

EPO FLIER No. 51

The EPO-FLIER wants to provide staff with uncensored, independent information at times of social conflict

Presflash 002

Diversity and inclusion

You will agree that for a modern, dynamic forward-looking organisation like the European Patent Office it is essential that we emphasise diversity and inclusion. We owe it to the organisation and those who use our services to cast our net as far as possible in order to gain the best, most able talent and most diverse talent. We need these people so that we can further our mission and unlock the synergies, and leverage the potential locked up in the latent skillset (whatever that sentence means but it sounds good).

Following in-depth consultations and discussions at top management level we had to conclude that the Office was left lacking in this area and that there was scope for improvement in diversity and inclusion.

Accordingly, we have decided to take the following measures:

Diversity

You may know that in my previous position, in Alicante, I felt we were like one big family. And it is so pleasant to be surrounded by members of one's own family. This is true not only for myself but also for all the people of my EUIPO management team I gifted senior employee positions at the EPO.

We will initiate a pilot project, offering also spouses and first-degree relatives of these senior employees jobs in the Office (regardless of their qualifications, although having appropriate qualifications is not necessarily an impediment).

When the pilot proves successful it will be expanded.

We have decided to take a stepwise approach:

In a first step we will forthwith extend the scope of our recruitment efforts to their second and third degree relatives, second cousins, and in-laws.

In a second step we will extend to cover more remote cousins and in laws by marriage (in German "Schwippschwager/Schwippschwägerin").

In a final step we will extend to family friends.

Inclusion

With regard to inclusion, it is unsatisfactory and a matter of shame to me that we have so far included in our recruitment targets only former colleagues and subordinates of these senior

employees. We will, analogously to the approach on diversity, now cast the net wider, in a first step, to close family members of their former colleagues/subordinates. In a second step, we will extend to more remote family members, and finally, in a third step, to friends of their former colleagues/subordinates.

As inclusion and diversity have become a major part of our HR policy it is essential that no pedantic attitude or other obstacles are allowed to impede these laudable aims from flourishing. Hence suitable qualifications and experience will no longer be of any relevance. Job descriptions and vacancy notices will be drafted in order to fit the specific people we are targeting or who have requested a post at the Office. (Fortunately we have modified the recruitment procedures to reduce the influence of those pesky staff representatives who always complained about such procedures.)

We expect all staff to support this initiative, which forms an essential component of the move to produce a more inclusive working culture, as set out in the recent announcement on the intranet. Clearly there may be some impact on staff in place, e.g. by having to change jobs, or take on extra workload to support the newly arrived employees whilst they get acclimatised to their new tasks (for no more than a couple of decades). Also, we expect all staff currently in place to understand that staff reporting assessments and distribution of bonuses will have to be adjusted to take account of the influx of new high calibre staff members.

Your President