



Eidgenössisches Institut für Geistiges Eigentum
Institut Fédéral de la Propriété Intellectuelle
Istituto Federale della Proprietà Intellettuale
Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property

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Medienmitteilung – Communiqué aux médias – Comunicato per la stampa – Media release

The fight against counterfeiting and piracy

Improved protection for intellectual property as of July 1, 2008

Bern, 26 June, 2008 – Legal measures for dealing with counterfeited goods and piracy products will be more comprehensive in Switzerland beginning July 1. They reflect current developments and affect consumers as well. A joint press conference about the changes was held by the Federal Institute of Intellectual Property, Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and the STOP PIRACY association.

The issue of counterfeiting and piracy has steadily increased in significance over the past years and reached global proportions: Organized crime is meanwhile financed to a significant degree from the sale of counterfeits and pirated copies. Plagiarisms are produced with no quality assurance, productions standards are ignored, meaning that counterfeited products are often of inferior quality and present a significant risk to consumers—in Switzerland as well. Illegal goods arrive in Switzerland through the internet or with tourists, for example. This is why the legislative framework in Switzerland has been amended.

Customs can confiscate and destroy goods more easily

The legislative amendments which go into effect July 1 create a significantly better basis for combating counterfeiting and piracy. Rights owners can also prohibit the private importation of design and trademark counterfeits into Switzerland. The new regulations do not mean that consumers will be punished but they will lose their goods at the border crossings. In addition, it will be easier to remove illegal products from the market because customs may directly destroy counterfeited and pirated goods as long as no objection is filed. This avoids expensive legal costs. Penalties for the commercial infringement of intellectual property rights have also been sharpened and standardized so that counterfeiting and piracy present even more of a risk.



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Appropriate protection for the arts and entertainment industry in the internet age

In order to protect artists and performers from the reproduction and distribution possibilities offered by the digital age, the partial amendment of the Copyright Act will also go into effect July 1, 2008. For example, it is now prohibited to circumvent technological measures (such as copy barriers) which helps rights holders protect their copyrighted works and performances from illegal uses.

Changes to be announced with targeted measures

STOP PIRACY and the Federal Institute of Intellectual Property are informing the public of the legislative changes through a variety of targeted measures. Flyers are being handed out to travelers, posters have been hung at border crossings, information has been spread through airports, travel agents, travel magazines and the internet. But the path to a counterfeit-free Switzerland is still long. Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, minister of the Federal Justice and Police Department, warns: "In order to combat counterfeiting and piracy effectively, the Swiss economy and consumers must all work in the same direction."

Further documentation:

The press folder and other information can be found at www.stop-piracy.ch under "Media" or at www.ige.ch.

For further information:

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The Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IGE) is a legal public entity under the Federation. It advises governmental officials on issues of intellectual property and represents Switzerland internationally on issues all related to this. The IGE is the official agency in Switzerland for applying for a patent, registering a trademark or depositing a design. It manages these intellectual property rights and copyright. The IGE has access to over 50 million patent documents from at least 80 countries and more than 460,000 registered trademarks in Switzerland. Technology and patent information, trademark searches and training events on intellectual property complete its service products. Further information can be found at www.ige.ch.

STOP PIRACY is a cooperative initiative between the Swiss public sector and private sector and aims to combat counterfeiting and piracy long-term through a variety of actions such as awareness campaigns and supporting cooperation between the private and public sectors. For further information under www.stop-piracy.ch.