

EU OBSERVATORY

Conference on IP Enforcement

Athens, April 4th, 2014

Opening Address by the President of the Industrial Property Organization

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all at this conference on behalf of the Hellenic Industrial Property Organization. I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Campinos for generously proposing to co-host this conference with the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market.

The protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights is a key concern to all authorities that deal with intellectual property rights. It is also a major issue for the European Union and for the World Intellectual Property Organization as well. It is within this framework, that a series of training and awareness raising activities on the importance of protecting intellectual property rights are planned every year by the Industrial Property Organization alongside its normal course of business for granting patents and utility models and registering designs. Our Organization is not alone in this. Famous European entities, such as EPO and of course OHIM, are constantly assisting us. And today's session is another fruit of this collaboration.

Needless to say, that, as a national correspondent for the industrial property rights administered by it, the Industrial Property Organization is closely following

the activities of the European Observatory on infringements of intellectual property rights.

As we all know, significant actions have been deployed by OHIM since the establishment of the Observatory in June 2012. Despite the short period of operation, a lot has been accomplished to promote respect for intellectual property, improve knowledge about counterfeiting and piracy on the Internal Market and target enforcement resources.

A major study on the economic value of the intellectual property rights within the European Union and their contribution to employment and economic growth has been drawn, the results of which provide significant guidance to policy makers. Tools have been developed to support enforcers in tracking counterfeit goods. Consumer perception of the value of intellectual property and tolerance to counterfeit products and illegal downloading has been explored. Best practices by enforcement authorities are being identified to prevent infringements of intellectual property rights and strengthen the fight against piracy and counterfeiting.

I must confess, that I have a strong personal interest for being here in order to hear about those interesting studies carried out by OHIM. You see, as the Director of the Hellenic Copyright Organization at that time and a member of the legislative Committee, that has prepared the draft law for the implementation of

the EU Directive 2004/48 in Greece under the Presidency of the founder and first President of the Industrial Property Organization Professor George Koumantos, I had to deal with all procedural issues of IPR enforcement as early as 2005. The result of the work undertaken by this legislative Committee was Law no. 3524/2007 implementing the Enforcement Directive in Greece for copyright only. This law has been used later on as the basis for the implementation of the abovementioned Directive by the Industrial Property Organization (Law no. 3966/2011) and consequently by the Directorate for Trademarks of the Ministry of Development and Competitiveness (Law No. 4072/2012) and by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Enforcement Directive has thus harmonized directly national procedural rules and the available civil measures and remedies in all Member States of the European Union. Despite legislative action, however, coordinated administrative action is required to reduce counterfeiting and piracy. The importance of such coordinated action has been signaled by the Comprehensive Action Plan on Intellectual Property Rights drawn by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 2009.

As we all know, an effective IPR system is key to economic growth and employment. Hence, measures against new forms of piracy and the sale of counterfeit goods over the Internet should be explored and combating IPR infringements should be prioritized, were we to secure the necessary conditions

for companies to innovate and create. The distinguished reporters today are going to help us on our way to achieve these aims.

I hope you will enjoy this very interesting session.