

February 3, 2014

EU Commissioner for Trade De Gucht visits STIHL

Karel De Gucht, EU Commissioner for Trade, visited STIHL in Waiblingen on February 3. He was welcomed by Dr. Rüdiger Stihl, member of the STIHL advisory board and honorary chairman of the Anti-Counterfeiting Association, and Dr. Nikolas Stihl, chairman of the STIHL advisory board. The reason for the visit was a meeting on product and brand piracy with the representatives of companies from Baden-Württemberg as well as Rainer Wieland MdEP, vice president of the European Parliament, and Daniel Caspary MdEP (CDU), spokesman of the EPP group in the international trade committee of the European Parliament. Dr. Rüdiger Stihl stressed in the discussion the significance of worldwide marketing of ideas and inventions for the success of many companies: "Effective protection of intellectual property and swift results in the fight against product and brand piracy are of central importance for the German and also the European economy." Trade commissioner De Gucht confirmed the relevance of property rights for brands and ideas as far as the European trade policy is concerned: "Intellectual property rights are the supporting pillars of creativity and innovation. The EU must protect these intangible assets in order to promote growth and competition in industry."

The fight against product and brand piracy is also consumer protection. STIHL never ceases to warn people against counterfeit products which do not comply with the relevant safety standards. "The consumer is exposed to the highest risks. The great majority of pirate products are of appallingly poor quality, often with considerable safety risks," said Dr. Rüdiger Stihl, and outlined what he expects from the European Commission: "Europe must continue to take a stand for intellectual property rights and put a stop to trade with illegal and forged products – in order to protect the European economy, and jobs, but more specifically, to protect consum-

ers.“

Daniel Caspary emphasized the dimension of the threat for the industry: “Product counterfeiters cause damage amounting to millions to the European economy every year. Our companies depend on innovative high-quality products for their livelihoods. They have long been a target of brazen product pirates, who often operate on a large scale. We must therefore enforce the protection of the original products – also in countries outside the EU.“ European member of parliament Daniel Caspary had invited the EU commissioner to Baden-Württemberg. After the meeting, Dr. Rüdiger Stihl took the EU commissioner on a tour of the power tool assembly facility in STIHL Plant 2 in Waiblingen-Neustadt.

Company Portrait

The STIHL Group develops, manufactures and distributes power tools for professional forestry and agriculture as well as for garden and landscape maintenance, the construction sector and the demanding private user. The range of garden power tools from VIKING complements the product line. Products are distributed exclusively through authorized dealers, including 34 marketing subsidiaries, about 120 importers and more than 40,000 dealers in over 160 countries. STIHL has been the world's top-selling chain saw brand since 1971. The company was founded in 1926 and is based in Waiblingen near Stuttgart. In 2012, STIHL achieved a worldwide sales volume of 2.78 billion euros with a workforce of 12,338.

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