

The European Network of Authenticities strengthens its ties in Thessaloniki

- **More and more EU cities are becoming Authenticities. So far, Mykonos and Thessaloniki (Greece), Sofia and Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) and Madrid (Spain) are part of the network.**
- **The Authenticities network is committed to fighting against counterfeiting and promoting business practices that protect the local economy among citizens and visitors.**

On 4 April 2022, the six EU cities that are part of the [Authenticities network](#) met in Thessaloniki to discuss the state of play of the network, ongoing actions and to look ahead. As the network is constantly growing since it was launched in 2020, this is the very first time all the 'Authenticities' met together. Representatives from national intellectual property offices and stakeholders from EU countries involved, as well as from the member cities, took part in meetings and confirmed their commitment to the Authenticity network and to helping it grow. The Authenticities event aims to create a solid platform for exchanging ideas and dialogue among the different stakeholders and to attract new participants to the network.

'At this event today we celebrate the six certified Authenticities, and share information on their experiences with the wider network. We hope that this will help to build a sense of community between the certified Authenticities, so that they can learn from each other and help to build a truly European Network of certified Authenticities, where best practices can be shared, and new synergies created. Counterfeiting and piracy are a threat to our economy, and expose our citizens to low quality and dangerous goods. However, through our continued cooperation, we can both understand the problem, and work on possible solutions. And with Authenticities, we get to do this from the ground up, at local level', said **Christian Archangeau, Executive Director of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)**.

'The Authenticities network is of major importance in the fight against counterfeiting and we are proud to be part of it with two important Greek cities: Thessaloniki & Mykonos. The Hellenic Government, during the last 3 years, is using all its forces and effort in this fight having confiscated more than 285.185 counterfeit items in 2021, while 70% of them in Northern Greece. The battle against illegitimate commerce is uneven. Nevertheless, we are positive that our joined forces and our determination to fight against fakes and to increase awareness of both the value of IP and the damage caused by counterfeiting, will eventually protect the creators, the inventors, the consumers, and the states economies', added **Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, Director General of the Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation (OBI)**.



What are Authenticities?

[Nearly 1 in 10 Europeans \(9 %\)](#) claimed that they were misled into buying counterfeits. In countries like Bulgaria this number is even higher (19 %). The EU cities involved in the Authenticities network engage together in the fight against counterfeits (clothes, perfumes, bags, toys and other fakes) through public awareness campaigns aimed at the general public and businesses, and training sessions for local enforcement authorities. In brief, the network makes the certified Authenticities healthier, wealthier, safer and more respectful with the environment.

Authenticities organise awareness events and campaigns all year round. To give a few examples of past and future activities:

[Thessaloniki \(Greece\)](#), the host city of the 2022 Authenticities annual event, has undertaken a number of promotional activities. Besides posters and banners in bus stops, administrative buildings and many other public spaces, the city also organised video spots, press advertising and social media campaigns. In addition, the Authenticities were present at the 2021 Thessaloniki International Fair and Christmas 2021 celebrations, and more recently at the city games 'ThessTruth Quest: A Living City Game' on 3 April 2022.

[Mykonos \(Greece\)](#) is currently running a promotional campaign in public spaces, including the airport. The campaign will be intensified during the summer of 2022.

[Sofia](#) and [Plovdiv](#) (Bulgaria) got involved with the European Consumer Center in Bulgaria in 2021 to launch face-to-face and social media campaigns involving enforcement and education authorities as well as the public at large.

[Banská Bystrica](#) (Slovakia) focused on young people. The city organised a school contest ('Original vs. Fake - DONT BE A FAKER!') in 2021, which was extensively promoted.

[Madrid \(Spain\)](#), the latest city to become an Authenticity, will launch its own educational and awareness-raising campaigns locally in the coming months.

Any EU town or city can become an 'Authenticity' and form part of this international network for a period of 2 years. Candidate towns/cities should be proposed by the national intellectual property office of the EU Member State where the town or city is located and will then be appointed at EU level by the EUIPO. The network is managed by the EUIPO, under the supervision of the EU Intellectual Property Network (EUIPN), which groups the IP offices of all the EU Member States. Following the Authenticity event, the [EUIPN's](#) annual meeting will also take place in Thessaloniki on 5-6 April 2022.

Why is it so important to fight against counterfeiting?

Fakes and counterfeit products ruin our local businesses and are behind the loss of many jobs in the EU. Counterfeits represent [6.8 % of EU imports worth EUR 121 billion](#), and [1 out of every 4 SMEs in Europe](#) claims to have suffered from infringement of their intellectual property



rights (such as trade marks or patents). The damage caused in the cases reported includes loss of turnover, damage to reputation and loss of competitive edge.

Fake products also pose serious [risks to health, safety and the environment](#). Examples range from products ingested by consumers (food, drink, medicines), to those put directly on the skin (cosmetic, fragrances). In addition, small parts from toys, magnetic components and especially batteries can be swallowed and cause significant intestinal damage to children.

Not only is it essential for creators, inventors and artists to be rewarded for their work, so they can continue to exist and innovate, there is also the issue of there being no quality or safety guarantees at all during the production of counterfeits (nor for the final product itself). Moreover, counterfeiting is not a victimless crime. It supports other criminal activities, including money laundering, fraud, cybercrime, drug and human trafficking. Counterfeit and pirated goods represent billions of euros in lost revenue every year in key sectors of the EU economy, as well as hundreds of thousands of jobs lost.

ABOUT THE EUIPO

The [EUIPO](#) is one of the largest decentralised EU agencies, based in Alicante, Spain. Ranked as one of the two [most innovative intellectual property offices in the world](#) in 2021, the EUIPO manages the registration of the European Union trade mark (EUTM) and the registered Community design (RCD), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all Member States. The EUIPO also cooperates with the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU and hosts the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights.

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