

Expedited Examination of EC Patent Applications (“PACE”)

The EPO will accelerate prosecution if a formal PACE Request is filed.

A PACE request can be more effective if filed on EPC filing or EPC regional phase entry, although a PACE Request can in principle be filed at any time.

There is no official fee for preparing and filing a PACE Request but we will charge £50.00 covering preparation, filing and additional on-going docketing.

The following should be noted:

- Applications on the PACE programme will normally be accelerated although this is not always in practice the case; when a PACE Request is filed, the EPO “*makes every effort*” to issue the first examination report within three months of receipt by the Examining Division of the application or the request for accelerated examination¹ (whichever is later).
- The EPO in general expects a PACE application to be handled without recourse to extensions of time and will generally remove an application from the programme if an extension is requested.
- Practical experience tends to show that:
 - applications on the PACE programme can be rushed by an applicant finding he is short of time for consideration, and this should be taken fully into account as a practical real world consideration
 - complex cases which experience serious obstacles are in principle poorly suited to the PACE programme in practice unless the applicant is unusually committed to prioritizing the application within his other responsibilities
 - applications on the PACE programme are often more expensive to prosecute due to urgency and the need for special handling by attorneys.

¹ Or, where there has been an Extended Search Report issued by the EPO, the applicant's response to that Report