

Recruitment

Euroseeds (www.euroseeds.eu) is inviting applications for the position of

Manager Intellectual Property and Legal Affairs

to join the Euroseeds General Secretariat's team in Brussels, Belgium.

Background

The EU seed sector is a highly innovative sector constantly creating new and better plant varieties for the benefit of farmers and society at large. Every year, approximately 3500 new agricultural and vegetable varieties are approved for the EU market, a result of the sector's exceptionally high investment in R&D reaching up to 25-30% of companies' annual turnover. Each new plant variety represents this high financial investment as well as 8 to 15 years of breeding and development work. At the same time, plant products are self-reproducing biological material that it is easy to copy. This presents challenges for an effective and fair system of intellectual property rights that provides the necessary return on investment to fuel further R&D; hence, Plant Breeder's Rights (PBRs) are key for breeders and seed companies. Next to PBRs, other forms of IP are also very relevant for the seed sector, such as patents for biotechnological inventions, trademarks etc. The balanced co-existence of these different forms of IP rights requires careful consideration.

As the starting point of all food production, seed is a highly regulated product; from access to genetic resources, use of specific breeding techniques, variety registration, seed certification, plant health, and defined marketing rules for specific material such as organics, a wide range of EU and international rules govern the sector, which require continuous monitoring.

About Euroseeds

Euroseeds is the voice of the European seed sector, representing the interests of those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plant species. With more than 36 national member associations from EU Members States and beyond, Euroseeds represents several thousand seed businesses, as well 67 direct company members, including from seed related industries (www.euroseeds.eu).

Job description

The “Manager Intellectual Property and Legal Affairs” will work closely with the Euroseeds membership and, as part of the Euroseeds Policy Team, under the guidance of the Secretary General to whom he/she will be reporting. The Manager represents Euroseeds on all relevant matters related to intellectual property and legal affairs towards the responsible EU institutions, specifically the European Commission, the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), the European Patent Office (EPO), the EU Observatory on IP Infringements as well as the Union for Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and national plant variety offices. The Manager shall be the spokesperson of the EU seed sector on these subjects and assure multiplication of European activities at international level as required.

The Manager will be responsible for the management, support and animation of the dedicated Euroseeds Committee on Intellectual Property Rights as well as its Working Group on Farm Saved Seed; further tasks may be assigned in line with the association’s needs and individual expertise and experience.

Euroseeds welcomes applications of experienced professionals with a minimum of 3 to 5 years of practical work experience in the relevant fields. Specific further training will be provided.

The position requires regular travel, mainly in Europe, but at times also internationally.

Specific tasks

- Following the developments in plant breeder’s rights both at European and international level, including regular involvement in the relevant bodies of the CPVO and UPOV. Development of the sector’s position on the specific topics on the agenda of these bodies and representation of the views at the relevant meetings.
- Providing input to plant breeder’s rights related discussions at the level of the European Commission (DG SANTE, DG TRADE, etc.) as well as at the EU Observatory on IP Infringements.
- Monitoring of developments in European patent law with particular attention to patents for plant-related inventions; following the implementation of the Unified Patent Court Agreement at the national level.
- Representing Euroseeds in EU and international bodies such as the CPVO, UPOV and EPO as well as in WIPO on relevant IP and related matters.

- Management and animation of the IP-related discussions within Euroseeds' IP committee (and Farm Saved Seed Working Group), including preparation of meetings, minuting and implementation of decisions.
- Providing legal analysis and advice on all matters related to seed legislation, including, but not limited to, seed marketing, GMO legislation, plant protection products, plant health, biodiversity.
- Overseeing all matters related to the legal and statutory obligations of the association under Belgian law (publication of necessary information in the Belgian State Gazette and the Belgian Company Register (BCE); updating of Ultimate Beneficiary Owner (UBO) register etc.).

Qualifications

- University degree in law from a university in an EU Member State
- Solid knowledge and understanding of EU law
- Specialization in IP law (preferably patents and plant variety rights)
- Practical work experience in EU and IP law in an association, company, firm or EU institution (min. 3 - 5 years)
- Knowledge of international public law and multilateral environmental agreements is an asset
- Ability to explain legal issues and provide legal analysis of complex legal matters in a simple and concise manner, but also able to communicate with authorities and experts
- Very strong written and spoken EN (working language) and solid FR
- Computer literate

Personality and skills

- Excellent interpersonal skills, service oriented
- Tactful in dealing with people, also under pressure
- Discretion, good judgment ability, flexibility and versatility
- Organizational skills, management ability
- Team player with initiative and ability to work independently
- Curiosity and affinity to new fields of law
- Creative and innovative

Application

Interested candidates should send their CV and motivation letter, including salary expectations, to Euroseeds Secretary General Garlich von Essen (vonessen@euroseeds.eu) with the reference "Manager IP & Legal Affairs". All applications will be treated confidential.

Process

Application deadline: 17.07.2023

First selection round: online interview between 31.07. and 18.08.2023

Second selection round: in-person oral interview and written test, between 28.08. and 05.09.2023

Third selection round: in-person oral interview 18.09. – 29.09.2023

Starting date: November 2023 or earliest possible date



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