



**Embargo:
30.01.2007, 10.15 h**

Speech: Both the spoken and the written word are equally valid. The speaker reserves the right to deviate – even considerably – from the manuscript!

Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy: Shared Challenges—Common Goals

Opening Speech by Federal Councilor Christoph Blocher at the Third Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy, Geneva, January 30, 2007

1. Message of Greeting

Dear Director General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have chosen the city of Geneva to host this congress. Geneva is a city with an international appeal, but it is also home to the World Intellectual Property Organization.

I am honored to welcome you on behalf of the Swiss Federal Council to the Third Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy. Your interest and the fact that decision makers from all over the world are convened today clearly show one thing:

2. Counterfeiting and Piracy in the Twenty-first Century

Counterfeiting and piracy are **criminal acts. And these criminal acts claim victims.**

There are indeed many victims: business corporations, jobs, and people.

Again, **counterfeiting** and **piracy** are acts of fraud and theft. These are crimes that cause great harm!

Entire **economies** can become affected by these crimes. And above all, it is the **consumers** the world over that get harmed. Yes, people's **health and safety** may be put at risk if they are provided with a product of substandard quality.

Each sector of the economy is affected. It is no longer only the products of the big companies that are faked. More and more, the products of **innovative small and mid-sized companies** are faked by counterfeiters.

The practice of counterfeiting and piracy reaches across national borders. Indeed, **there is hardly a country that has been spared.**

The trade in counterfeit products is largely controlled by well-organized criminal gangs. They **operate internationally**, and they **take unfair advantage** of the trade channels and **means of communication** provided by the globalized economy.

The countries affected by counterfeiting and piracy are affected either as **country of origin**, as a **market**, or as **transit country**.

3. Co-operation – the key to success

Ladies and gentlemen: The motto of this congress is “Shared Challenges—Common Goals.”

Counterfeiting and piracy are indeed **challenging to each and everyone**:

Business corporations, police and customs authorities, the international community of states, and the consumer at large.

This challenge must be faced. And it can be done. But only if we act in unison. Facing this challenge effectively means cooperation.

- First and foremost, it requires **cooperation among the business corporations** that are affected. And it takes cooperation within the particular economic sectors that have been affected by counterfeiting and piracy.
- What is more, the **private sector** and the **public sector** need to work together too.
- And finally, and just as important, there is the need for **cross-border cooperation**. The law-making bodies especially are called upon in the first place.

It is their responsibility to provide high standards worldwide for the protection of intellectual property. It can not be overstated: Counterfeiting is an **act of theft of intellectual property**. Such theft causes great harm—harm that is not only of an economic nature.

Fake medical products or machine spare parts are often substandard. Such products may seriously endanger people’s health and safety. But even the very best of law is futile if proper **law enforcement is lacking**. **Prosecuting authorities** therefore need to cooperate internationally.

4. Switzerland takes measures: Revision of intangible property legislation

Switzerland aims at **high standards** in the protection of intellectual property. The Swiss Parliament is therefore currently reviewing proposals for the **amendment of intangible property legislation**.

- A novelty in the proposed law is that it not only provides against the importation and exportation of pirate products but also provides against the **transit** of such illegal goods across Switzerland.
- Furthermore, Customs will be granted **greater authority**.
- And violating intellectual property rights with a view to making a profit will be **punished more severely** than before.

5. Switzerland takes measures: Public Private Partnership “STOP PIRACY”

As I said before, laws alone won’t do the trick. It takes more. This is why Swiss authorities and private business have joined in a **Public Private Partnership**.

This partnership aims to **improve cooperation and coordination** between the police, customs, and other authorities. At the same time, cooperation and coordination among private business will be improved too under this partnership.

Yet another goal is to enhance public awareness of the risks inherent in counterfeiting and piracy. To this end the Swiss government and Swiss private industry launched an awareness campaign two weeks ago. It goes by the name of **STOP PIRACY**.

6. Conclusion

The motto chosen for this congress is “Shared Challenges—Common Goals”, and with good reason. There is no denying: Counterfeiting and piracy have become a **serious challenge to each of us**.

International platforms such as the **Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy** are essential; because only if all of us take a firm stand and rise to this challenge can we reach the goals we have set for ourselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude by thanking you. Thank you for your commitment in combating piracy and counterfeiting. Thank you for being here today.

Contact:

Tel. +41 31 322 18 18