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SUEPO: Industrial actions ‘striking success’

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The trade union SUEPO has claimed the strike it called for during the meeting of the Administrative Council on 22 March 2022 was a ‘striking success’.

According to a statement it sent to its members two days after the strike, 1.514 employees representing 24,45% of all staff participated in the strike, including 28,63% of staff in The Hague, 20% of staff in Munich, 46,94% of staff in Berlin, and 35,71% of staff in Vienna. It is the highest result of an industrial action since 2016 and even better than the strike of 15 December 2020. It is a clear signal to Mr Campinos that there is room for improvement in terms of social peace.”

The SUEPO also wrote that “strike registration was made difficult and remains unreliable. The registration tool showed an error message already on Friday which led many colleagues to simply discard it and only send an email to their line manager. (...) Some colleagues who managed to register (...) Friday with the tool, found out on Monday that their registration had disappeared. The HR Department confirmed that only the registrations entered via the tool were taken into account for counting the participation. (...) When putting the figures into perspective, even based on these unreliable and incomplete data, we count that at least 40% of non-managerial available staff went on strike.”

According to the SUEPO, the Work-to-Rule actions which started around 22 February 2022 and which are also part of industrial action to achieve the restoration of fundamental rights at the EPO and the suspension or reversal of reforms detrimental to working conditions and staff’s wellbeing, have lead to a drop in production, illustrated by this picture.



The strike was preceded on 17 March by a letter of EPO president Antonio Campinos, in which he invited SUEPO to meet members of his team. The SUEPO stated no progress could be reported from this meeting, however.

A new source of conflict at the EPO may be the start of a ‘professional mobility’

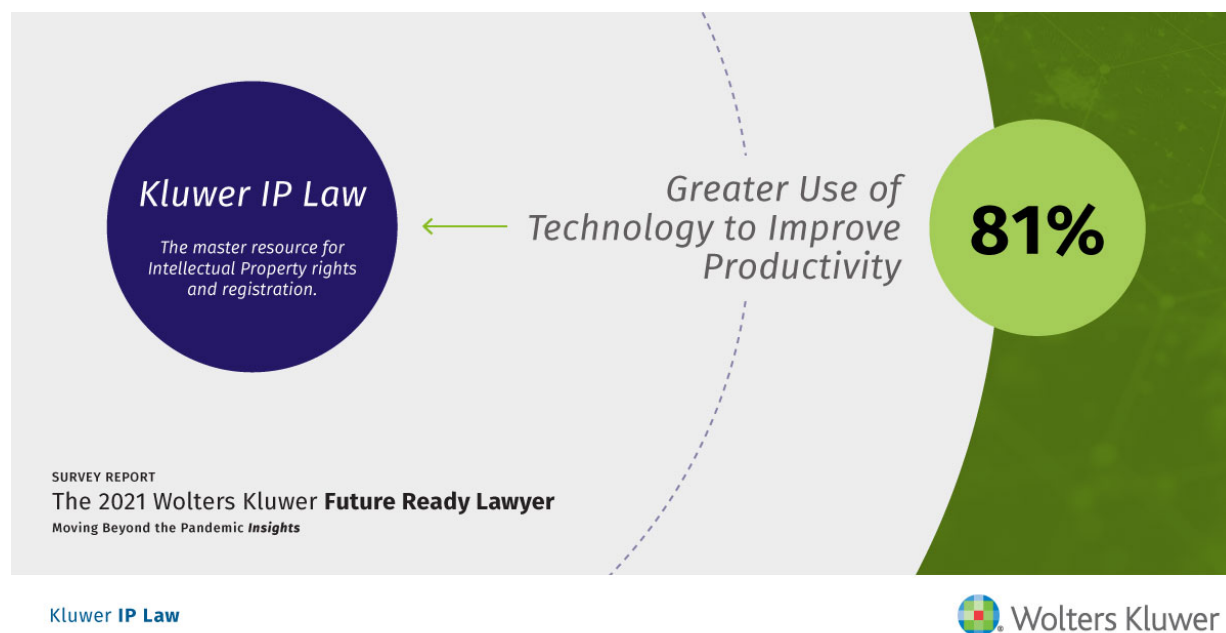
project called for by the EPO management. It received support from the Administrative Council in the 22 March meeting. According to the Central Staff Committee the “orientation paper on professional mobility bears the risk of introducing a decentralisation of the EPO and thus constitutes a fundamental reform of the EPO, incompatible with the mission of the Office”. The CSC “considers that a conference of ministers of the Contracting States under Article 4a EPC is overdue and urges the Heads of Delegation to inform their respective Ministries, if they wish to engage into this ‘professional mobility’ project.”

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