

Preparations for Unified Patent Court go on despite upcoming Brexit referendum

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Although observers think a 'leave' vote in the UK Brexit referendum of 23 June 2016 could be a great setback or even the end for the Unitary Patent (UP) system even before it launches, preparations go on unabatedly. [Recruitment of judges](#) for the Unified Patent Court (UPC) is underway, a [Draft Code of Conduct](#) has been published, and at its meeting last Friday in Hamburg, the Preparatory Committee for the Unified Patent Court discussed staff 'pensions, payroll and health care as well as the future corporate functions of the UPC.'

According to the Preparatory Committee about fifty legally and technically qualified judges will be hired, most of them part-time. However, work on a reserve list will also be part of the recruitment process, in order for the UPC to be able to respond effectively to demand from business once the Court is operational.

Work on the budget of the UPC is progressing, 'with a specific focus on the contributions of Member States during the provisional application period and the first year of operation', according to the [report of Friday's meeting](#). It isn't clear when Member States will be asked to make contributions to the Court on the basis of the budget.

'Furthermore the training framework of the UPC was agreed which means that the Budapest training centre of the UPC now can proceed with the planning for training also for the first year of operation.'

As to IT, the coordinator of the working group, Neil Feinson and Vice-Chair Louise Åkerblom presented a report. 'Work is progressing well even though it is clear that the IT environment of the Court is an area that will need constant development and attention', according to the Preparatory Committee.

The European Patent Office, in the meantime, has started a [test of the online procedure](#) which will be available for registering unitary effect once the UP system has entered into force.

A 'Unitary Patent DEMO' plug-in can be installed, which 'enables users to simulate the drafting, signing and sending of a request for unitary effect and to file subsequent documents in a demonstration mode.' Users are invited to send feedback on the demo to upplfeedback@epo.org until 31 July 2016.

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