

✓ **'Messe Frankfurt against copying'**

August 15, 2006

- 'Messe Frankfurt against copying' campaign at the Automechanika
- Forged parts and accessories are a safety hazard
- A contentious issue: design protection regulations still not harmonised in Europe

According to the US 'Federal Trade Commission', product piracy costs the automobile industry more than €9 billion every year. In Europe, around ten percent of all replacement parts are thought to be forged. Besides losses for the companies concerned, counterfeiting leads to perilous situations on the road. In view of this, the Frankfurt-based fair and exhibition company, launched the big 'Messe Frankfurt against copying' campaign in January 2006 and will be providing information about product piracy at the Automechanika. Detlef Braun, Member of the Board of Management of Messe Frankfurt: "In common with all other trade fairs, the Automechanika reflects the situation in the sector. It must take account of globalisation and offer the automotive growth markets an opportunity to make presentations. Nevertheless, we give top priority to fair competition that rules out dishonesty. Only in this way can we be sure that the Automechanika remains the leading international event for the automobile sector."

Messe Frankfurt is running the campaign in conjunction with four partner organisations:

- The Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market, Trade Marks and Designs (OHIM)
- German Patent and Trade Mark Office (Deutsches Patent- und Markenamt)
- Anti-Product Piracy Campaign Committee of German Industry (Aktionskreis der Deutschen Wirtschaft gegen Produktpiraterie e.V.)
- Intellectual Property Rights Protection Department of German Customs (Zentralstelle Gewerblicher Rechtsschutz des Zolls)

These organisations will be available to give advice and answer questions in Hall 4 (mezzanine floor, C).

Besides causing considerable economic losses for the companies affected, counterfeit products also represent a danger to road-traffic safety. Many motorists are unaware of the fact that the use of inferior-quality automobile parts

can endanger both themselves and others. Thus, with its campaign against product piracy, Messe Frankfurt is also making a contribution to safer roads.

A contentious issue is the law applying to the design of replacement parts. In Europe, the protection afforded to visible repair parts, such as wings, headlamps, bumpers or door mirrors still differs from country to country. Although the 1998 Design Directive states in principle that replacement parts can also be covered by design-protection law, it also says that this need not be the case and leaves it up to the individual member states whether they protect replacement parts or not. In 16 countries, including Germany and France, intellectual-property rights also cover replacement parts. In nine countries, including Spain and Italy, the market has been liberalised. To enjoy protection in these countries, manufacturers must apply for design protection under the appropriate national intellectual-property law. European design law provides no protection for replacement parts.

Messe Frankfurt advises and supports exhibitors in the fight against product piracy. For exhibitors, it is extremely important that they take steps before the fair, to prevent unpleasant surprises during the event. On the one hand, they should register their products or trademarks with the design office and, on the other hand, make an appropriate application to the customs authorities who can then stop suspicious consignments, investigate them, take samples and destroy copies. Further information and tips can be found in a brochure published by Messe Frankfurt entitled 'Protection against brand and product piracy', which is distributed to all exhibitors and can also be downloaded from the internet at http://www.messefrankfurt.com/corporate/en/unternehmen_publicationen.html. Messe Frankfurt has arranged for an emergency intellectual-property service during the Automechanika.

The Automechanika is the biggest trade fair for the aftersales market. This year, Messe Frankfurt anticipates further growth on the exhibitor side to over 4,500 exhibitors on around 300,000 square metres of exhibition space. More than 160,000 trade visitors are expected.