

AmCham IPR Committee Round Table held in Banja Luka on 26 June 2008

AmCham IPR Committee held its first Round Table on IPR Protection on Thursday, 26 June 2008 at the conference room of the RS Chamber of Commerce. The Round Table gathered 40 representatives from different enforcement agencies in BiH.

Mr. Frank Ostrander from US Embassy in Sarajevo gave the key note speech and opened the RT, welcoming the initiative of the Committee and highlighting the importance of IPR protection.

Prof. Slobodan Markovic, EUIPR Project Team Leader gave a brief overview of the project, as well as details on the upcoming legislation to be drafted by end of 2009. He pointed out that the major issue is lack of awareness and the process of raising IPR awareness would be longest one. He suggest that elementary schools are the right places to begin with this process.

On behalf of AmCham IPR Committee, Lejla Hadziabdic from Microsoft addressed the participants presenting problems that our members are facing, but also pointed out the risks of piracy and losses of the state, and concluded by calling on all the present institutions to cooperate with AmCham IPR Committee and use our experience and expertise in training their staff for IPR enforcement.

Mr. Saudin Terzic, Head of Enforcement at Indirect Taxation Authority talked about the work of his department and seizures in 2006 and 2007. As ITA is responsible for protection of state revenue, the IPR Law is another reflection of revenue protection. There is initiative in ITA to establish a special unit for IPR enforcement. *This is something that we should focus our efforts on and follow up on this point by Mr. Terzic.*



The second panel was opened by Mr. Ognjen Djinic, Bliz Film Distribution who talked about IPR problems in film and video industry in BiH, challenges they are facing on a daily bases and losses of the industry.

Mr. Milomir Misa Ognjanovic, AP Manager in Microsoft Serbia and President of IPR Committee in AmCham Serbia presented their experiences, showed the examples of some counterfeit products in Serbia and achievements of their IPR Committee in cooperation with Serbian government and enforcement agencies, highlighting the recent tax initiative.

Mr. Dzamil Sabrihafizovic, BSA Local Counsel in BiH presented the latest IDC Piracy study and warned the participants on the huge losses in IT industry. He highlighted that these figures are enormous and they just represent one industry suffering from this problem, and that the overall losses must be something that we should all be concerned about.

We were pleased to have Philip Morris representatives Jasmina Osmanovic, member of our IPR Committee and Marko Mihalic attending our round table who took active part in the discussion, as well as Nike representative Zoran Strsoglavec.

Theme of the discussion was positive. It was confirmed by the participants that IPR protection is a problem in BiH. The main comment coming from the inspections was that the existing law is not clear when it comes to jurisdiction and that does not give grounds for the inspections to pursue IPR cases at their level. They appealed to be included in the working group drafting the new legislation as they are the ones on the field.



Over forty participants present were representing: Indirect Taxation Authority, Inspectorate of RS, Financial Police of FBiH, SIPA, State Prosecutor's Office, ICT Agency of RS, Ministry of Finance and Treasury of BiH, and our AmCham members Triland Development and UNITIC Business Center whom we thank for their support.

Many thanks to all our guest speakers who made this event successful and US Embassy for their support. And of course, many thanks to all IPR Committee members for their contribution.