

INPI starts providing video conference interviews

20.04.2021 2 min read

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In yet another step towards improving communication with users, the Brazilian Patent and Trademark Office (INPI) incorporated a tool for scheduling interviews by videoconference in its service platform.

The so-called “Serviço de Atendimento Telepresencial” (“Telepresence Assistance Service”) was long awaited. In recent years, the INPI has progressively restricted telephone interviews, directing users to the “Fale Conosco” (“Contact Us”) channel. In addition to that, with face-to-face meetings discouraged or strictly forbidden, videoconferencing tools became popular over the past year.

In line with best practices, therefore, the INPI now facilitates access to examiners. It is important to note that INPI/PR Ordinance No. 512, of October 25, 2019, already provided for interviews in person or by voice or video conference in some situations (particularly when there is a need for guidance), aiming at “clarifications of technical nature on the content of acts already practiced in an administrative proceeding, notably those referring to opinions, requirements and abeyance, and for the review of a purely formal error”.

The “Telepresence Assistance Service” may be requested through the website (click here to access). The request must include identification of the participants, the subject of the meeting and a justification. The acceptance of such request is at the discretion of the sector responsible for the relevant case, which will assess availability and relevance, and should provide a response to the request within seven business days. The primary communication channel is still “Contact Us”.

A greater interaction between innovators and examiners of the INPI will undoubtedly advance the examination of patent, trademark and industrial design applications, helping to clarify misunderstandings on certain points and reach a conclusion in a faster, more reasonable manner. The obstacle lies only in the instabilities and challenges inherent to videoconferencing technologies.

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