

Data protection statement on the processing of personal data in the context of the Code Fest

Protecting your privacy is of the utmost importance to the European Patent Office (EPO). We are committed to protecting your personal data and ensuring respect for data subjects' rights when performing our tasks and providing our services. All data of a personal nature that identify you directly or indirectly will be processed lawfully, fairly and with due care.

The processing operations described below are subject to the EPO Data Protection Rules ([DPR](#)).

The information in this statement is provided in accordance with Articles 16 and 17 DPR.

EPO CodeFest is a competition that aims to explore the rapid rise of the use of Artificial Intelligence in the handling, interpretation and analysis of data, leading to a transformative impact on how humans derive value from data.

Leveraging AI to enhance innovation and support strategic decision-making offers many significant benefits. This is an important area of focus at the EPO, as it not only enriches the utility of patent data but also maximises user impact by accelerating the advancement of new technologies, as outlined in Strategic Plan 2028.

This event includes a code challenge, for which participants are asked to develop a generative AI application that transforms how users access, interpret and leverage patent data to uncover hidden opportunities and streamline decision-making processes.

For more information on the code challenge's terms and conditions (e.g. eligibility criteria, intellectual property rights, etc.), please refer to the Rules of Competition.

1. What is the nature and purpose of the processing operation?

This data protection statement explains the way in which Principal Directorate Communication ("PD Communication") processes personal data to carry out the Code Fest event. The event is organised by the EPO and open to EPO internal staff and external stakeholders.

EPO CodeFest is a series of multi-week coding competitions designed to tackle contemporary challenges in a highly innovative environment. It offers a unique opportunity for coders and developers to engage in solving real-world problems using the unparalleled data resources of the European Patent Office (EPO).

For the organisation and management of the event, the EPO opens a call for submissions of proposals. Later in the stage selected participants are contacted if they were chosen for the next phase. In the second phase, the EPO opens a call for submissions of the final proposals, from which the finalists are selected. The finalists are then invited to attend the Prize ceremony, where the awards to the top three submissions are given. The award ceremony will be part of the Patent Knowledge Forum, organised in a hybrid format.

Online attendants can participate via Zoom. In order to know more about how Zoom processes your personal data, please refer to their [Privacy Policy](#).

Personal data are processed for the following purposes:

- Registering the event's participants
- Organising and managing the online sessions taking place during the event
- Recording, photographing and streaming content showing the participants being taped by their sponsor or their contractors
- Giving access to participants to the event platform by providing an access link
- Distribution of agendas
- Coordinating any required follow-up activities (e.g.: announcement of the next Code Fest challenge)
- Coordinating any technical issues affecting the execution of the event that may arise before, during or after the event takes place.
- Creating promotional audiovisual content to be published in EPO internal, external and social media channels or the drafting of news items.

In order to allow participants to ask questions, the EPO will use, during the event's online sessions, the Q&A platform Slido, an external processor of the EPO. Please be aware that you can choose directly on Slido whether your questions, comments and/or opinions are posted to the event publicly or anonymously.

The event will be recorded and made available internally to EPO staff and contractors (having access to EPO intranet) on EPO TV. The event will also be published on our external website as well as our Social Media Channels, in particular YouTube.

We use social media to inform about and promote the event (before and/or after it takes place). For instance, the EPO might produce highlight videos of the event, which we will upload to our YouTube page and promote them on the EPO website, X, Instagram and/or LinkedIn.

Each social media provider has its own policy on how it processes personal data when users access its website. We therefore encourage you to refer to the various providers' privacy policies for more information on the purposes and scope of their processing of the personal data:

- [X](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Instagram](#)

After the event, you will receive an email with a link to a User Satisfaction Survey. Your feedback will be collected anonymously through MS Teams forms. Should you wish to have more information on how the EPO process your personal data using the MS Teams form, please visit the following [link](#).

If you do not agree to the collection of your personal data during the event online sessions, such as your image or voice recorded, for compelling and legitimate grounds, you can always exercise your right to object. Alternatively, you can choose not to be present when the recording occurs, for instance, by switching off your camera. To exercise your right to object, please contact the event organisers in order to allow them to take your wish into account and, if the case, offer you an alternative solution.

Please note that objecting to the processing of your personal data does not affect the lawfulness of the processing done prior to the objection.

The processing is not intended to be used for any automated decision-making, including profiling.

Your personal data will not be transferred to recipients outside the EPO which are not covered by Article 8(1), (2) and (5) DPR unless an adequate level of protection is ensured. In the absence of an adequate level of protection, a transfer can only take place if appropriate safeguards have been put in place and enforceable

data subject rights and effective legal remedies for data subjects are available, or if derogations for specific situations as per Article 10 DPR apply).

2. What personal data do we process?

The following categories of personal data are processed:

For **all** participants:

- Audiovisual content (recordings) and pictures taken during the event online sessions
- Statements, opinions, questions and comments made during the online sessions (together with your identification data if you choose to publish them in the Q&A platform without the anonymous function)

For jury members (internal EPO Staff):

- Name and surname
- Professional email address
- Affiliation
- CV and/short biographies
- Audiovisual Material (e.g.: Photos and/or Videos).

For internal and external participants:

- Participant's contact details (e.g. email address and phone number (if necessary)) and other personal information, namely
 - Name and surname (also for event and post event promotion)
 - Age, only to know whether you are 18 years or older
 - Nationality
 - Place of residence
 - Nature and purpose of the application (also for event and post event promotion)
 - Employer or other organisation you are affiliated with (e.g.: College or university, also for event and post event promotion)
 - Team's name and members of such (also for event and post event promotion)
 - Voice recordings (also for event and post event promotion)
 - Personal data contained in participant's contributions and materials submitted (e.g.: audio, video, pictures, reports, documents and/or presentations, also for event and post event promotion)

For winning teams:

- The EPO and its sponsors may further process the event participant winners' (as defined in the Rules of Competition) above listed personal data, for additional promotional purposes (e.g. publication of the award ceremony and prizes on the EPO intranet, website and/or social media).

For those participants acting as speakers/moderators, additional data may be collected:

- CV or personal picture

As the event includes participation of speakers, we will publish the agenda of the meeting with the name, affiliation and intervention title of the speakers. We might publish other personal information that the speakers provide us with, such as a short biography summary photos, etc. If you are a speaker and you do not wish your image/voice to be photographed/recorded/web published or that we disseminate the agenda of the

meeting with your name, affiliation and intervention title, your CV or other data you have provided us, for compelling and legitimate grounds, you can always 'object'. In such cases, please, contact the meeting/event organisers in advance in order to allow them to take your wish into account and specify the reasons due to which your legitimate interests might be prejudiced by the disclosure of your data.

3. Who is responsible for processing the data?

Personal data are processed under the responsibility of PD Communication (PD 02), acting as the EPO's delegated data controller.

Personal data are processed by the EPO staff involved in managing the initiative, project or activity of PD54 Patent Intelligence, DG4 (Vice President 4 Corporate Service (VP4 Office) and PD Communication (PD02) referred to in this statement.

External contractors involved in providing the event platform, the Q&A platform and maintaining certain services may also process personal data, which can include accessing it.

4. Who has access to your personal data and to whom are they disclosed?

Personal data are disclosed on a need-to-know basis to the EPO staff working in PD Communication, PD54 Patent Intelligence and DG4 (Vice President 4 Corporate Service (VP4 Office) (e.g.: Business Information Technology (BiT) and Chief Sustainability Office (CSO)).

Personal data may be disclosed to third-party service providers for maintenance and support purposes, as well as to evaluate the prototype software code and/or requiring a team to provide evidence of permission to use certain third-party materials, or to sign additional agreements related to prizes, taxes, or similar, as determined by the Sponsor.

Personal data will only be shared with authorised persons responsible for the necessary processing operations. They will not be used for any other purposes or disclosed to any other recipients.

5. How do we protect and safeguard your personal data?

We take appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard and protect your personal data from accidental or unlawful destruction, loss or alteration and unauthorised disclosure or access.

All personal data are stored in secure IT applications in accordance with the EPO's security standards. Appropriate levels of access are granted individually only to the above-mentioned recipients.

For systems hosted on EPO premises, the following basic security measures generally apply:

- User authentication and access control (e.g. role-based access control to the systems and network, principles of need-to-know and least privilege)
- Logical security hardening of systems, equipment and network
- Physical protection: EPO access controls, additional access controls to datacentre, policies on locking offices
- Transmission and input controls (e.g. audit logging, systems and network monitoring)
- Security incident response: 24/7 monitoring for incidents, on-call security expert.

In principle, the EPO has adopted a paperless policy management system; however, if paper files containing personal data need to be stored on EPO premises, they are locked in a secure location with a restricted access.

For personal data processed on systems not hosted on EPO premises, the providers (or external processors) processing the personal data have committed in a binding agreement to comply with their data protection obligations under the applicable data protection legal frameworks. The EPO has also carried out a privacy and security risk assessment. These systems are required to have implemented appropriate technical and organisational measures such as: physical security measures, access and storage control measures, securing data at rest (e.g. by encryption); user, transmission and input control measures (e.g. network firewalls, network intrusion detection system (IDS), network intrusion protection system (IPS), audit logging); conveyance control measures (e.g. securing data in transit by encryption).

6. How can you access, rectify and receive your data, request that your data be erased, or restrict/object to processing? Can your rights be restricted?

You have the right to access, rectify and receive your personal data, not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing, to have your data erased and to restrict and/or object to the processing of your data (Articles 18 to 24 DPR).

Your right to rectification applies only to factual data processed as part of the selection procedure. In addition, your data relating to the admissibility criteria cannot be rectified after the closing date for submitting proposals.

If you would like to exercise any of these rights, internals may write to the delegated data controller at PDComm-DPL@epo.org, externals may write to the delegated data controller at DPOexternalusers@epo.org. In order to enable us to respond more promptly and precisely, you always need to provide certain preliminary information with your request. We therefore encourage you to fill in this [form](#) (for externals) or this [form](#) (for internals) and submit it with your request.

We will reply to your request without undue delay and in any event within one month of receipt of the request. However, Article 15(2) DPR provides that this period may be extended by two further months where necessary in view of the complexity and number of requests received. We will inform you of any such delay.

7. What is the legal basis for processing your data?

Personal data are processed in accordance with Article 5(a) DPR, which states that “processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the exercise of the official activities of the European Patent Organisation or in the legitimate exercise of the official authority vested in the controller, which includes the processing necessary for the Office's management and functioning.”

8. How long do we keep your data?

Personal data processed by the data controller or the service providers under its supervision are stored for the period of time necessary to achieve the purpose for which they have been processed.

Personal data will be kept only by PD0.2 for the time needed to achieve the purposes for which it is processed and then deleted from its databases as follows:

For personal data related to sound, video and audio-visual recording/photographs of meetings and events, they are stored for educational, institutional, historical, informational and/or promotional purposes for a period ranging from 2, 10 or 25 years according to the retention categories reflected in the PD Communication Audiovisual Retention Policy, which can be provided upon request.

Events that can fall in the aforementioned retention categories are:

- Recurrent events with a low level of newsworthiness (2 years renewable);
- Non-recurrent events related to the core business of the EPO, for example related to the promotion of patent knowledge activities (10 years renewable);

- Recurrent events with a high level of newsworthiness related to the core activity of PD Communication at the EPO (e.g.: European Inventor Award, European Patent Convention 50 years celebration) (25 years renewable).

For personal data related to contact details (e.g.: name, surname, email address, affiliation), they are stored for and deleted after a maximum period of 5 years as part of an internal EPO contact details database owned by PD Communication and shared internally among EPO organisational units in order for them to contact data subjects for similar future meetings/events.

Nevertheless, in the event that the data subject shows interest in continuing to be part of this list, Principal Directorate Communication may keep their data for a further period of up to 5 years, or until the data subject indicates otherwise or the data controller becomes aware that the data subject cannot longer be part of the list e.g., receipt of an automatic error reply that confirms that the contact details no longer exist. In order to prevent inaccurate data being kept indefinitely, after the 5-year maximum period they will be asked regularly whether they wish to remain on the list and whether their data is still accurate.

Additionally, for participants or speakers who agreed to be contacted for future events, personal data such as short biographies, CVs, Intervention title, or any additional personal data provided by them are stored for a maximum period of 3 years, or for a shorter period if the if the EPO becomes aware that the data subject can no longer be part of the database (e.g.: Upon retirement of the speaker). In order to prevent inaccurate data to be kept indefinitely, after the 3-year maximum period they will be asked regularly whether they want the EPO to keep the personal data.

Where personal data, for promotional purposes only, are made available on Social Media, the retention period will be determined by such platforms.

In the event of a formal appeal/litigation, all data held at the time the formal appeal/litigation was initiated will be retained until the proceedings have been closed.

9. Contact information

If you have any questions about the processing of your personal data, internals may write to the delegated controller at PDComm-DPL@epo.org or the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at DPO@epo.org. Externals may write to the delegated data controller and/or the DPO at DPOexternalusers@epo.org.

Review and legal redress

If you consider that the processing infringes your rights as a data subject, you have the right to request review by the controller under Article 49 DPR and, if you disagree with the outcome of the review, the right to seek legal redress under Article 50 DPR.