

Plenary Meeting Summary

European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights

28-29 September 2016 EUIPO, Alicante



List of Participants:

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The **Executive Director of the EUIPO** welcomed all participants to the 2016 Plenary Meeting of the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights. He underlined the broad body of work carried out by the Observatory regarding the value of, and threats to European intellectual property (IP), and of the Observatory's integral role as a credible, independent network which acts as an objective source for policymakers to support IP protection within the EU. He referred to the many IP issues that the Observatory has mapped since it was entrusted to the EUIPO in 2012, and that in 2016 it is time for the network to consolidate its findings and progress to the next stage of knowledge dissemination.

He explained that the trilogy of studies carried out by the Observatory during 2013 in order to quantify the economic and societal damage caused by IP crime, and the perception of European citizens regarding the value of intellectual property rights (IPRs) are currently being updated. In addition to the series of sectorial studies which quantify the economic and employment loss at firm level caused by infringements of IPRs, the recently published Voluntary Collaboration Practices Study which focuses on the role of intermediaries, and the SME Scoreboard and Youth Scoreboard have helped to accurately set the scene across Europe regarding some of the major issues currently faced by businesses and young people in relation to IP. The Executive Director underlined the need to raise awareness among citizens regarding IP infringement, that it is not a victimless crime, and that tolerance and indifference must be tackled from an early age. To this end, the Observatory has carried out a workshop with young influencers during June 2016, and will be working in conjunction with national Ministries of Education in order to introduce IP as a concept into the teaching curriculum. With regard to SMEs, he highlighted the costs of registration, and the length and cost of court proceedings as major issues. The need for greater interagency corporation on a holistic level was also emphasised.

The topic based, biannual knowledge building seminars for enforcement authorities, held in conjunction with Europol and Eurojust; the active judges seminars populated by a network of over 800 European IP judges; and the EIPPN (European Intellectual Property Prosecutors' Network), now in its second year, have helped to amalgamate enforcement officers and key figures from Customs, police, the judiciary and prosecution from across the European arena. Following the review of the current design law carried out by the European Commission (EC), the EUIPO will prioritise matters associated with the protection of designs; the autumn Observatory Working Group Meetings will take place alongside the European Design Awards in Milan on 3 November 2016.

The Slovak Presidency underlined the increase in organised crime linked to intellectual property infringement, and the threats to public health and safety. They noted the 15% increase of intercepted goods at borders during 2015 compared to the previous year, despite the efforts of enforcement authorities. Importantly, counterfeit household goods constitute 26% of seized infringing and substandard products. They called for the consolidated cooperation of national, international and EU stakeholders and the amalgamation of all European Customs authorities under the European Customs Action Plan and in line with SOCTA, in order to protect European trade, public health and safety, and the environment. The main recommendations of the Customs Cooperation Party within the European Council



focus on effective interagency cooperation and the establishment of synergetic working models. The Slovak Presidency expressed the wish that the Observatory Plenary Meeting would help to bring together all stakeholders and MEP support in order to enhance interagency coordination.

MEP Cavada voiced his support for the breadth and depth of work carried out by the Observatory as an independent network and an inclusive platform in which to exchange information and views on the IP landscape in Europe. He underlined that the role of the Observatory in the amalgamation of police, prosecutors, Customs, judges, and enforcement experts, and all interested stakeholders could not be overestimated. He highlighted the increase in counterfeiting on an organised, criminal level within two main areas – pharmaceutical products and via online trade. To this end he called for an increase in financial support to the Observatory in order to help to tackle the growing issue of IP crime.

The European Commission (EC) thanked the Observatory for their sustained and objective work, and informed the floor about current and future policy initiatives and how they relate to the Observatory. They referred to the huge scale of criminal infringements and associated issues including the loss of revenue by Member States, and a lack of market trust. The consultation and review of IPRED¹, which was published on 14 September 2016, underlines the need for clarification of the directive, the lack of efficient civil court measures, and the obstacles to registration and enforcement encountered by European SMEs. It was emphasised that potential amendments to IPRED during 2017 must be complemented by efforts to increase judicial knowledge and LEA (law enforcement authorities) cooperation in order to effectively tackle IPR crime. The EC highlighted their focus on, and the work carried out by the EUIPO regarding voluntary agreements and associated best practices demonstrated by online advertising and payment service providers, and the need for increased stakeholder investment in order to evaluate key performance indicators (KPIs) in this area. They also referred to their prioritisation to monitor supply chains, in particular within the pharmaceutical industry and by shipping companies during the forthcoming year, which will require higher levels of due diligence by rights holders and stakeholders.

The EC explained that the second phase of the Copyright Reform Package which is currently being reviewed by the European Parliament and Council, aims to facilitate easier access to legal copyright content online, and will involve the EUIPO in its implementation.

It was suggested that a communication regarding SMEs and the obstacles to registering and enforcing their IPRs via court proceedings would be released by the close of 2016. The possibility of litigation insurance and funding of an IP diagnostics service were mentioned, alongside future focus on mediation and arbitration routes, in particular with regard to work on the unitary patent.

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¹ Directive 2004/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the enforcement of intellectual property rights



Finally, the implementation of the Trade Secrets Directive² will be supported by EUIPO. It was noted that all stakeholders must work together to overcome the difficulties in collating information from industry regarding the scale of cybercrime.

The floor expressed their support and their wish for sustained momentum by the European Commission.

Participants were shown a short video of recent Observatory work, and the Deputy Director of the Observatory gave an update on the current and future work streams, and associated budget of the Observatory.

It was explained that the five sectors of the Observatory will incur approximately EUR 7.4 million during 2016, which is a similar level of expenditure to that of 2015.

The Deputy Director explained that a detailed overview of Observatory activities is available on their webpage, including 33 Observatory publications and a collection of more than 250 stakeholder reports.

The Observatory's increased efforts to expand media outreach has been monitored across five Member States, post study publication. The equivalent of EUR 4 million advertising has been achieved to date, but it was underlined that stakeholders could help further at sectoral and national level by disseminating the findings of the studies, and by referring to them in their reports. The Observatory's social media presence via LinkedIn and Twitter has increased during 2016, and more than 2,000 readers receive the Observatory newsletter.

The Deputy Director underlined that the Work Programme 2017 will offer a method of realistic planning in order to consolidate and review the Observatory's current findings, and will address measures to be taken in collaboration with national authorities regarding the improvement of information collation systems and the maintenance of databases.

The floor congratulated the Observatory regarding the studies they have carried out and published to date. France, Denmark, Romania, Ireland and Portugal underlined the utility of the studies and training material in driving policy making and when training enforcement officers, judges and prosecutors. It was noted that translation of the studies, summaries and training resources into all Member State languages is vital for their utility and dissemination to maximum capacity. Unifab emphasised the weight that the studies lend to supporting debate on the factual economic value of IP, and added that it is possibly not necessary for such regular updates of the reports.

ECPA offered to help to disseminate findings of the sectorial report on pesticide infringements, which will be published during 2016.

ANDEMA noted an increase in interest from the Spanish media regarding the sale and distribution of counterfeit goods. It was suggested by **MEP Cavada** that regular press trips could be organised by the Observatory in order to target sectoral and mainstream media, and to maintain coverage on IP. **The Observatory** noted the suggestion, which was supported by other stakeholders.

² Directive (EU) 2016/943 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2016 on the protection of undisclosed know-how and business information (trade secrets) against their unlawful acquisition, use and disclosure



Enforcement Panel One – Understanding the Phenomenon in Order to Become More Focused in Enforcement

Lord Mogg (Advisory Board) introduced the **Enforcement** session, which focused on the support that the Observatory can give to enforcement authorities, and the initiatives in progress. Examples of collaboration between partners was highlighted.

The UK IPO stressed that reports from consumers, industry, enforcement feedback and notice and take down statistics are all equally vital in the analysis of infringement and its drivers. They underlined that consumer confusion remains regarding legal online content, and that an important role for governments lies in regulating advertising on infringing sites and identifying which sectors are targeted. In the UK, the Police IP Crime Unit has made an agreement with the gambling industry regarding online advertising.

Andema focused on the lack of judicial and local council level understanding of the issues surrounding counterfeiting. They called for strong private-public partnerships; training and specialisation; cooperation between Customs and police at national level: and the need for sound legal judgements which offer deterrent messages especially by the criminal court. **The floor** agreed that sound case-law would help to support legal measures against the activities associated with counterfeiting. They agreed that major focus should be placed on the costs of storage and destruction, and on ensuring that right holders are able to obtain reasonable and effective injunctive relief.

The EUIPO referred to the scale of lost sales captured in the sectorial studies and the health and safety issues associated with infringing goods – if counterfeiting was eradicated, there would be an increase of 7.3% across all legitimate EU business sales. They explained that their recent study on "Infringements of Protected Geographical Indications of Wine, Spirits, Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs in the European Union" revealed an estimated sectorial revenue loss of EUR 4.3 billion per year. **OECD** referred to their joint report with the EUIPO and stressed that organised crime groups (OCGs) use progressive ecommerce techniques and logistical systems which call for rapid, coordinated enforcement counteraction.

EAASM explained the progress made via the Falsified Medicines Directive and whilst this will enhance the security of the legitimate supply chain there still remains the need to tackle the rising tide of criminals who sell falsified/counterfeit medicines illegally via the internet. The EAASM stressed that this was a significant patient safety issue and that it was essential that Member States and stakeholders raise public awareness about how to buy their medicines safely on line.

Pietro Fochi (Ideas Powered representative) underlined the need to focus on youngsters in the 15 - 29 age group, and on the IP which is created by current youth - including start-up companies and SMEs, which requires protection.

Frederick Mostert (Advisory Board) highlighted that the demand for counterfeit items requires further focus by governments on a holistic level. He supported the concept of inviting press to the EUIPO for targeted media campaigns.

Alliance for IP underlined the role that search engines play in promoting infringing sites, knowingly and unknowingly. They referred to the need for rapid and dissuasive action, especially to support SMEs, who find it hard to protect their content online. **The Advisory**



Board reminded the floor that the Observatory's role is non-operational and is focused on the provision of objective information on which to base policy, and on supporting knowledge transfer and dissemination of the information gathered.

Enforcement Panel Two – What is Being Done?

The EUIPO underlined their work with European prosecutors under the EIPPN, which, in its second year includes active participants from 21 Member States. The Office signed an MoU with Eurojust on 12 July 2016 which complements the relationship forged with the US Department of Justice. The Observatory's topic-based, regional seminar and knowledge building seminar programmes for enforcers cover the full range of IPRs. The programmes provide an arena for detailed training on issues (including cybercrime, the confiscation of the proceeds of crime and sectorial counterfeiting), the sharing of best practice, and the establishment of relationships between customs, police, prosecutors and judges. Participant satisfaction surveys reveal an increased understanding of work of synergetic authorities and the amalgamation of operational relationships with LEAs in other Member States.

Europol gave a presentation on their new IPR crime unit - IPC3 (IP Crime Coordinated Coalition). The EUIPO has during 2016, and will annually fund Europol with EUR 500,000 in order to help them set up and maintain the unit, which was launched on 12 July 2016. The main focus is to establish an EU coordination team dedicated to online infringements of IPRs. The Observatory will facilitate a secure flow of information from private stakeholders using the Enforcement Database (EDB). The centre will support the work currently carried out by Focal Point Copy and will offer strategic support for LEAs including training; and operational support for ongoing cases including criminal analysis and coordination meetings. A stakeholder advisory group will support LEA understanding of the issues surrounding counterfeiting and piracy.

Italy underlined the need to harness more product information in the EDB, and to establish interoperability of existing databases with other systems including SIAC (the database used by the Italian Guardia di Finanza).

BASCAP explained that they are currently building on their 2015 report regarding the roles and responsibilities of intermediaries under two new work streams which focus on online platforms (published in May 2016), and on vessel operators.

DG Trade explained that their biennial survey which is carried out in cooperation with the EUIPO, focuses on different countries' attitudes towards IP, and their current legislation. The studies help to identify priority countries and to establish European Commission dialogue with them.

EDRi underlined the need for the consolidation of sound court judgments and the possibility of courts to become more specialised in IP and counterfeiting matters. The EUIPO noted the comments and explained that the European Commission has asked the Observatory to develop a study on specialised IP courts.

IVF highlighted the limitations of IPRED and its inconsistent application across the Member States, and the resulting obstacles to European businesses seeking injunctive relief. **MEP Cavada** asked whether, in the context of international organised criminal gangs (OCG), European and national legislation is sufficiently advanced. He stressed the need for fiscal



responsibility by online traders, and the necessity for them to pay tax in the territory of their consumers.

In reply to MEP Cavada's question, AAPA stressed the need to increase interagency cooperation amongst LEAs, especially in complicated cross-border cases. AIPPI agreed and noted the need for more rapid responses in the enforcement and injunctive processes at EU level. ANDEMA added that counterfeiting is growing despite the efforts of enforcement, and that voluntary agreements with intermediaries are not sufficiently effective to deter the huge scale of the problem - a comment which was reiterated by Greece. Unifab echoed this sentiment and stressed that steps must be quickly taken in order to forge a clear legal framework regarding infringements online in order to protect the health and safety of EU citizens.

Digital Panel

The debate focused on consumers' experience online and the means to improve their ability to avoid infringement, and to identify infringing goods and content on the internet.

Frederick Mostert (Advisory Board) introduced the topic and suggested that voluntary guidelines could prove to be more effective than amending legislation.

The EUIPO gave a summary of their activities, including focus on the availability of legal offers online. Notably, when questioned, 35% youngsters responded that they were not sure if they were accessing a legal online source. It was explained that Agorateka, the European Online Content Portal, will enable EU consumers to identify legal offers for music, TV and films, games, books and sports available in each Member State. The FAQ on Copyright is a simplified, online guide compiled by national copyright experts in Member States which aims to help consumers to make well informed decisions in this field, and features on the Observatory website. The Voluntary Collaboration Practices study focuses on the roles of stakeholders involved and on the legal frameworks in which they exist. However, there is little factual data concerning their effectiveness.

Sweden explained that their national office now has competence for some copyright protection including online violations, and for raising public awareness of legal online offers. Sweden considers Agorateka an interesting initiative and has decided to join the project.

Sinead Burke (Ideas Powered representative) stressed the importance of involving youngsters in discussions on IP and the advantages of IPR and should be implemented by involving the younger generation in the legislative process. She emphasised the need to establish commonality in different jurisdictions regarding online content especially with regard to music, film and TV.

Nordic Content Protection underlined the highly adaptable and multi-layered structure of OCGs involved in IP crime, which use the most advanced digital technologies ahead of enforcement. They noted that in reality, few right holders collaborate which renders the empirical reports of the Observatory highly useful. They underlined the need to encourage collaboration across all sectors and to focus on training in new technologies including blockchain, to manage and protect IP rights.

The floor was opened for comments. **Alliance for IP** stressed that that there is no single answer to the issue and that many measures must work simultaneously regarding raising



awareness and making legal offers more visible. **APRAM** suggested that the domain name dispute resolution system could be rolled out to apply to intermediaries. **EDRi** stressed that the EU copyright framework is ineffective, specifically with regard to geoblocking, and that authors do not receiving fair remuneration. They explicitly underlined that they do not defend piracy, but asked for a common sense approach to accessing content – for example, in the context of teachers using material in a classroom setting. **EuroISPA** referred to the "follow the money" approach in order to remove the financial impetus to infringe online. They opposed the concept of blocking the ability to link online, citing the financial burden for ISPs to implement measures - and instead proposed that court judgments should regulate the issue. **FEP-FEE** reminded the floor that a part of society does not wish to pay for online content, and that the availability of legal and affordable offers is only one aspect of the issue.

Work Programme 2017 (WP 2017)

The Deputy Director of the Observatory gave an overview of the comments received to the draft WP 2017. The adoption of the WP 2017 will take place subsequent to approval by the MBBC during November, and the final text will be published in December. Individual replies to stakeholders' written comments will be sent by the Observatory during October. Thirteen written contributions had been received from the public sector, private sector and agencies.

With regard to the area of Public Awareness, and more specifically the grant schema to support awareness initiatives, it was explained that the Observatory intends to relaunch the same scheme in 2017 based on a thorough evaluation of past projects. The results of the evaluation, as well as the overall approach for the 2017 scheme, will be discussed with the Public Awareness Working Group (PA WG). Nevertheless, it was mentioned that it is not possible to involve stakeholders in the selection process as this could give rise to a conflict of interest. Regarding IP in Education, many positive comments were received and the Observatory is currently creating a network of national education experts. Stakeholders suggested that education should focus on teacher and student creativity/ownership/innovation and on underlining the negative effects when IP is not respected. The project brief will be discussed during the PA WG meeting in November.

Regarding **Enforcement**, in their comments to the draft WP, some stakeholders suggested the need to increase interoperability between EDB, COPIS and other databases. The Observatory confirmed that this is indeed the intention, and informed about the status of the development of a link between IPM and EDB, which has experienced some technical delays. With regard to the remarks put forward by few stakeholders on the need to avoid overlapping between the EUIPO-CEPOL Virtual Training Centre (VTC) and Interpol IIPCIC activities, it was underlined that the VTC will focus on the needs of European law enforcement officers who must apply specific national and EU laws and regulations when enforcing IP rights. Moreover, it was indicated that CEPOL has invited Interpol to be involved in creating the VTC. Finally, addressing the remarks put forward by some stakeholders, it was suggested that Europol IPC3 will attend all Enforcement Working Group meetings in order to present the results achieved and receive feedback.

In relation to **IP** in the **Digital World**, some of the contributions to the draft WP suggested to extend the scope of the Copyright FAQs in order to cover exceptions and limitations to copyright. The Observatory explained that the recently published FAQs cover some of these



aspects, and indicated the intention to focus its effort on expanding the dissemination of the available FAQs, before enlarging their scope.

Comments regarding the area of **Economics and Statistics** included the suggestion that the Observatory completes the analysis carried out in cooperation with the OECD to quantify the trade of counterfeited goods within the EU. The Observatory replied suggesting that the results of the sectorial studies already shed some light on the size and impact of the phenomenon within the EU, and expressed continued commitment to collaboration with the OECD for additional studies which will help to complete the picture.

The EC has proposed a number of new initiatives to be carried out by the Observatory, and under the WP 2017, the Observatory will carry out preparation work regarding the Out-of-Commerce portal foreseen in the proposal for a Directive on copyright in the Digital Single Market. Additionally, initial research will be carried out on trade secrets misappropriation; training on transit related issues in cooperation with DG Trade; and on mapping current insurance products which cover the risks of IP litigation. It is also intended that analysis will begin on the potential benefits and drawbacks of specialised IP courts. Furthermore, it was indicated that the Observatory is ready to help EC with training in transit-related issues and with producing a map of databases used by competent enforcement authorities within the EU, in order to assess whether further interoperability is possible.

AAPA expressed the importance of avoiding duplicity of work with regard to the CEPOL online training portal while **Italy** suggested that the information in existing databases could be used to greater effect at national, operational level.

DG GROWTH underlined their wish for the Observatory to be involved in the preparation of dialogue with the insurance industry regarding litigation, during 2017.

AIM asked if it would be possible to monitor data regarding spurious transit routes, which the Observatory confirmed. **WCO** voiced their commitment regarding collaboration between IPM and the EDB, and stated that they would aim to gather accurate data on seizures in transit and free trade zones (FTZs).

TaC voiced their support regarding the collation of data collection in the growing field of cybercrime.

Public Awareness Panel

The first Public Awareness panel and the floor discussed how to use the results gathered to date by the Observatory studies which have focused on the two main target groups – youth and SMEs. The Observatory has built a community of young people under the Ideas Powered scheme and has a growing presence on Facebook and Twitter. The results of the IP Youth Scoreboard underlined need for clarity, reasonable prices and availability. The Observatory's IP in Education project has produced a country comparative profile of how IP is taught in schools. The Observatory will carry out a national case study on countries which have implemented IP in their national curricula in order to understand how they have achieved this, and will create an online repository of resources for teachers and students.

CEFIC and the **European Commission** praised the Observatory for the SME Scoreboard and emphasised that the questionnaire revealed the lack of available information for businesses, and the cost and complexity of the registration process, and of court procedures



in infringement cases. The Observatory noted their anticipation for the EC's communication on SMEs.

Gerhard Bauer (Advisory Board) underlined that the current younger generation will become the SME leaders and start-up owners of the future, and the need to address the general lack of knowledge regarding IP and IPRs. Ben Woldring (Ideas Powered representative) underlined the lack of knowledge regarding use of copyright images on the internet and on IP protection in general, in relation to SMEs run by young people. The European School of Alicante explained that they are implementing a pilot project of topics surrounding IP in the curriculum amongst the European School Network. TaC explained to the floor that the Youth Internet Governance Forum, which is a voluntary group and was launched with the Council of Europe, acts as a platform in which young decision makers and influencers discuss IP, internet and copyright matters. Unifab presented their annual summer campaign in southern France which is publicised in national media in order to educate the public regarding the disadvantages counterfeit goods including lack of quality and trust, and links to organised crime. BEUC specifically noted that they are not in favour of piracy but cited the lack of clarity in the current legal framework, and lack of availability of copyrighted material as key drivers to the public accessing content illegally online. They presented a short video on the issues surrounding geoblocking. SROC and AIM underlined that the issues surrounding geoblocking concern licences, and do not intentionally target nationalities. APRAM stated that geoblocking concerns distribution issues and that business will only sell to commercially viable markets - a sentiment supported by FEP-FEE, whilst Wikimedia replied that there is a link between territory and IP licences. MARQUES underlined that the question of availability is relevant, but there will always be consumers who never wish to pay for content regardless of its availability.

During the second PA panel, stakeholders presented their projects which were carried out with the help of 11 Observatory grants to support national awareness raising schemes targeted at young children, youngsters, and to citizens in city areas. The Hellenic Copyright Organization presented their work with primary school age children, in order to educate them about creativity and innovation, and the advantages of rewarding artists for the creation of works. In Romania, the PONT Group project focused on educating young people regarding ownership and property through a campaign carried out during concerts and festivals. In Poland, COMMUNIA's campaign centred on public domain content and the reasons for paying for content, and took place during workshops and festivals. Legalna Kultura presented their work in Poland to facilitate dialogue between creators and viewers alongside travelling cinema and film, music and theatre festivals. The UK explained that their best practice, Real Deal campaign has been successful in reducing the quantity of counterfeit products sold at markets through sustained commitment by right holders and a concerted multiagency approach. INDICAM presented their project which targeted the 15 -30 age group of internet consumers in a city area. They noted the difficulties in harnessing the support of city authorities but explained their wish to broaden the network. DG GROWTH and **COFACE** voiced their support regarding expansion of the network to other cities.

The floor voiced their support for the projects and their achievements. The panel discussed, and asked the floor for suggestions regarding how the knowledge acquired by the Observatory should be used most effectively to align national initiatives. Following approval by the Management Board, the Observatory plans to expand the grant scheme in future.



All stakeholders were thanked for their continued commitment to the Observatory network and the Plenary Meeting was closed by the Director of the Observatory.