "language-related fee reductions" with these recent "fee reductions for micro-entities." For example, if a fee of € 1000 is reduced by 30% to € 700 under the language-related fee reduction scheme, then a second reduction of 30% under the micro-entity scheme would take it down to € 490.*

Where do I sign up?

The application steps are described here. It’s important to know that the reduction can be applied to new AND pending patent applications.

Anything else I should know?

If you qualify, you'll also benefit from reduced appeal fees, making the entire process more affordable and accessible. The EPO has published a full list of FAQs on their patent fee reductions, which you can consult here.

Questions regarding these fee changes?

The Sirris Patent Cell, founded with the support of FOD Economy, is your contact point for all your questions related to this issue. Our experts Benoit Olbrechts and Katrien Meuwis are just one click away.

Get in touch

Authors



Katrien Meuwis