

PRESS RELEASE

15 March 2021

## **Stepping up cooperation to tackle intellectual property crime**

- **The EUIPO and Eurojust join forces to better fight counterfeiting and online piracy**
- **An agreement between the EUIPO and Eurojust was signed to boost Eurojust's capacity**
- **Cooperation has been established for the next four years, until the end of 2024**

### **Alicante/The Hague**

**The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) are stepping up their cooperation to more effectively tackle criminal abuse of intellectual property rights in the field of counterfeiting and online piracy. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) was signed to boost Eurojust's capacity and expand its expertise to support complex investigations in this field.**

As intellectual property (IP) crime is increasingly considered linked to organised crime and part of other serious criminal offences, it has become essential to intensify the fight against IP infringements, notably in the online environment.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the problem of counterfeiting and piracy has gained new momentum with the illegal production and distribution of fake protective equipment and face masks, tackling IP crime is key to protect consumers and preserve a healthy economy and support the recovery of legitimate businesses, notably creative and innovative ones.

The Agreement, which provides for EUR 750 000 in extra funding for Eurojust until the end of 2024, will contribute to building up additional expertise capacity to combat this kind of criminal activity.

The strengthened cooperation between the EUIPO and Eurojust will also give strong impetus to the European Intellectual Property Prosecutors Network (EIPPN), in particular to improve the knowledge, experience and research on the business models behind the infringements of intellectual property rights. It will also help raise awareness among prosecutors and judges and is of great importance to develop and identify up-to-date materials to answer recurring questions on intellectual property crime investigations and prosecutions.

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, Mr **Christian Archambeau**, said:

*'The dangers applying to IP crime go beyond the displacement of jobs in legitimate industries and severe damage to the EU economy. Counterfeits also entail serious health and safety risks for consumers, as seen during the COVID-19 crisis with fake personal protection equipment and medicines. Now more than ever, addressing counterfeiting should return to being a priority in enforcement in the fight against international crime. We need to make a concerted effort to combat fakes, and the strengthened cooperation with Eurojust is a crucial step in this direction.'*

The Director of the EU Observatory on Infringements of IPR at the EUIPO, Mr **Paul Maier**, added:

*'IP crime is predominantly carried out across borders, and successful investigations and prosecutions often rely on efficient international cooperation. The EUIPO has today published [a report on international judicial cooperation in online IP infringement cases](#). The report highlights the vast variety of legal remedies available and presents a series of examples of successful judicial cooperation. The report clearly documents the essential role of Eurojust in facilitating effective cooperation in the fight against IP crime.'*

Eurojust has been giving priority to tackling large-scale copyright infringements in recent years; for instance, by setting up major operations against audio-visual piracy. Since September 2019, six major action days have been organised in cooperation with Member States such as Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and France and third countries such as Canada, Switzerland and the United States.

These actions led to the dismantling of criminal networks that illegally offered online streaming and video-on-demand services to viewers worldwide, without paying the copyrights to legitimately operating television channels and film studios. During these actions, almost 6 000 computer servers used for the transmission of illegal signals were seized.

Eurojust President Mr **Ladislav Hamran** said:

*'Tackling IP crime across borders is of paramount importance for creating a safe economic environment in which both IP rights holders and consumers are protected. Thanks to this agreement with the EUIPO, Eurojust can better support joint investigations in this crime area and put the brakes on the enormous damages suffered by legitimate businesses and the EU economy as a whole.'*

Mr **Laszlo Venczl**, Contact Point to the EUIPO, and National Member for Hungary at Eurojust, said:

*'Cross-border organised serious crime is the natural habitat and modus operandi of IP crimes. The increasing cooperation with the EUIPO will be a strong impetus for Eurojust's contribution, for instance, to improve the knowledge and experience of prosecutors and analysis on the business models behind the IP and connected crimes.'*

## **ABOUT THE EUIPO**

The [European Union Intellectual Property Office](#) (EUIPO) is a decentralised EU agency based in Alicante, Spain. It manages the registration of the EU trade mark (EUTM) and the registered Community design (RCD), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all EU Member States. The EUIPO also carries out cooperation activities with EU national and regional intellectual property offices.

The [European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights](#) was established in 2009 to support the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights and help combat the growing threat of intellectual property infringement in Europe. It was transferred to the EUIPO on 5 June 2012 by Regulation (EU) No 386/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

## **ABOUT EUROJUST**

Eurojust is the [European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation](#). Based in The Hague in the Netherlands, it facilitates cross-border judicial cooperation for all 27 EU Member States and the 13 countries with which it has cooperation agreements, covering all areas of major crime. Currently, ten third countries have Liaison Prosecutors at Eurojust.

### **Media contacts**

#### **European Union Intellectual Property Office**

##### **Julio Laporta Insa**

Head, Communication Service

Tel. +34 965 139882

#### **Eurojust**

##### **Ton van Lierop**

Spokesman

Tel. + 31 6 2719 4773

tvanlierop@eurojust.europa.eu