Customs officers from Moldova trained in the enforcement of intellectual property rights

More than 50 customs officials participated in an international training session that included two seminars on intellectual property organized by the EU funded Project “Support to Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights”.

The seminars, which took place in Chisinau between 20th and 23rd February, were designed to guide the Customs Service in the enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and, in particular, the application of border protection measures. In addition to the topics addressed, an important objective was also the exchange of experience between the participants and the international experts of the project. The seminars were supported by experts Kenny Wright, Gyula Almasi, Ion Tiganas and a specialist in Legal Assistance and Registration Agreements at AGEPI, Ana Cheptene.

"*In 2016, European Union customs officers detained suspected counterfeit and pirate goods valued at 642 million euros. This represents a fraction of the global trade in counterfeit and pirate goods. Intellectual property crime, including counterfeiting and piracy, damages the economy, funds organised crime and threatens the health of consumers. Consequently, it is important that Governments and law enforcement, all over the world, including Moldova, prioritise the protection of intellectual property rights*", highlighted Kenny Wright, Deputy Team leader of the EU project.

And the Head of the Service for Intellectual Property Protection in the Customs Service, Sergiu Suvac, considers: "*The main purpose of the customs authorities is to ensure the respect of the intellectual property rights, to protect the rights of the owners on the intellectual property objects, to protect the internal market from counterfeit goods and to remove them from trade. After graduating from this training course, customs officers will have a better understanding of the importance of intellectual property to society*". According to Sergiu Suvac, since the beginning of 2018, there have been 10 cases of goods suspected of infringing IP rights, including clothing, cosmetics and car parts, intercepted by customs officers at the Moldovan border.

During the training sessions, the customs officers were introduced to IPR, impact of intellectual property infringements on society, enforcement legislation, enforcement procedures, useful databases, the role of rights holders and European Union best practice..

"*I came to find out what's best. Although we work with intellectual property protected goods and follow orders in the computer, we do not know much about it, unfortunately*", says Ilie Antoci, Chief inspector at Giurgiulesti International Port.

And for Tatiana Chilari, Inspector at the North Customs Bureau, stated the seminars were useful: "*The seminar brought me new knowledge in the field of intellectual protection. The ideas I approached and the discussions I participated in I will certainly implement them in everyday work.*"

"*The knowledge acquired at this seminar will help us in the work we do day by day. Although we know the field of intellectual property and applied procedures, the seminar offered a wider, deeper information*", says Radu Rosca, Senior inspector at Center Customs Office.

"*After the seminars the participants will realize how important IPR is to society and how dangerous counterfeit products can be. Hopefully, this will result in an increase in the number of detentions at the Moldovan border*", concluded Kenny Wright.

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Enforcement of border measures in the field of IPR protection is carried out in accordance with procedures set in the Customs Code, Chapter XII. These activities are aimed at ensuring effective enforcement of border protection measures in order to protect the internal market from import of

counterfeit and pirated goods, the marketing of which cause damages to right holders and sets the grounds for unfair competition, and represents a threat to economic security of the country and health of the local consumer.

The Technical Assistance project "Support to enforcement of the intellectual property rights" in the Republic of Moldova is funded by the European Union and is implemented by a Consortium led by Archidata Srl (Italy) together with European Profiles SA (Greece) and Business and Strategies in Europe S.A. (Belgium) for a period of 2 years until November 2018.

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