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**UNECE ADVISORY GROUP ON THE PROTECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR INVESTMENT**

Progress Report

## **1. Introduction.**

The present report summarises the activities of the UNECE Advisory Group on the Protection and Implementation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for Investment during the second year of its two-year mandate.

### **Background**

In October 1998, the Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice (WP.5) organised a major Forum in Geneva on the “Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in the Transition Economies of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.” The Forum brought together senior government representatives from these countries and senior private sector representatives.

At the Forum, a proposal was made to set up an Advisory Group under the UNECE to implement the recommendations of the Forum. This proposal was adopted by the UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development in June 1999 at its third annual session. The Committee also adopted a two-year mandate of the future Advisory Group and its programme of work. The UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development approved a two-year extension of this mandate in June 2001.

### **Work accomplished**

During the second year of its mandate, the Advisory Group’s activities included the implementation of support projects for transition economies; dissemination of information on its activities and other relevant information; and organisation of training events for enforcement officials as a follow-up to support projects (consultative visits).

## **2. Support projects**

The objective of the support projects in transition economies consists in facilitating the sustainable protection and enforcement of IPRs in those countries and creating a climate favourable to indigenous technological development, and foreign and local investment.

### **Latvia and Lithuania**

As agreed in the workplan of the Advisory Group, Latvia and Lithuania were the next countries to host support projects and by the beginning of September 2001 the following goals had been achieved:

Background reports on the status of intellectual property protection in Latvia and Lithuania were prepared;

- Consultative visits of the Advisory Group’s experts to Riga and Vilnius were organised in November 2000; The meetings in Riga were held on November 13-14, and in Vilnius on November 16-17. During the visit, the experts held consultations with high-level Government officials and experts;

- Jointly with the relevant Latvian and Lithuanian experts, a report of the consultative visit was produced and recommendations prepared for the Government on ways to improve enforcement of IPRs;

- The UNECE has placed the reports of these Support Projects on the Advisory Group's WWW site.

## **Russia**

As agreed in the work plan of the Advisory Group, Russia was the next country to host a support project and by January 2002 the following goals had been achieved:

- A background report on the status of intellectual property protection in Russia was prepared;

- Consultative visits of the Advisory Group's experts to Moscow were organised in April 2001, and hosted by Rospatent. During the visit, the experts held consultations with high-level Government officials and experts;

- Jointly with the relevant Russian experts, a report of the consultative visit was produced and recommendations prepared for the Government on ways to improve enforcement of IPRs;

- The UNECE has placed the report of this Support Project on the Advisory Group's WWW site.

## **Ukraine**

As agreed in the work plan of the Advisory Group, Ukraine was the next country to host a support project and by January 2002 the following goals had been achieved:

- A background report on the status of intellectual property protection in Ukraine was prepared;

- Consultative visits of the Advisory Group's experts to Kiev were organised in October 2001. During the visit, the experts held consultations with high-level Government officials and experts;

- Jointly with the relevant Ukrainian experts, a report of the consultative visit was drafted and is expected to be finalised by April 1, 2002.

## **Poland**

As agreed in the work plan of the Advisory Group, Poland will be the next country to host a support project and by January 2002 the following goals had been achieved:

- A background report on the status of intellectual property protection in Poland was in preparation.

- Dates for the consultations in Poland were fixed for April 2002.

The Group has also received requests for consultations from Kyrgyzstan and Yugoslavia. The timing of these consultations will be established later in the year.

### **3. Dissemination of information**

The Advisory Group has continued to expand its WWW site incorporating relevant information on the Group and its activities. It has launched an electronic newsletter which provides updates on recent activities, two editions of which have been distributed.

### **4. Other projects**

The Advisory Group has organised three training seminars for which EU TAIEX-Office (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) funding was provided. The first project was the organisation of two training seminars for enforcement officials as a follow-up to the Consultative Visit to Estonia, held in October 2000. The other project for which EU TAIEX financing was provided was a regional seminar for Judges, Prosecutors, Police and Customs representatives from Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, which was held in Sofia in April 2001.

In March 2001, the Advisory Group supported a Symposium on the Internet and Intellectual Property Crime, hosted in London by the United States Patent and Trademark Office and in conjunction with the UK Patent Office.

### **5. International co-operation**

The Advisory Group has continued to develop its successful co-operation with other international organisations dealing with the protection of intellectual property rights.

The European Commission, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) are permanently represented on the Steering Group of the Advisory Group and actively participate in the decision-making.

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) also are permanently represented on the Steering Group. In July 2001 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the USPTO, the UNECE and the Advisory Group committing to co-operation on joint projects to assist transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe to meet their obligations under international intellectual property agreements.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) secretariat is regularly invited to meetings of the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group also co-operates closely with the World Customs Organisation when planning training seminars of enforcement officials.

## **6. Financing and fund-raising**

The Advisory Group's activities are primarily financed by contributions from its sponsors, which include private-sector companies, and professional and industry associations. By January 2002, the Advisory Group had five key sponsors who had each committed Euros 27500 for the third year of activities, and two senior sponsors who had each committed Euros 15,000 a year for the third year of activities. In addition, a number of companies and associations have continued to extend financial support to the Advisory Group on a smaller scale.

In addition to funding from the private sector, the Advisory Group has continued to seek funding from the public sector and international organisations.

Governments co-operating with the Advisory Group make important contributions in kind to the common objectives of the Group through sending their experts to the AG's meetings, as well as providing premises and conference services in the course of consultative visits.

## **7. Work programme 2001-2002**

During the second year of its two-year mandate the Advisory Group agreed to implement the following projects:

- Support project for Ukraine, progress on which is described above.
- Support projects for Poland, progress on which is described above.
- Support project for Kyrgyzstan, timing of which will be determined later in the year
- A seminar in Lithuania in February 2002 for Judges, prosecutors, police and customs officials, in response to specific training requests developed after the consultative meeting with the Lithuanian government.
- A seminar in Poland for local rights holders and relevant public sector officials on the valuation of intellectual property rights, which will be held in Warsaw in April 2002
- A seminar in Latvia for Judges, Prosecutors and Police officials, in response to specific training requests developed after the consultative meeting with the Latvian government. Provisional dates have been set for early June.
- Two seminars in the Russian Federation; one for enforcement officials and one on the valuation of intellectual property rights. Dates for these will be determined later in the year.