Recruitment at the EPO
Past and planned workforce management
Recruitment under the current administration

From 2019 – 2023

• Fewer recruits than leavers in 2019
• Recruitment freeze during the pandemic 2020 – 2021, not compensated for later
• In 2022 and 2023, staff numbers falling further again fewer recruits than leavers

Plan for 2024 – 2028

• No change in direction, maintain pace of staff cuts
• 80% replacement for examiners, FOs no replacement in 2024, and 50% in other areas

Prudent, cautious approach?
Workforce and Workload: Examiners

Examiners

- Actuals
- Plan

-6%
+13%
-11%

Source: Social reports, Orientation on recruitment, Patent Index
Change in Age Demographics of all EPO Staff

Source: Social Reports 2012, 2022

- Average Age of Staff:
  - 2012: 45
  - 2022: 50.3
  - Increase: +5.3 yrs

- Staff with ages 50+:
  - 2012: 25.6%
  - 2022: 54.6%
  - Increase: doubled

- Staff with ages 55+:
  - 2012: 12.6%
  - 2022: 27.6%
  - Increase: doubled
Impact of Low Recruitment and Demographic Change

- More work for fewer colleagues, and targets ever increasing
- Implications for pension contribution calculations
  - Actuarial method had to change because of variations in average age
- A wave of retirements is on the horizon
  - Staff ages not evenly distributed among teams
  - Technical areas may see majority of experts departing
  - Experienced colleagues relied upon for coaching

Response from the administration

- “Front loading” solves the problems with knowledge transfer and coaching capacity
- Digitalisation and new tools have enabled efficiency gains and cuts in staff numbers