

**Aktion Plagiarius – Important Information-Institution against Product- and Brand Piracy**

Plagiarisms, imitations and pirate copies cause yearly worldwide an economic damage of several hundred Bill EUR. Several hundred thousands of jobs are wiped out, as Prof. Rido Busse and Christine Lacroix of Aktion Plagiarius e.V. ([www.plagiarius.com](http://www.plagiarius.com)), Elchingen, explicated on the occasion of the "Plagiarius", awarded for the 32<sup>nd</sup> time on February 8<sup>th</sup> on the worldwide biggest consumer goods fair "Ambiente" in the Congress Center, Messe Frankfurt.

With the dreaded negative prize are each year producers and traders of shameless forgeries awarded and made public in the frame of a press conference. Trophy is the black dwarf with the golden nose – as symbol for the enormous gains that the plagiarators win at other people's expense. The goal of Aktion Plagiarius is to inform producers and traders, and also politicians, the legislator and the consumers in the form of press- and PR work as well as worldwide exhibitions, with practical orientation, about quantity, damages and dangers of plagiarism and forgeries.

The Plagiarius has been created in 1977 by Prof. Busse as an affected designer. The laudation on the "prize winner" was delivered by Dr. Guido Westerwelle, chairman of the FDP Bundestagsfraktion. As was further disclosed by the two experts of the Aktion Plagiarius in the very well visited media conference, it is by far not a trifling offence anymore. This is affirmed by the yearly customs statistics of the EU-commission. According to this, more than 250 Mill faked articles have been confiscated in 2006 at the EU-borders, compared to only 75 Mill in 2005. German customs alone seized forged merchandize in value of 1.2 Bill

EUR in 2006 – with this the value has increased fivefold compared to 2005. Customs confiscated on the first fair day of the Ambiente this year alone more than 100 forgeries. For the first time since the existence of Plagiarius the 'Ehrennadel für Plagiatsbekämpfung' (needle of honor for fighting plagiarisms) was awarded on this world fair, to the customs inspector Silke Langebartels, Zollamt Frankfurt.

The sum of sales losses by product piracy alone the Federal Ministry of Finances rates to be between 200 and 300 Bill EUR. The total damage to the economy worldwide adds up to about 800 Bill EUR at an estimate of the Aktionskreis deutscher Wirtschaft gegen Produkt- und Markenpiraterie (activity circle of the german economy against product- and brand piracy) in Germany to about 25 Bill EUR. The Aktion Plagiarius works in its information activity closely together with the initiative "Messe Frankfurt against Copying" ([www.messefrankfurt.com](http://www.messefrankfurt.com)).

The rapid growth of the problem is among other things due to the globalization, the most modern technology and anonymous distribution channels like the internet. Also there are so-called free zones which turn out to be blooming terminals for forged merchandize. The trade itself unfortunately contributes to it with a mix of lack of knowledge, overload and reckoning so that in western shelves more and more plagiarisms are on offer. South East Asia, especially China, is in fact demonstrably the number 1 due to low prices with respect to producing plagiarisms and forgeries. However, it is also proven that traders from all over the world are buying them or

even, knowing well about the original, order them. The profit margin of western traders is there oftentimes much higher than the one of the Chinese producers.

On 1 April 2007 the museum Plagiarius in Solingen was opened. The small but exceptional exhibition shows the Plagiarius-prize winners from 1977 to today. Altogether there are more than 250 originals and plagiarisms of the most different branches presented in direct comparison. With around 12,000 visi-

tors in the first 10-months-period the museum is very much satisfied. The visitor structure is widespread. With a great number of visitors the practical information in the form of guided tours through the exhibition leads to a changed attitude towards the subject. And also the numerous international publications (e.g. New York Times, Shanghai Morning Post) show the global interest in the subject.

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