
China IPR SME Helpdesk: an important assistance for companies active in China

The China Intellectual Patent Rights SME Helpdesk organized on 18 November 2010 was an event to celebrate the two years of its function and to provide information about its activities. The Helpdesk is **based in China** and financed by the European Union in order to provide European SMEs with the necessary knowledge and information tools to protect their intellectual property rights, when active in the Chinese market.

At the event, representatives of the Helpdesk explained how their work has developed over the years. The Helpdesk does not only assist companies that have problems with IPR in China, but also the ones that prepare their installation to this market and, therefore, wish to know how to protect their rights. Furthermore, the Helpdesk offers training sessions in several member states for companies, which wish to expand their knowledge on practical issues. The Helpdesk does not focus solely on replying to certain requests. On the contrary, it treats the SMEs that ask for advice as clients, offering them a comprehensive guidance throughout the Chinese market. The **advisory services of the Helpdesk are offered for free** and several **interesting guides**, such as the strategy for European SMEs at trade fairs in China or advice on how to keep trade secrets in China can be found online.

The second part of the event was dedicated to professionals active on IPR in China. **Wang Yizhen of Agoria** stressed the need for a common European shield against counterfeit in China and asked the European Commission for the creation of better surveillance services in cooperation with the Chinese surveillance body. The speaker also proposed the launch of a **list of lawyers experienced in IPR issues** in China. **Mr. Rutger Devoldere of CLEPA**, the European Association Automotive Suppliers, praised the **training sessions** of the Helpdesk and gave an elaborated image on the extent of counterfeit in China. He particularly insisted on the imports of fake products in the European market used as cheap alternatives. Finally, **Mrs. Serena Tierney from Wragge & Co** gave her insight as a lawyer with many years of experience in IPR protection in China. She explained that the Chinese market has slowly started to capture the importance of IPR, but still surveillance is lagging behind and sometimes the implementation of the law by courts is impeded by financial reasons. She praised the new initiatives of the Chinese government to launch centres against counterfeit in major economic centres of the country. However, she highlighted the fact that China is now active in advanced products such as new materials, therefore the country will soon have the expertise to produce them, and thus this information might leak to non-accredited companies.

You can contact the China IPR SME Helpdesk either by calling at **+86 (10) 6462 0892** or by sending an email to enquiries@china-IPRhelpdesk.eu ■