

IP Key South-East Asia calls for stories on counterfeit medicines impact

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#YourHealthisPriceless campaign to scale down the price of the cure by countering counterfeit medicines in the fast-paced world of e-commerce



The EU-funded project IP Key South-East Asia (SEA) initiates #YourHealthisPriceless on 14 Sep 2020 and launches an online campaign to raise awareness of the harms that counterfeit pharmaceutical and healthcare products can cause. The campaign is also a call for the public to share their experiences with counterfeit medicines on social media.

"#YourHealthisPriceless campaign emphasizes the EU mission through IP Key SEA project in raising awareness on IP rights on social media. We also believe that the stories shared will help envisage the current situation and encourage customers to be fully aware of the product's authenticity and buy from legitimate sources," said Tiago Guerreiro, IP Key SEA Project Leader.

"The harmful effects of counterfeit pharmaceutical products bring intellectual property (IP) closer than ever to the course of our daily lives. They show that the strong enforcement of IP rights protection—including the protection of trade mark, patent, and industrial design—can greatly contribute to consumers' well-being and public health", shared Tiago Guerreiro.

The threat to international trade and legal supply chains

Cross-border trafficking of counterfeit pharmaceutical products occurs with more ease in the digital age, where e-commerce and logistics have increased access to. Globalization makes it possible for second-tier distributors to sell their fake products globally; that is, they do not have to be produced in the market of distribution as they can be shipped from anywhere.

Global trade in counterfeit pharmaceutical products accounts for EUR 11.87 billion, representing more than 3.3% of total global trade in the pharmaceutical sector, according to the 2016 OECD study. It remains to be a challenge for IP and government officials to detect fake products and enforce IPRs protection measures, hence the need for local consumers to be careful when being approached by unauthorized sellers.

"The EU is supporting Thailand and ASEAN regional approach and initiatives for combatting substandard and falsified

medicines. Harmonized pan-ASEAN safety and control measures allowing easier identification of counterfeit medicines, and improving verification and controls at borders, as well as a system enabling patients to identify legally operating online pharmacies, would certainly help limiting the commerce of these dangerous products", stated Laurent Laurdais, Counsellor at the EU Delegation to Thailand.

Purchase genuine products from verified or verified and legitimate distributors and join the campaign by sharing your experiences with counterfeit pharmaceutical products alongside a description, photo, or video, include the hashtag **#YourHealthIsPriceless** and mention @IPKey_EU Twitter account or IP Key Facebook page.