G8 Law Enforcement Experts Agree to Examine Transborder IP Crime

(September 18-19, 2000)

- On September 18-19, 2000, the United States sponsored the first-ever meeting of law enforcement experts from G-8 countries to discuss trends in trafficking in counterfeiting and pirated merchandise. The purpose of the meeting was to identify ways in which the G-8 countries might usefully collaborate in combating transnational intellectual property crimes.

- The meeting was held in Washington, D.C. under the auspices of the G-8's Senior Law Enforcement Experts on Transnational Organized Crime (Lyon Group). The Department of Justice, Customs Service, and FBI jointly hosted delegations from Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, and the European Commission.

- The meeting focused on the involvement of organized criminal groups in counterfeiting and piracy, and the threats to public health and safety posed by infringing merchandise (including counterfeit pharmaceuticals). Delegates also discussed the role of mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements and other arrangements for providing evidence and witnesses for investigations and prosecutions of these offenses in other countries.

- The law enforcement experts forwarded their observations and proposal for future cooperative activity to the Lyon Group plenary, which met in Hiroshima, Japan in November, 2000. The Lyon Group endorsed the experts' recommendations. These include: (1) exploring the possibility of sharing strategic intelligence information concerning groups trafficking in counterfeit or pirated merchandise, assigning high priority to products affecting health and safety and/or which manifest organized criminal involvement or associations with other crimes, and (2) sponsoring an annual briefing on trends in IP crime and member countries' enforcement activities.

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