

Baroness WilcoxParliamentary Secretary for Business,
Innovation & Skills

Dear Colleague

29 July 2010

Today sees the publication of the IP Crime Group's Annual Report for 2009/2010. The document reports on the range of actions being taken by industry, enforcement agencies and government. It provides a useful reference for people wanting to understand better the problem of IP crime and what is being done to tackle it within the UK. I am pleased to be able to send you a copy.

Counterfeiting and piracy are serious problems. Their impact is felt widely – by businesses, by consumers and by society in general. Businesses are affected through lost sales and also through damage to brand value. Consumers receive poor quality products that can expose them to health and safety risks. Society as a whole is also affected – through links with wider criminality and anti-social behaviour and through the broader impact that IP crime can have on our economy.

The responsibility for reducing IP crime is a shared one. Government, industry and enforcement agencies all have a role to play. The general public also have a role. We must continue to do what we can to help them understand the risks posed by IP crime and the role they can play – by demanding genuine goods and by reporting sellers they think are suspicious. There is a high degree of collaboration across all parties and much is already being done, as highlighted by the report.

As the new Minister for Intellectual Property I intend to play an active role. One of my priorities as Minister is to make sure that our IP framework provides the right conditions for UK businesses – to help them grow and succeed. IP crime threatens our ability to do this and so we need to work together to tackle it.

There is evidence of some real innovation – with new projects aimed at improving the spread of intelligence, new linkages with the health agenda and efforts to make use of the full range of legal tools available to target IP criminals. The IP Crime Group is itself an important example of collaboration, with law enforcement, industry and government working together to share information, disseminate best practice and develop effective strategies.

We are all aware that public sector resources will be stretched over the coming years – both centrally and at the local level. We need to work together so we can continue to make good progress. Our focus should be on three key areas. First, we need to make sure we get the legal framework right. It must be effective and proportionate, with a strong focus on evidence based policy. Second, we must continue our work to raise awareness and build skills, aiming to improve understanding, build capacity and influence others. Finally we must maintain a strong focus on intelligence led enforcement – to ensure we make best use of our resources.

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