

**EIP**

## The 2020 CIPA Life Sciences Webinars

Head of EIP HealthTech practice, Gareth Probert, spoke at the CIPA Life Sciences conference providing an update on the effects of COVID-19 on EPO practices this year. Gareth discussed the ongoing variations from 'normal' operation, and most significantly, the recent announcement that videoconferencing will be used for all Opposition hearings until at least September 2021. Consent of the parties will not be required for the use of videoconferencing, and whilst an 'in-person' hearing can be requested, serious and specific reasons are required. Also, EPO Board of Appeal hearings will be increasingly held by videoconference next year.

EIP attorneys are experienced in conducting videoconferencing oral proceedings, and have completed many already this year. Our experience of video hearings is largely positive, with good engagement from all parties meaning that there is often little difference to being in the room. Also, the lack of a need for a hearing room means that more hearings can be arranged (and so cases will be resolved in a more timely manner) and costs for clients are reduced, as travel and accommodation costs are avoided. This reduction in costs also means that observing competitors' hearings as an interested third party becomes more attractive.

Please get in touch with your usual EIP contact for more information.