

Press Release
Alicante, 26 June 2013

Pan- European efforts to tackle PHARMACRIME

The counterfeit medicines and illicit pharmaceutical business is a significant threat to public health and safety in Europe. In response, the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights, part of the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM), and Europol are co-hosting a major conference from 26 to 28 June 2013 in Alicante, Spain.

The conference aims to strengthen cross-border and inter-agency cooperation and to find practical ways to help in the fight against Pharmacrime in the EU. In 2012 for example, fake medicines topped the list of articles detained by European customs authorities, with over 27 million items seized.

Paul Maier, Director of the Observatory commented: *"Together with Europol, the Pharmaceutical Security Institute (PSI) and with valuable input from our Commission colleagues, we are determined to help Member States deal with this crucial problem which affects consumer and patient safety and public health in general. The Observatory's cooperative platform has been set up to foster knowledge and collaboration between EU and international enforcement authorities, industry experts and national regulatory agencies and following this event a strategic assessment will be produced to help enforcement in the continued fight against this menacing business.*

The Director of Europol Rob Wainwright said: *"Pharmaceutical crime is highly lucrative for criminals and can have extremely dangerous consequences for citizens. It is very important to gather all stakeholders: enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies, and the private sector around the table to exchange and enhance communication. The excellent cooperation with the OHIM, and all actors at the European level, enables Europol to provide better support for the Member States tackling this type of crime, and dismantling the organised crime groups behind this trade".*

With the support of the PSI, a non-profit organisation representing major pharmaceutical companies active in this fight, the conference brings together, in the first European event of its kind, almost all European and International authorities competent in this field such as the World Customs Organisation, the Council of Europe and European Commission services as well as EU Police, Customs, health and medicines regulatory agencies and private partner experts.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The **European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights** was established in 2009 to support the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights and help combat the growing threat of IP infringements in Europe. It was transferred by Regulation on June 5, 2012, to the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM), which is the official trademarks and designs office of the European Union, headquartered in Alicante, Spain since 1994.

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Europol is the European Law enforcement Agency of the European Union.

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