Evolving challenges - innovative responses

Seventh Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy

Held under the High Auspices of HE Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey

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It is an irrefutable fact that the trade in counterfeit and pirated goods is experiencing exponential growth. Attracted by the lure of high profit margins and minimum start-up capital, counterfeiters respect neither laws nor borders. Everything that can be counterfeited and pirated has been, or will be in the near future. Transcending borders, legal frameworks and often evading customs duties, these goods bypass the legal supply chain and find their way onto legitimate markets the world over.

In addition to the detrimental threat posed by counterfeiting and piracy to the health and safety of consumers, there are direct implications for those sectors of the economy which are driven by the creativity and innovation of entrepreneurs; these entrepreneurs spend years designing and cultivating the perfect product to appeal to the taste of consumers, this product can subsequently be counterfeited and pirated at minimal cost, with minimal regard for the health and safety consequences of such inferior products. The money generated by this illegal industry runs into hundreds of millions of dollars and has attracted elements of organized crime involvement in this industry.

The industrialised nature of this illicit industry poses serious problems for enforcement agencies, customs authorities and consumers alike. Vast quantities of counterfeit and pirated goods are currently circulating the globe, and a concerted effort on behalf of all those concerned is required to stem the tide of these illegal trade flows.

Relevant Intergovernmental Organizations, governments, ministers, law enforcement agencies, and business leaders convene to discuss methods to remedy this seemingly deteriorating situation and how best to coordinate their efforts. The event is entitled the Global Congress; the audience - anybody and everybody concerned with counterfeiting and piracy, the venue - Istanbul, Turkey where, from 24 to 26 April 2013 close to 1,000 delegates will gather for the

seventh Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy, held under the High Auspices of HE Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey.

The event itself is a manifestation of the coordinated efforts that the major international organizations concerned with counterfeiting and piracy issues are undertaking to try to stem the flow of these goods. The World Customs Organization (WCO), INTERPOL and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), have joined forces to organize this high-level event, in collaboration with the International Trademark Association (INTA) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)/Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy (BASCAP).

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It seems particularly appropriate that this year's Congress should be chaired by the World Customs Organization in collaboration with their customs colleagues; Turkish Customs. In excess of 70% of all IPR detentions are made by Customs. Customs controls are also the first line of defence used by governments to protect their citizens from unsafe or dangerous consumer products moving through international supply chains. The WCO, with its diverse membership of 179 Customs administrations, is currently focusing on a few key priorities for its member administrations which, if implemented, should lead to increased efficacy and detentions at the border. These priorities include:

- Enhanced cooperation, collaboration and coordination amongst national authorities concerned with IPR at the border.
- Promoting increased and more efficient coordination between international institutions involved in combating and piracy.
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- Sharing of good national practices on IPR border enforcement among national customs administrations.
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- Providing technical assistance and capacity building expertise based on requests received from its members.

The latter is a key priority for the WCO; capacity building in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy appears increasingly necessary for Customs administrations faced with the double burden of ensuring trade facilitation whilst simultaneously working to protect the health and safety of consumers against the trade of fake products which pose a potential threat to their health and safety.

Strongly adhering to the WCO's policy of aligning its capacity building objectives in order to aid its members to face this dual challenge, the anti-counterfeiting and piracy trainings delivered by Technical and Operational advisors on IPR revolve around current best practices and, more particularly, modern control methods that are commensurate to new strategies adopted by those involved with fraud. The WCO's trainings are composed of two principal elements; the theoretical component focuses on training Customs officers on risk analysis techniques and acquainting them with current best practices whilst the practical element of the seminar aims to engage them in practical activities that simulate their day-to-day working environment. This dual approach ensures provision of the theoretical underpinnings of risk analysis techniques and the opportunity for practical application to ensure the future conversion of theory into action, allowing Customs colleagues to draw the maximum benefit from the trainings.

The theme of the Seventh Global Congress, *Evolving Challenges - Innovative Reponses*, illustrates just how crucial a concerted effort is to ensure that the proliferation of counterfeited and pirated goods is curtailed. A crucial pillar of any strategy will be raising awareness amongst the public; many are unaware of the inherent dangers consummation of these goods can entail; that substandard spare parts, pharmaceuticals and consumer goods can provoke serious injuries or worse, fatalities. Against this backdrop, discussions will cover a broad range of issues, including:

- From Paris to Istanbul – evolving challenges and innovative responses;
- Building respect for IP;
- Supply chain security-connecting the dots between supply and demand;
- Capturing the elusive infringer on the internet;
- Evolving nature of counterfeiting - what is the impact on future public health and safety;
- Awareness and education;
- Operational enhancement activities in the context of Customs;
- Determining jurisdiction in cross-border cases;
- The Turkish experience;
- Transnational organized crime in relation to counterfeiting and piracy;
- Regional and national challenges - updates from developing markets;
- Public-private partnerships and other self-regulatory mechanisms;
- Technology as a key driver.

The Congress is structured in such a way that dialogue will be at a maximum; participation is encouraged at all levels, whilst didactic lectures will be kept to a minimum. To register, or to find out more about this important conference, please consult: www.ccapcongress.net. For all inquiries concerning sponsorship and exhibition opportunities, please contact parvis.hanson@ccapcongress.net. ■