

Business Community Urges the European Union to Endorse ACTA

November 2010

Since discussions started in 2007, the business community has expressed its strong support to the objectives of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) to create an international framework to combat trade in counterfeit and pirated goods more effectively. We applaud the work of the EU negotiators and their dedication to addressing counterfeiting and piracy at an international level. Now that the negotiators have achieved a final text, we call upon the European Union to endorse ACTA and take the necessary steps to ensure that this agreement can be adopted under the new Lisbon rules.

Millions of citizens, legitimate businesses and industries in all sectors are threatened by counterfeit and pirated goods on a daily basis, putting the health and safety of their customers and their own reputation and investment at risk. IP-based industries are a critical part of the EU's economic growth and job market, and the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, especially trademarks and copyrights, are crucial to growing Europe's economy, fostering innovation and protecting consumers. This is all the more important as counterfeiting and piracy networks continue to expand globally without concern for borders, laws or regulations.

We believe that ACTA is an important step in addressing the global nature of counterfeiting and piracy in a harmonized and coordinated way. In particular, we note that ACTA has enormous potential to complement the tangible steps the European Commission is taking to promote legislation, upgrade enforcement measures, allocate resources and establish the European Observatory to control the global problem of counterfeiting and piracy. Moreover, ACTA complements Parliament's recent and strong vote adopting the "Gallo Report" on Enforcement of IP Rights in the Internal Market.

The ability of ACTA to supplement and strengthen these measures must not be compromised by inaccurate criticisms about both its goals and its substance, which have been clarified on several occasions by EU negotiators. Counterfeiting and piracy – both physical and online – are, by every measure, rampant global problems that in order to be addressed require better international resolve and cooperation.

The final text made available to the public on November 15 demonstrates willingness to go beyond obligations from existing agreements and treaties that have limited governments' ability to effectively enforce IP rights. Now is not the time to step backwards and we therefore wholeheartedly support the initiative's attempt to establish stronger and more effective cooperation among ACTA parties, and legal frameworks for enforcement.

We thank the European Commission and the EU Presidencies involved in the negotiations for their efforts and perseverance in recognizing the need for more effective mechanisms to combat counterfeiting and piracy and for bringing ACTA to these final stages. As always, we stand ready to provide feedback and assistance towards completion of this important agreement.



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