

U.S. Expands Outreach in Campaign To STOP! Trade in Fakes

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Officials representing seven United States Government agencies will travel to Europe June 6-10 on the second leg of the Administration's Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy (STOP!) initiative aiming to strengthen cooperative enforcement efforts against the international trade in fakes. Having returned from meetings with their Asian counterparts in mid-April, the U.S. delegation will meet with German, UK, French and European Commission officials to discuss cooperation to crack down on global piracy and counterfeiting.

"Intellectual Property Rights violations are a significant source of revenue for organized criminal groups" said Randy Beardsworth, Acting Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security in the Department of Homeland Security. "These violations pose a potential vulnerability to our national security. The Department of Homeland Security is actively engaged in following the money trail, dismantling these criminal groups, and preventing the importation of infringing goods into the U.S."

Following a model that generated positive results in Asia, U.S. officials will meet with government officials and representatives of the private sector across Europe to learn about their successful enforcement programs and to share U.S. proposals to stop the global trade of tangible counterfeit goods. Among the discussion topics are U.S. proposals to simplify registration and improve protection of brands in overseas markets by:

- Strengthening border control measures.
- Boosting investigation and prosecution of money laundering crimes associated with trade in fakes.
- Raising the stakes for global pirates and counterfeiters by improving law enforcement methods.
- Standardizing the trademark registration process.

The delegation will also propose means to increase consistency in IP policy and to coordinate international enforcement actions.

The delegation will include Victoria Espinel, Acting Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Intellectual Property; Shaun Donnelly, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs; Stephen Jacobs, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Trade Agreements and Compliance; Anne Maricich, Director for Trade Management of the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection; Martha Stansell-Gamm, Chief of the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice; and Elaine Wu, Attorney-Advisor for the Office of International Relations of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO). U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau of the Department of Homeland Security will be represented by its respective attachés in U.S. Embassies abroad.

Background:

Announced in October 2004 by the U.S. Trade Representative, the Secretary of Commerce, the Attorney General and the Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security at the Department of Homeland Security, STOP! is a coordinated, government-wide initiative designed to empower American businesses to secure and enforce their intellectual property rights (IPR) in overseas markets, stop counterfeit products at U.S. borders, keep global supply chains free of infringing goods, dismantle criminal enterprises that steal intellectual property and reach out to like-minded trading partners to build an international coalition to stop piracy and counterfeiting worldwide. An overview of the Administration's progress implementing STOP! is available at: <http://www.stopfakes.gov/>

In April 2005, the United States traveled to Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul to explore avenues for increased cooperation, improved coordination, and expanded information exchanges as an initial step in garnering international support to work together to stem the trade in fakes. A series of 17 U.S. proposals were shared with government officials from these countries generating fruitful discussions, interest and commitments to continue working together on this shared concern.

In addition to holding bilateral government meetings, the U.S. delegation also met with various business associations and held a number of press events. These meetings provided valuable insight into the local problems and solutions being pursued on a practical level to combat the trade in fakes. Media events served to promote public awareness on the importance of protecting IPRs while highlighting the U.S. delegation's cohesive message that the U.S. is open to solutions.

It is anticipated that through dialogue, U.S. agencies participating in STOP! and its international outreach efforts will lead to a common understanding with our trading partners on the problems requiring action. This understanding will in turn form the basis for further discussions on cooperation outside of bilateral channels so as to create a united effort to disrupt the trade in counterfeits.

For a copy of the April 11, 2005 USTR press release announcing the STOP! trip to Asia, which includes more background on this initiative, go to:

http://www.ustr.gov/Document_Library/Press_Releases/2005/April/US_Advances_Global_Outreach_to_STOP!_Trade_ir