



As the year draws to a close it is always a perfect opportunity to look back and reflect – and what a year it has been! I certainly am very proud of all that has been achieved this year at the IPO especially given recent challenges and just wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their input and contributions.

So I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope everybody gets the chance to recharge the batteries and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that 2017 will bring.

Pippa Hall

Chief Economist and Acting Director of Innovation

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Corporate News

UK signals green light to Unified Patent Court Agreement



The Life Sciences and Pharmaceutical Division will be in London.

The UK government has confirmed it is proceeding with preparations to ratify the Unified Patent Court Agreement.

This is part of the process needed to realise the Unitary Patent and Unified Patent Court (UPCA). Under the new regime, businesses will be able to protect and enforce their patent rights across Europe in a more streamlined way – with a single patent and through a single patent court.

The court will make it easier for British businesses to protect their ideas and inventions from being illegally copied by companies in other countries.

UK Minister of State for Intellectual Property, Baroness Neville Rolfe said:

“The new system will provide an option for businesses that need to protect their inventions across Europe. The UK has been working with partners in Europe to develop this option.

“As the Prime Minister has said, for as long as we are members of the EU, the UK will continue to play a full and active role. We will seek the best deal possible as we negotiate a new agreement with the European Union.

“But the decision to proceed with ratification should not be seen as pre-empting the UK’s objectives or position in the forthcoming negotiations with the EU.”

Following the announcement on 28 November, the UK will continue with preparations for ratification over the coming months. It will be working with the Preparatory Committee to bring the Unified Patent Court (UPC) into operation as soon as possible.

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Parliamentary Business

IP (Unjustified Threats) Bill – Update



Report stage of the Threats Bill took place in the House of Lords on 23 November. Proposed amendments to the Bill were discussed and a number of Government amendments were accepted. The debate is available to view on [Parliament TV](#).

The next stage of the Bill was Third Reading, which took place on 13 December. Following Third Reading the Bill will now transfer to the House of Commons.

You can follow progress of the [Bill](#) or visit our [webpage](#) to find out more.

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UK and India agree to increase IP cooperation

Prime Minister Theresa May and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have witnessed the signing of a major Intellectual Property (IP) agreement between the UK and India.



The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was put together by the UK Intellectual Property Office (UK IPO) and the Indian Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. It will help enhance bilateral cooperation on a range of IP related activities.

These include:

- exchanges of best practice in the field of IP, for example, streamlining the processing of registrations for patents, trade marks and designs;
- technical exchanges which can involve supporting enforcement authorities and assisting mechanisms for the judicial resolution of IP disputes;
- outreach activities including business advice on how to value and secure IP; and
- education campaigns to increase awareness and respect for IP for the general public.

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It makes perfect sense for the UK and India to share best-practice and look to improve our respective IP systems as much as possible.”

This work stream reflects the importance of Intellectual Property for economic and social development in both regions.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister of State for Energy and Intellectual Property, said:

“I am very pleased to see the importance of Intellectual Property being recognised in India, notably in their Intellectual Property Rights Policy published in May. A strong IP system is a catalyst for running a modern innovative economy.

“It makes perfect sense for the UK and India to share best-practice and look to improve our respective IP systems as much as possible. I look forward to working closely with our Indian counterparts to ensure that innovative British and Indian businesses can thrive whether their operation is in Manchester or Mumbai.”

Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, British High Commissioner to the Republic of India, said: “The signing of a MOU on intellectual property between India and the UK is an important development that will promote innovation and creativity in both countries. It will help the UK to support India’s drive to improve ease of doing business, thereby advancing trade, investment and economic growth.”



The agreement was signed by Adam Williams, Acting Director International Policy at the IPO UK, and Joint Secretary Rajiv Aggarwal of India’s Department for Industrial Policy and Promotion.

Enforcement

99% of counterfeit Apple chargers bought online fail basic safety test



A recent campaign #SwitchedOn to coincide with National Consumer Week at the beginning of December urged buyers to think twice when purchasing second-hand or cheap counterfeit chargers and electrical goods online.

This warning comes after a recent operation by Trading Standards investigators found that 397 out of 400 counterfeit Apple chargers purchased from online suppliers failed basic safety tests. A second operation targeted local charity shops, antique dealers and second-hand shops and found 15% of 3,019 used electrical goods were non-compliant, rising to 27% in London.

Experts from the Consumer Protection Partnership, which runs National Consumer Week, said that while the figures are concerning there are simple steps consumers can take to remain safe. It urges people to look for tell-tale signs of counterfeiting such as mistakes in brand names or logos, and check plugs for safety marks – all genuine electrical items made in the EU should have a CE mark on them.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe, minister of state for intellectual property said: “I am delighted to support the National Consumer Week campaign which this year highlights unsafe and counterfeit electrical products.

“The Government is committed to promoting consumer awareness of the dangers of buying counterfeit goods and encouraging consumers to choose legitimate goods and

services, which helps honest traders. We will continue working closely with our partners to build respect for IP in line with our enforcement strategy published earlier this year.”

Leon Livermore, Chartered Trading Standards Institute chief executive, said: “Only buy second-hand electrical goods that have been tested and only buy online electrical goods from trusted suppliers. It might cost a few pounds more but counterfeit and second-hand goods are an unknown entity that could cost you your home or even your life, or the life of a loved-one.”

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Lord Toby Harris, chair of National Trading Standards, said: “Protecting consumers from harm is our top priority and National Trading

Standards teams are working closely with partners – including search engines, social media platforms and producers – to remove dangerous electrical items from our supply chain.

“Our teams help prevent dangerous goods from entering the country, undertake enforcement work to remove criminal social media profiles and seize hordes of dangerous items destined for households across the country.

In the New Year the National Trading Standards eCrime team will be working with the fire and rescue services to identify and locate dangerous electrical items in UK homes when they conduct routine home fire safety visits.

This is in addition to Operation Jasper, a joint initiative with the National Markets Group specifically designed to remove counterfeit goods from social media sites. It has already led to more than 100 investigations and has removed more than 9,500 suspicious online selling platforms.

Businesses selling electrical goods can visit the [government-funded Business Companion](#) website to check what their obligations are and how to comply with the law.

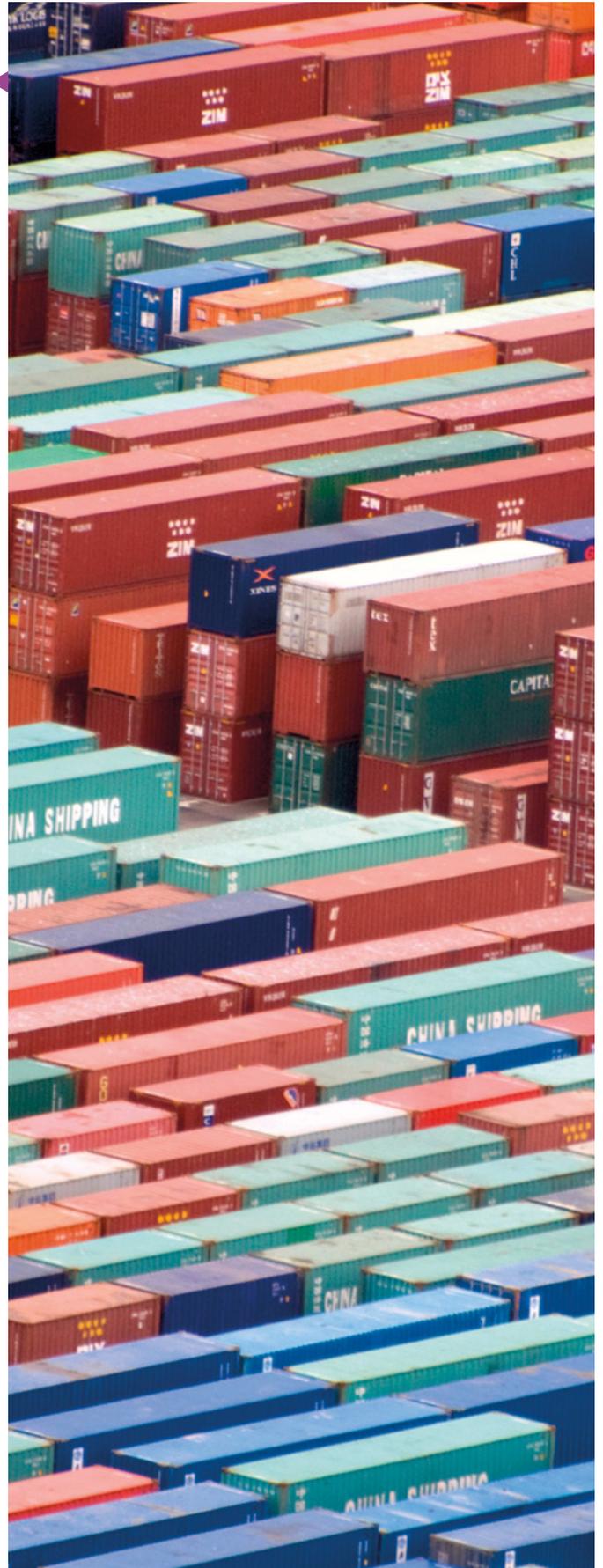
IP Minister Praises Border Force as Pre Christmas Blitz Removes Fakes from Sale

A concerted effort at UK ports to disrupt the trade in counterfeits ahead of criminals' busiest time of the year has been a success for Border Force. Working with intelligence teams from the UK IPO and rights holders and industry representatives, intensification at the borders has netted more than 83,000 items with a retail value of more than £3.5m.

This action has a dual impact, as the goods never reach wholesale or retail traders, thereby reducing the demand on hard pressed Trading Standards staff.

The activity, planned between Border Force, HMRC and the IPO follows a busy year of partnership working. In January, the IP Minister released a report highlighting counterfeits as a significant problem, before launching a four year enforcement strategy in May, outlining key factors in reducing the availability of counterfeits and increasing respect for IP. The IPO's intelligence team will be analysing the seizure data to identify further opportunities to target criminal assets in conjunction with other law enforcement partners.

Baroness Neville Rolfe, IP Minister said: "I am pleased that Border Force, HMRC and the IPO are continuing to successfully disrupt this trade. I warned criminals earlier this year that we would be taking action, and reminded industry that success in IP enforcement was all about a co-ordinated partnership approach. We will keep the pressure on, and look to hit these criminals in their pockets, be it through tax or asset seizures."



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Supporting our stakeholders

IP Executives forum

At the end of November, the IPO held the first IP Executives Forum at Concept House, Newport – a one day event focussing on future opportunities and challenges in the world of IP.

More than a dozen senior representatives from the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys, Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys, the IP Federation and FICPI-UK, joined Sean Dennehey, IPO Acting Chief Executive, IPO Directors and other officials for a day of networking and discussion.

The forum provided an opportunity to quiz IPO experts on issues such as IP policy, digital services, and professional development, as well as consider particular issues such as exhaustion of rights in greater detail. Attendees enjoyed the lively debate with IPO and industry peers and the opportunity to input to horizon scanning.

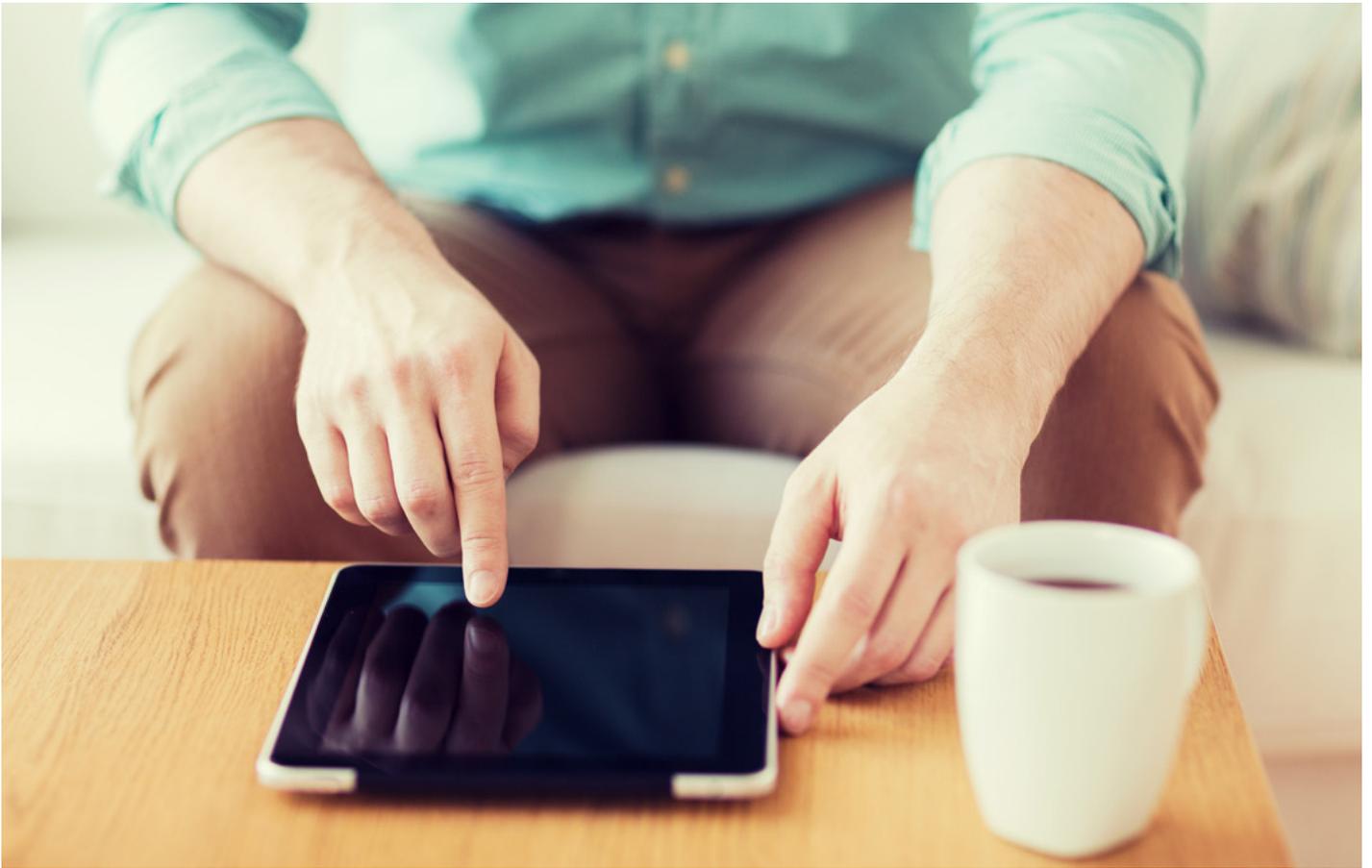
Feedback from participants was extremely positive and we are very grateful for their active participation and insight. It was clear that stakeholders welcome the opportunity to engage with us in a variety of ways, and work will now begin on how we can integrate feedback from the event to improve that further.



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