

Enforcement regime of copyright and related rights in Azerbaijan: recent challenges and perspectives

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Abstract

Over the past 20 years Republic of Azerbaijan has been actively engaged in the process of developing its copyright system to international standards. The country has established the legislative base for a modern copyright and related rights regime.

Some steps had been made to enhance copyright enforcement in last years. In 2006 Azerbaijan was removed from the USTR Special 301 Report's Watch List due to IPR enforcement progress. In April 2008 and September 2010 substantial amendments were made to the Law on Copyright and Related Rights, bringing the national legislation closer to the TRIPS, the WIPO Internet treaties (WCT and WPPT) and EU standards.

In May 2011 Azerbaijan government signed an agreement with Microsoft to help ensure that all government offices covered by the agreement will run legally licensed software. The 2011 BSA Piracy Study showed that the rate of pirated software in Azerbaijan was 87 per cent, which was an improvement from 94% in 2006.

Improvement of legislation on copyright enforcement was the main objectives of the EU twinning project "Capacity Development for Enhancing Enforcement of Copyright and Related Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan" implemented by Greece, Germany and Spain, which had been finished in May 2013. Specific priority results of the project were adoption of the Law "On Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights and the Fight against Piracy", establishment of the Centre for Enforcement of IP Rights, as well a system of application of control marks (holograms) to products incorporating IP protected works, and a digital rights management (DRM) platform for legitimate electronic trade in IP-protected works. The DRM platform serves as a good basis for copyright protection of digital images, audio and video archives through the use of digital watermarking technologies. In addition international metadata standards for managing Intellectual Property in the digital environment are being applied.