

COVID-19: Recommendation for remote interviews for asylum applicants

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has issued [new recommendations](#) providing practical guidance on the conduct of remote interviews for international protection. The recommendations follow [guidance](#) issued by the European Commission to EU Member States, including with input from EASO, on implementing the EU's rules on asylum within the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic. These include the flexibility for interviews to be "conducted with specific arrangements, such as remotely".

The new EASO [Practical recommendations on conducting the personal interview remotely](#) aims to support EU+ Member States in the context of the current health emergency. As a result of the pandemic, preventive measures and social distancing have had consequences for the conduct of personal interviews with applicants for international protection. EASO's recommendations provide means to remedy this through practical advice on conducting the personal interview remotely. This guidance is primarily intended for national asylum authorities, policy-makers and case officers.

EASO's recommendations are based on good national practices from across Europe, and existing EASO practical tools. Furthermore, the guidance elaborates procedural safeguards that asylum authorities may want to consider when preparing and conducting a remote personal interview. The guidance covers various aspects relevant for conducting remote interviews such as practical and technical arrangements, security and confidentiality. The guidance also covers legal, quality-related, and vulnerability-related considerations. The overall goal is to ensure that remote personal interviews are conducted to high quality standards in the best interest of applicants.

The guidance contributes to EASO's overall aim of supporting Member States in achieving common standards and high-quality processes within the Common European Asylum System. In this regard, EASO is fostering communication amongst EU+ States, the exchange of good practices as well as the identification of coping mechanisms applicable to different national contexts.

Update from the Executive Director of the EUIPO

May 15, 2020 [About the EUIPO](#)

Update from the Executive Director of the EUIPO

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, Christian Archambeau, has released a video update on the current situation at the Office. Mr. Archambeau underlined today's publication of the Guidance Note on the end of the extension of time limits, to assist users.

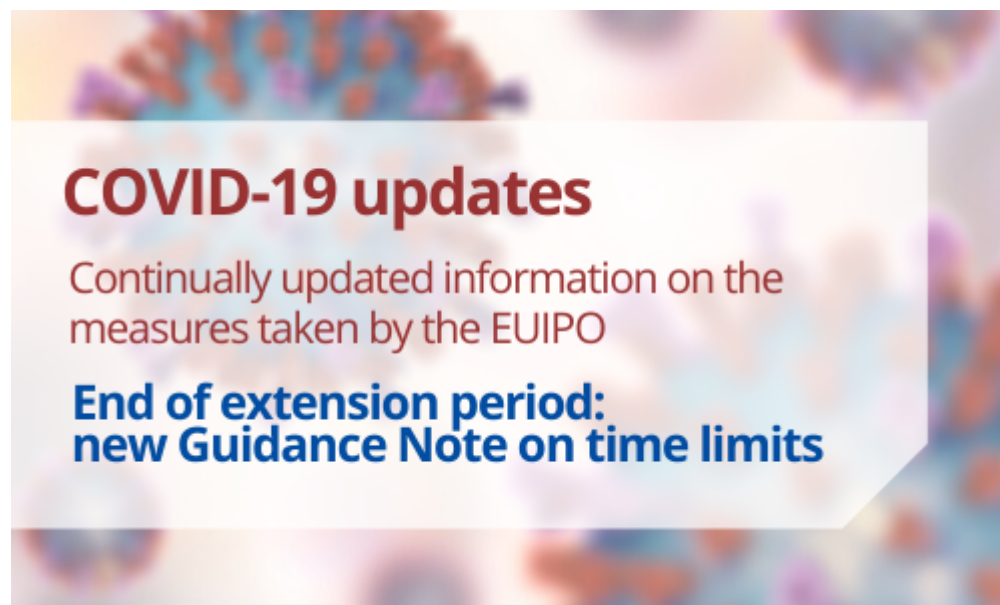
Mr. Archambeau also updated users on the Office's successful use of videoconferencing during the current COVID-19 crisis, and confirmed that the first virtual Stakeholder Quality Assurance Panel meetings will begin next month.

EUIPO's staff has been teleworking since 16 March, in accordance with the state of emergency declared by the Spanish government. Mr. Archambeau gave details on the first phase of the Office's return plan, to be carried out in full compliance with health and safety advice.

COVID-19 – Guidance Note on time limits after end of extension period

May 15, 2020 [About the EUIPO](#)

COVID-19 – Guidance Note on time limits after end of extension period



As a response to the exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Executive Director of the EUIPO issued [Decision No EX-20-3](#) and the consequent [Decision No EX-20-4](#), both of which concern extension of time limits in proceedings before the Office.

As of 18 May 2020, those extensions come to an end. It is possible that some

users may still face difficulties due to the COVID-19 outbreak. To provide them with further guidance on the usual means of dealing with time limits provided for in the applicable Regulations (EUTMR, EUTMDR, EUTMIR, CDR, CDIR), the following clarifications are issued.

AVAILABLE REMEDIES

Time limits are an essential tool for conducting orderly and reasonably swift proceedings. Compliance with them is necessary to ensure clarity and legal certainty. The procedural instruments listed below mitigate the rigorous application of the principle of strict observance of time limits and are available upon request by the parties of proceedings before the Office.

I. EXTENSION OF TIME LIMITS (Article 68 EUTMDR and Article 57 CDIR)

The time limits laid down directly by the Regulations are mandatory and cannot be extended at the request of the parties (although for some exceptions to this rule, please see section IV *Restitutio In Integrum* below). However, time limits determined by the Office in ongoing proceedings can be extended under certain circumstances. Upon receipt of a reasoned request, the Office may grant an extension of a time limit it has set. The request must be submitted by a party to the proceedings and before the time limit in question expires. An extension can be granted in:

- **ex parte proceedings** (i.e. where one party is involved, such as in the examination of the classification or absolute grounds for refusal of a European Union trade mark application). An extension may be granted upon request of the party, depending on the circumstances of the case. The extension cannot exceed six months for any given request. The first request for an extension will be considered appropriate without a detailed justification. However, this does not prevent parties from asking for an additional extension if exceptional circumstances warrant it.
- **inter partes proceedings** (i.e. where there are two or more parties involved, such as in opposition, invalidity and revocation proceedings). In these types of proceedings the first request for an extension will be considered appropriate without a detailed justification and will be granted for a period one to up to six months. Second and subsequent extensions of the same time limit, for a period of up to six months for each extension, can be granted if the party requesting it can explain the presence of exceptional circumstances that prevent it from observing the time limit. The Office may subject the extension of a time limit to the agreement of the other party.

Difficulties arising from measures taken by public authorities against the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 outbreak or instances of sickness of the party or its representative for the same reason do constitute exceptional circumstances that will be considered appropriate by the Office for granting second and subsequent extensions of the same time limit.

II. SUSPENSION OF PROCEEDINGS (Article 71 EUTMDR)

Where *inter partes* proceedings have been suspended, the proceedings are stayed, and no procedural steps are taken (except, where applicable, for the payment of fees). A suspension can be granted:

- **At the reasoned request of one of the parties**, where the suspension is appropriate under the circumstances of the case. Before granting the suspension, the Office will take into account the interest of all the parties and the stage of the proceedings.
- **By joint request of the parties in:**
 - **Trade mark proceedings**, for periods which will not exceed six months. That suspension may be extended upon a request of both parties up to a total maximum of two years.
 - **Design invalidity proceedings**, for periods of six months regardless of the period requested by the parties.

Furthermore, difficulties arising from measures taken by public authorities against the pandemic or instances of sickness of the party or its representative may constitute appropriate circumstances for requesting a suspension. In addition, financial difficulties preventing the party from obtaining or securing continued professional representation before the Office (within the meaning of Articles 119 and 120 EUTMR, and Articles 77 and 78 CDR) that are caused by the pandemic situation may also constitute a proper reason for granting a suspension.

III. CONTINUATION OF PROCEEDINGS (Article 105 EUTMR)

Any party in **trade mark proceedings** before the Office that has **missed a time limit** can seek continuation of proceedings, even without giving an explanation or justification. This is however not available in design proceedings. In order to exercise the right to continuation of proceedings, the party must:

- submit a **request within two months** of the expiry of the unobserved time limit;
- carry out **the omitted act** by the time the request is made; and
- pay a **fee of (EUR 400)**.

Once a request for continuation of proceedings has been granted, the time limit is deemed to be observed and the consequences of having failed to meet the time limit will be deemed not to have occurred.

Continuation of proceedings may be requested, for instance, for all the time limits in opposition proceedings, other than the ones for filing an opposition and paying the applicable fee, such as the time limits under Article 146(7) EUTMR to translate the notice of opposition and under Article 10(2) EUTMDR for submitting proof of use, as well as all the time limits that apply in proceedings for revocation or declaration of invalidity.

Continuation of proceedings is not applicable to certain time limits, specified in Article 105(2) EUTMR, namely:

- the time limits for requesting *restitutio in integrum* and paying the fee (Article 104 EUTMR) and the time limits for continuation of proceedings itself (Article 105(1) EUTMR);
- the period of three months within which conversion must be requested and the conversion fee paid (Article 139 EUTMR);
- the time limit for filing an opposition and paying the fee (Article 46(1) and (3) EUTMR);
- the time limits laid down in Article 32 EUTMR (payment of the application fee), Article 34(1) EUTMR (right of priority), Article 38(1) EUTMR (right of exhibition priority), Article 41(2) EUTMR (period to remedy filing deficiencies), Article 53(3) EUTMR (period for renewal), Article 68 EUTMR (appeal) and Article 72(5) EUTMR (appeal before the Court of Justice); and
- the time limits for claiming, after the application has been filed, seniority within the meaning of Article 39 EUTMR.

IV. RESTITUTIO IN INTEGRUM (Article 104 EUTMR and Article 67 CDR)

The remedy of reinstatement of rights, also called *restitutio in integrum*, allows a party to proceedings before the Office to be reinstated in its rights, when:

- it has **missed a time limit** to perform a procedural act;
- the time limit was missed despite it **taking all due care** required by the circumstances; and
- the non-observance (of the time limit) by the party has the direct consequence of causing the **loss of a right or means of redress**.

In order to exercise the right to *restitutio in integrum*, the party must:

- submit **a request within two months of the removal of the cause of non-compliance** and no later than **one year** after expiry of the missed time limit. In this context:
- The date when the cause of non-compliance is removed is the first date on which the party knew or should have known about the facts that led to the non-observance of the time limit. If the ground for non-compliance was the absence or illness of the party or the professional representative dealing with the case, the date on which the cause of non-compliance is removed is the date on which the representative returns to work.
- However, if the omitted act is a request for renewal of an EU trade mark

registration or a Community design, or payment of the renewal fees (Article 53(3) EUTMR and Article 13(3) CDR), the one-year time limit, specified above, starts on the day on which the protection ends (date of expiry), and not on the date the further six-month time limit (grace period) expires. Once the grace period expires the Office will inform the party about the expiry and the loss of rights.

- **set out the facts** justifying that they have taken **all due care** (required by the circumstances) to perform the omitted act and provide appropriate and proportionate evidence. The circumstances must be exceptional, namely circumstances that cannot be predicted from experience and are therefore unforeseeable and involuntary, such as natural disasters and general strikes. In this regard, failures to comply with time limits caused by operational difficulties arising from measures taken by public authorities against the pandemic or due to instances of sickness of the party or its representative may constitute exceptional circumstances in the above sense. Financial difficulties preventing the party from obtaining or securing continued professional representation before the Office or from paying fees payable to the Office when they were originally due that are caused by the pandemic situation (i.e. are due to objective circumstances that are beyond the sphere of influence of the party) and have resulted in the loss of right or means of redress may also constitute exceptional circumstances (unless otherwise provided for in the Regulations);
- carry out **the omitted act** within the abovementioned period (e.g. submit the observations for which the time limit was missed, pay the missing renewal fee and any surcharges); and
- pay a **fee (EUR 200)**.

Granting *restitutio in integrum* has the retroactive legal effect that the time limit that was not met will be considered to have been observed, and that any loss of rights in the interim will be deemed never to have occurred.

Restitutio in integrum is available, for instance, when the party has missed one of the time limits, laid down in: Article 32 EUTMR (payment of the application fee), Article 34(1) EUTMR (right of priority), Article 38(1) EUTMR (right of exhibition priority), Article 41(2) EUTMR (period to remedy filing deficiencies), Article 53(3) EUTMR (the period for renewal) subject to the specific provision in Article 104(2) EUTMR, Article 68 EUTMR (appeal), Article 139 EUTMR (request for conversion into a national trade mark) and Article 39 EUTMR (the time limit for claiming seniority after the application has been filed).

Restitutio in integrum is not applicable to certain time limits specified in Article 104(5) EUTMR and Article 67(5) CDR, namely:

- the priority period, which is the six-month time limit for filing an application claiming the priority of a previous design or utility model application (Article 41(1) CDR);

- the time limit for filing an opposition and paying the opposition fee (Article 46(1) and (3) EUTMR);
- the time limits for *restitutio in integrum* itself (Article 104(2) EUTMR and Article 67(2) CDR);
- the time limit for requesting continuation of proceedings and paying the fee (Article 105(1) EUTMR);
- the two-month time limit to file an appeal against a decision of the Boards of Appeal before the General Court (Article 72(5) EUTMR).

As a general rule, a fee must be paid for each application for *restitutio in integrum* (i.e. one fee per individual right). Nevertheless, in certain cases exceptions may apply. The minimum conditions (all of which must be met) for applying these exceptions are the following:

- all the rights should relate to the same rights holder;
- all the rights should be of the same type (e.g. EUTMs, RCDs);
- the unobserved time limit should be the same for all rights (e.g. missed time limit for renewal);
- the loss of all rights concerned should be the result of the same circumstances.

If the abovementioned conditions are met, the application for *restitutio in integrum* relating to multiple rights can be subject to a single fee. For instance, when a party has missed renewing multiple EU trade mark registrations, it can file a single request for *restitutio in integrum* for the renewal of all of its marks and pay a single *restitutio in integrum* fee. Otherwise, an individual fee must be paid for each right concerned.

CONDITIONS FOR APPLICATION

The Office's Guidelines for examination of European Union trade marks (Trade Mark Guidelines) and the Guidelines for examination of registered Community designs (Design Guidelines) are applicable to all the above listed time limit instruments. They will be interpreted in the light of this communication insofar as they relate to exceptional circumstances caused by the ongoing pandemic. The same applies to the Rules of Procedure of the Office's Boards of Appeal. Further information is available for:

- **extension of time limits** at: [Trade mark and Design guidelines, Means of communication, time limits](#); [Trade mark and Design guidelines, Extension of time limits](#); [Trade mark guidelines, Extension of time limits in opposition proceedings](#); [Trade mark guidelines, Extension of the cooling-off period](#) and [Design guidelines, Extension of time limits](#).
- **suspension of proceedings** at: [Trade mark guidelines, Opposition proceedings, Suspension](#); [Trade mark guidelines, Friendly settlement](#);

[Trade mark guidelines, Cancellation, Proceedings, Suspensions](#) and [Design guidelines, Suspension](#).

- **continuation of proceedings** at: [Trade mark and Design guidelines, Continuation of proceedings](#).
- **restitutio in integrum** at: [Trade mark and Design guidelines, Restitutio in integrum](#).
- **Rules of Procedure of the Boards of Appeal** at: [Decision 2020-1 of 27 February 2020 of the Presidium of the Boards of Appeal](#).

[**#CohesionAlliance starts consultation on new declaration**](#)



□ A strong cohesion policy for a cohesive, sustainable and resilient Europe

On the occasion of Europe Day on 9 May, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and #CohesionAlliance partner organisations launched a joint consultation on a renewed declaration in response to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 crisis. Interested organisations, institutions and individuals can contribute to the consultations until 30 May 2020.□

The #CohesionAlliance is a coalition of more than 12.000 signatories that calls for a reinforced EU cohesion policy within the Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2020. After the outbreak of the Corona virus and the latest development of the social and economic crisis triggered by the pandemic, the Alliance's partners believe that solidarity and coordinated action on an EU level is needed now more than ever to ensure that the gaps between more and less economically developed communities do not increase and no citizen or region in Europe is left behind.

The Cohesion Alliance is therefore taking a new step ahead to ensure that Cohesion is a key objective for all EU policies and investments and a crucial element in the EU recovery plan. This requires the involvement of regional and local actors in key decision and a stronger attention to the needs of regions, cities and villages, in all EU actions.

"By investing in all of Europe's people and places, we will all recover faster. Supporting those communities most in need, tackling disparities and accelerating sustainable green growth is not only a matter of fairness and equity, but of economic pragmatism. To achieve this, Europe needs a strong cohesion policy and the involvement of local actors as real partners in all

its recovery plans. This is why, as #CohesionAlliance partners, we have decided to renew our commitment and start working on a new declaration. We want to reaffirm the value of cohesion in the post-pandemic scenario, and help build a new partnership among EU, national, regional and local actors”, said CoR president **Apostolos Tzitzikostas**.□

The CohesionAlliance partner organisations have put forward a [draft proposal for a new declaration](#) and invite all interested organisations, institutions, individuals and signatories to send in their comments, ideas and suggestions.

The final declaration will be shaped according to the consultation outcome and to the forthcoming proposals for a Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2020 and the aligned EU Recovery Plan by the European Commission. The declaration will be launched by the partners of the Cohesion Alliance on the occasion of a new meeting of our Alliance by early June.

You can find the draft proposal in all languages on the [#CohesionAlliance webpage](#). Please send your contributions by **30 May 2020** via e-mail to: cohesionalliance@cor.europa.eu

Background:

In October 2017 the European Committee of the regions launched the #CohesionAlliance in partnership with the leading associations of regions and cities – [Association of European Border Regions](#) (AEBR), the [Assembly of European Regions](#) (AER), the [Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies](#) (CALRE), the [Council of European Municipalities and Regions](#) (CEMR), the [Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe](#) (CPMR) and [EUROCITIES](#) – to raise awareness about the vital role of cohesion policy. Since its launch, the Alliance’s declaration has been signed by more than 12 000 individual signatories, 121 regions, 135 cities and counties, 50 associations of regional and local governments, 40 Members of the European Parliament and 35 EU sectoral associations.

Declaration available in all languages:

[BG](#) – [HR](#) – [CS](#) – [DA](#) – [NL](#) – [EN](#) – [ET](#) – [FI](#) – [FR](#) – [DE](#) – [EL](#) – [HU](#) – [IT](#) – [LV](#) – [LT](#) – [MT](#) – [PL](#) – [PT](#) – [RO](#) – [SK](#) – [SL](#) – [ES](#) – [SV](#)□

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Common Security and Defence Policy:

Council extends the mandates of four Heads of civilian Missions



The Council today decided to extend the mandates of four Heads of Common Security and Defence Policy civilian Missions, following a proposal by the High Representative and the endorsement of the Political and Security Committee.

They are:

- Mr Lars-Gunnar **Wigemark** as Head of Mission of **EULEX KOSOVO until 30 June 2021**. The EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo was launched in 2008 with the overall mandate to assist the Kosovo authorities in establishing sustainable and independent rule of law institutions.
- Mr Antti **Hartikainen** as Head of Mission of **EUAM Ukraine until 30 June 2021**. The EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine started its operations in December 2014 with the aim of assisting the Ukrainian authorities towards a sustainable reform of the civilian security sector.
- Mr Kauko **Aaltomaa** as Head of Mission of **EUPOL COPPS until 30 September 2020**. The EUPOL COPPS, established on 1 January 2006, is the European Union Police and Rule of Law Mission for the Palestinian Territory contributing to sustainable and effective policing and wider criminal justice arrangements under Palestinian ownership.
- Mr Vincenzo **Tagliaferri** as Head of Mission of **EUBAM Libya until 30 September 2020**. The EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya was set up in 2013 to support the Libyan authorities in developing border management and security at the country's land, sea and air borders.