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Widespread support for intellectual property rights among EU citizens, and growing use of digital legal offers highlighted in new survey

An EU-wide survey carried out by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) shows that 97% of all EU citizens believe it is important that inventors, creators and performing artists can protect their rights and be paid for their work.

The survey questioned 26,555 people aged 15 and over across the EU-28 about their perceptions of intellectual property. It confirms the overall results of a similar survey conducted by EUIPO in 2013.

70% of those surveyed said that nothing can justify the purchase of counterfeit goods, and 78% believed buying counterfeits had a negative effect on businesses and jobs.

However, the survey shows there appears to be more tolerance for buying counterfeits, in particular among young people. 15% of 15-24 year olds say they intentionally purchased a counterfeit product in the past 12 months, 9 percentage points more than in 2013.

Moreover, in the context of the ongoing economic crisis, 41% of young people said they felt it was acceptable to buy counterfeits if the original product was too expensive. Three quarters of all respondents said they would stop purchasing counterfeits if affordable alternatives were available.

83% said they prefer to access digital content through legal or authorised services whenever there is an affordable option available, and 71% of those admitting to using illegal sources say they would stop, if they could access affordable alternative options.

27% of those surveyed said they had paid for content from legal sources, 7 percentage points higher than in 2013, with 69% believing that legal sources are of a better quality.

Among the 15-24 age group, 41% said they had paid to access content from legal sources, which is 8 percentage points higher than in 2013.

The percentage of respondents who said that they knowingly accessed pirated content has not changed since 2013 (27% of 15-24 year olds and 10% of all respondents).

However, confusion is growing about what constitutes a legal source. Last year, 24% of respondents, five percentage points more than in 2013, wondered if an online source was

legal, rising to 41% among young people. Additionally, 10% of respondents said they were misled when buying products.

The Executive Director of EUIPO, António Campinos, said:

Overall, we see that support for IP rights is high among EU citizens. But we also see that more needs to be done to help young people in particular understand the importance of IP to our economy and society, especially now, when encouraging innovation and creativity is increasingly the focus of economic policy across our European Union.

Since the publication of the 2013 study, EUIPO has carried out a number of actions based on its results, aimed directly at EU citizens. The European online content portal, [agorateka](#) offers a way to identify legal content online across the EU. EUIPO raises awareness of the economic value that IP rights bring in terms of supporting growth and jobs in the EU through its [reporting and study series](#). EUIPO supports Europol's [IPR Crime Coordinated Centre](#), which works to combat online IP infringements. Through its online [Ideas Powered](#) initiative, EUIPO works to engage young people across the EU with intellectual property.

France

According to the survey, 97% of French respondents agreed that protecting IP is important because inventors, creators and performing artists can protect their rights and be paid for their work, in line with the EU average. 82% agreed that buying counterfeit products ruins businesses and jobs, four percentage points higher than the EU average. 6% admitted to having bought counterfeit products intentionally, as opposed to 7% across the EU, and 70% of those who admitted to buying counterfeit products said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available – seven percentage points higher than the EU average (63%). 85% of French respondents said they preferred to access online content through authorised platforms, as compared to the EU average of 83%. 15% admitted to have downloaded or streamed from illegal sources, five percentage points higher than the EU average, and 71% of those who had accessed copyright-protected online content illegally said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available, exactly in line with the EU average.

Germany

According to the survey, 98% of German respondents agreed that protecting IP is important because inventors, creators and performing artists can protect their rights and be paid for their work, one percentage point higher than the EU average. 80% agreed that buying counterfeit products ruins businesses and jobs, two percentage points higher than the EU average. 4% admitted to having bought counterfeit products intentionally, as opposed to 7% across the EU, and 55% of those who admitted to buying counterfeit products said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available – eight percentage points lower than the EU average (63%). 82% of German respondents said they preferred to access online content through authorised platforms, as compared to the EU average of 83%. 7% admitted to have downloaded or streamed from illegal sources, three percentage points lower than the EU average, and 67% of those who had accessed copyright-protected online content

illegally said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available, four percentage points lower than the EU average.

Italy

According to the survey, 97% of Italian respondents agreed that protecting IP is important because inventors, creators and performing artists can protect their rights and be paid for their work, in line with the EU average. 91% agreed that buying counterfeit products ruins businesses and jobs, 13 percentage points higher than the EU average. 7% admitted to having bought counterfeit products intentionally, exactly in line with the EU average, and 48% of those who admitted to buying counterfeit products said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available – 15 percentage points lower than the EU average (63%). 83% of Italian respondents said they preferred to access online content through authorised platforms, exactly in line with the EU average. 7% admitted to have downloaded or streamed from illegal sources, three percentage points lower than the EU average, and 67% of those who had accessed copyright-protected online content illegally said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available, four percentage points lower than the EU average.

Spain

According to the survey, 96% of Spanish respondents agreed that protecting IP is important because inventors, creators and performing artists can protect their rights and be paid for their work, one percentage point lower than the EU average. 75% agreed that buying counterfeit products ruins businesses and jobs, three percentage points lower than the EU average. 11% admitted to having bought counterfeit products intentionally, four percentage points higher than the EU average, and 70% of those who admitted to buying counterfeit products said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available – seven percentage points higher than the EU average (63%). 87% of Spanish respondents said they preferred to access online content through authorised platforms, five percentage points higher than the EU average. 16% admitted to have downloaded or streamed from illegal sources, six percentage points higher than the EU average, and 77% of those who had accessed copyright-protected online content illegally said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available, six percentage points higher than the EU average.

UK

According to the survey, 97% of UK respondents agreed that protecting IP is important because inventors, creators and performing artists can protect their rights and be paid for their work, exactly in line with the EU average. 79% agreed that buying counterfeit products ruins businesses and jobs, one percentage point higher than the EU average. 5% admitted to having bought counterfeit products intentionally, two percentage points lower than the EU average, and 68% of those who admitted to buying counterfeit products said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available – five percentage points higher than the EU average (63%). 82% of UK respondents said they preferred to access online content through authorised platforms, one percentage point lower than the EU average. 8% admitted to have downloaded or streamed from illegal sources, two percentage points lower than the EU

average, and 76% of those who had accessed copyright-protected online content illegally said they would stop if affordable alternatives were available, five percentage points higher than the EU average.

METHODOLOGY:

This survey was carried out in 2016, and is published through the [European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights](#). It gives an updated analysis of, and makes a comparison with, the results of [the 2013 study](#), based on a new quantitative survey and a literature review. It covers the population of the respective nationalities of the EU Member States, and residents in each of the 28 Member States aged 15 or over.

ABOUT THE EUIPO

The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) is a decentralised agency of the EU, based in Alicante, Spain. It manages the registration of the European Union trade mark (EUTM) and the registered Community design (RCD), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all 28 EU Member States, as well as carrying out cooperation activities with the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU. Up until 23 March 2016, EUIPO was known as the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM).

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 IP infringements in Europe. It was transferred to the EUIPO on June 5 2012 by Regulation (EU) No 386/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

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