

EU protects immaterial rights

Small and medium suppliers falling in disputes on immaterial rights in foreign countries can now get EU assistance. China seems to cause most problems (see page 22). There you can see your products copied by competitors at fairs, or find your partner as a competitor via other companies.

To assist in such and similar cases, the EU has opened an office in Beijing in China with a qualified staff under Simon Cheetham with experience as a customs police officer in China and other countries. The office is called China IPR SME Helpdesk (IPR = Intellectual Property Rights, SME = Small and Medium Enterprises).

It can be contacted on enquiries@china-iprhelpdesk.eu and on phone +86 (10) 6462 0892.

- Admittedly, China has IPR laws, and they are widely known. But local courts can still favour



companies from their own region against foreign companies, said Simon Cheetham at the Automechanika show.

There he shared a stand with Clepa, the umbrella organisation of the European automot-



Simon Cheetham (left) and Rutger Devoldere assist in immaterial right issues

tive suppliers. At Clepa, Rutger Devoldere is leading a project for better IPR protection. They both give European suppliers the following advice:

- Whatever business you have in or with China or with companies with Chinese connections, make sure to have fully covering and correct deals before entering a partnership. There are many

pitfalls on the road, but there are more than 100,000 lawyers to chose from in China.

IPR was a key issue at a Clepa meeting at Automechanika.

Clepa will also hold an aftermarket conference on Dec. 1-2 with IPR on the agenda. What is said there will of course also be valid for OE suppliers.

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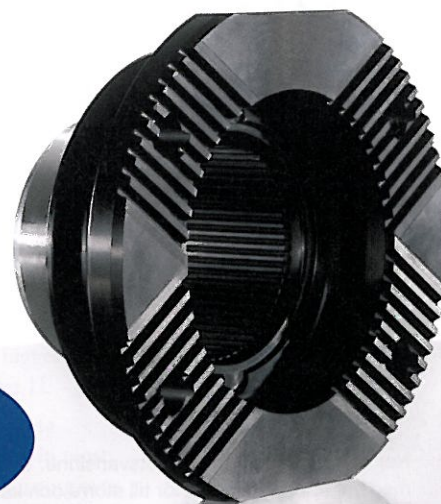
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