

Procedure file

Basic information		
NLE - Non-legislative enactments Decision	2011/0167(NLE)	Procedure lapsed or withdrawn
EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)		
Subject		
3.50.15 Intellectual property, copyright		
6.20.01 Agreements and relations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)		
6.20.02 Export/import control, trade defence, trade barriers		
6.20.05 Multilateral and plurilateral economic and trade agreements and relations		
7.30.30.10 Action against counterfeiting		
Geographical area		
Morocco		
Mexico		
New Zealand		
Canada		
Singapore		
United States		
Australia		
Japan		
Switzerland		
South Korea		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	INTA International Trade		29/02/2012
		S&D MARTIN David	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE FJELLNER Christofer	
		ALDE RINALDI Niccolò	
		Verts/ALE ANDERSDOTTER Amelia	
		ECR KAMALL Syed	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE Development		22/09/2011
	ECR ZHRADIL Jan		
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		09/01/2012	
	Verts/ALE ANDERSDOTTER Amelia		
JURI Legal Affairs		11/07/2011	
	S&D REGNER Evelyn		
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		05/12/2011	

Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Foreign Affairs	3154	16/03/2012
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Trade	DE GUCHT Karel	

Key events

24/06/2011	Preparatory document	COM(2011)0380	Summary
23/08/2011	Legislative proposal published	12195/2011	Summary
14/02/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/03/2012	Debate in Council	3154	Summary
30/05/2012	Additional information		Summary
21/06/2012	Vote in committee		
22/06/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A7-0204/2012	Summary
03/07/2012	Debate in Parliament		
04/07/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/07/2012	Decision by Parliament	T7-0287/2012	Summary
07/03/2015	Proposal withdrawn by Commission		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/0167(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consent by Parliament
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 207-p4; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 218-p6a
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure lapsed or withdrawn
Committee dossier	INTA/7/06356

Documentation gateway

Preparatory document	COM(2011)0380	24/06/2011	EC	Summary
Legislative proposal	12195/2011	23/08/2011	CSL	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	12196/2011	23/08/2011	CSL	
Committee draft report	PE486.174	12/04/2012	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE489.406	31/05/2012	EP	

Committee opinion	LIBE	PE480.574	04/06/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	JURI	PE487.684	04/06/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE478.666	05/06/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE483.518	05/06/2012	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A7-0204/2012	22/06/2012	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T7-0287/2012	04/07/2012	EP	Summary

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

PURPOSE: to conclude an Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States of America.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: further to the adoption of the negotiating directives by the Council on 14 April 2008, negotiations were launched on 3 June 2008. The agreement was concluded on 15 November 2010 and the text was initialled on 25 November, after 11 rounds of negotiations.

The EU Member States were kept informed of the negotiations orally and in writing. The European Parliament has also been kept regularly informed on developments via its Committee on International Trade (INTA) and by Commissioner De Gucht in three plenary debates in 2010. On 24 November 2010, the European Parliament adopted a [Resolution supporting ACTA](#).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 207 (4), 1st subparagraph, in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a)(v) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: ACTA aims to establish a comprehensive international framework that will assist the EU in its efforts to effectively combat the infringement of intellectual property rights (IPR). This infringement undermines legitimate trade and the EU's competitiveness with the subsequent negative repercussions on growth and jobs.

ACTA includes:

- state-of-the-art provisions on the enforcement of IPR, including provisions on civil, criminal, border and digital environment enforcement measures,
- robust cooperation mechanisms among ACTA Parties to assist in their enforcement efforts,
- the establishment of best practices for effective IPR enforcement.

Although ACTA does not modify the EU acquis, because EU law is already considerably more advanced than the current international standards, it will introduce a new international standard, building upon the World Trade Organisation's TRIPS Agreement (adopted in 1994). Thus, it will provide benefits for EU exporting right holders operating in the global market who currently suffer systematic and widespread infringements of their copyrights, trademarks, patents, designs and geographical indications abroad.

At the same time, ACTA is a balanced agreement, because it fully respects the rights of citizens and the concerns of important stakeholders such as consumers, internet providers and partners in developing countries.

Competences: ACTA contains a number of provisions on criminal enforcement that fall within the scope of Article 83(2) TFEU. Those parts of the agreement, in distinction to those parts falling under Article 207, fall under the area of shared competences (Article 2(2) TFEU). Where a matter falls under shared competence either the European Union or Member States may legislate and adopt legally binding acts.

The Commission's position as regards ACTA and Article 83(2) TFEU is without prejudice to the position of the Commission on future exercise by the EU of the shared competences foreseen by Article 83(2) TFEU as regards other initiatives.

Conclusion and signature: regarding the signature and conclusion of ACTA, the Commission has opted not to propose that the European Union exercise its potential competence in the area of criminal enforcement pursuant to Article 83(2) TFEU. The Commission considers this appropriate because it has never been the intention, as regards the negotiation of ACTA to modify the EU acquis or to harmonise EU legislation as regards criminal enforcement of intellectual property rights. For this reason, the Commission proposes that ACTA be signed and concluded both by the EU and by all the Member States.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: this proposal has no implication for the EU budget.

EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

PURPOSE: to conclude the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States of America.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: it is estimated that Europe is losing more than 78 billion annually through counterfeit goods flooding into its market. Statistics published by the European Commission in July 2011 show a tremendous upward trend in the number of shipments suspected of violating IPRs. Customs in 2010 registered around 80 000 cases, a figure that has almost doubled since 2009. More than 103 million fake products were detained at the EU external border. An OECD study on the global level of counterfeiting and piracy from 2009 estimates that international trade in counterfeit goods grew from just over USD 100 billion in 2000 to USD 250 billion in 2007. This amount is larger than the national GDPs of about 150 countries.

On 14 April 2008, the Council authorised the Commission to negotiate a plurilateral anti-counterfeiting trade agreement on behalf of the Union and its Member States. Those negotiations have been concluded and the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States of America was initialled on 25 November 2010 after 11 rounds of negotiations.

The European Parliament has also been kept regularly informed on developments via its Committee on International Trade (INTA) and on 24 November 2010, the European Parliament adopted a [Resolution supporting ACTA](#).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

LEGAL BASIS: the first subparagraph of Article 207(4), in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a)(v) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: this draft Decision aims to conclude, on behalf of the EU, the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States of America.

ACTA aims to establish a comprehensive international framework that will assist the EU in its efforts to effectively combat the infringement of intellectual property rights (IPR). This infringement undermines legitimate trade and the EU's competitiveness with the subsequent negative repercussions on growth and jobs.

ACTA includes state-of-the-art provisions on the enforcement of IPR, including provisions on civil, criminal, border and digital environment enforcement measures, robust cooperation mechanisms among ACTA Parties to assist in their enforcement efforts, and the establishment of best practices for effective IPR enforcement.

Although ACTA does not modify the EU acquis, because EU law is already considerably more advanced than the current international standards, it will introduce a new international standard, building upon the World Trade Organisation's TRIPS Agreement (adopted in 1994). Thus, it will provide benefits for EU exporting rightholders operating in the global market who currently suffer systematic and widespread infringements of their copyrights, trademarks, patents, designs and geographical indications abroad.

ACTA will only address the way companies and individuals can enforce their rights in court, at the borders or via the internet. It will not create new IP rights, nor will it define their acquisition, duration, scope of protection, registration, etc. ACTA countries will enforce the rights as they are defined domestically.

At the same time, ACTA is a balanced agreement, because it fully respects the rights of citizens and the concerns of important stakeholders such as:

- consumers,
- internet providers,
- partners in developing countries.

As regards medicines: ACTA does not prevent poor countries from buying cheap medicines. There are no provisions in ACTA that could directly or indirectly affect the legitimate trade in generic medicines or, more broadly, global public health.

As regards the Internet: ACTA is not about checking or monitoring private communication on the internet. It will not censor websites. It is not about how individual citizens use the internet. It will not lead to limitations of fundamental rights (e.g. control of laptops of air passengers at borders, monitoring of internet traffic). The respect of fundamental rights such as privacy, freedom of expression and data protection is expressly mentioned as a basic principle of the agreement.

Competence: ACTA contains a number of provisions on criminal enforcement that fall within the scope of Article 83(2) TFEU. Those parts of the agreement, in distinction to those parts falling under Article 207, fall under the area of shared competences (Article 2(2) TFEU). Where a matter falls under shared competence either the European Union or Member States may legislate and adopt legally binding acts. Regarding the signature and conclusion of ACTA, the Commission has opted not to propose that the European Union exercise its potential competence in the area of criminal enforcement pursuant to Article 83(2) TFEU. The Commission considers this appropriate because it has never been the intention, as regards the negotiation of ACTA to modify the EU acquis or to harmonise EU legislation as regards criminal enforcement of intellectual property rights. For this reason, the Commission proposes that ACTA be signed and concluded both by the EU and by all the Member States.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: this proposal has no impact on the EU budget.

EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

The Council took stock of the situation regarding the signature and ratification of the anti-counterfeiting trade agreement (ACTA) between the EU and Australia, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States.

ACTA establishes an international framework for improving the enforcement of intellectual property right laws and creating improved international standards for action against large-scale infringements of intellectual property. Negotiations were concluded in November 2010 and the agreement was signed by the EU and 22 Member States in Tokyo on 26 January 2012.

On 22 February, the Commission decided to refer ACTA to the Court of Justice to verify its compatibility with the EU treaties and in particular with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

For more information about the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), please click on the link to the [information note](#) published by the European Parliament's DG Communication.

EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

The Committee on International Trade adopted the report drafted by David MARTIN (S&D, UK) in which it declines to consent to the conclusion of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States of America.

To recall, ACTA is a trade agreement which addresses commercial-scale counterfeiting and online piracy by coordinating global enforcement of existing copyright violation laws. It is purported by the Commission that it will not require European legislation to be changed, but will coordinate procedures at borders to deal with large-scale counterfeiting. Counterfeiting and piracy have increased substantially and continue to do so.

The consequences of the growth in these illegal activities range from economic losses to health and safety dangers. The European Union has much to lose without efficient and enforced global coordination in copyright protection.

According to Members, Europe cannot compete in the global economy without adequate protection for European fashion, car parts, films and music. In this regard, international agreements dealing with any aspect of criminal sanctions, online activity or intellectual property must clearly define the scope of the agreement and the protection of individual liberties, in order to avoid unintended interpretations of the agreement.

The report states that the unintended consequences of the ACTA text is a serious concern. On individual criminalisation, the definition of commercial-scale, the role of internet service providers and the possible interruption of the transit of generic medicines, Members maintain doubts that the ACTA text is as precise as is necessary. The intended benefits of this international agreement are far outweighed by the potential threats to civil liberties.

Given the vagueness of certain aspects of the text and the uncertainty over its interpretation, Members consider that the European Parliament cannot guarantee adequate protection for citizens' rights in the future under ACTA.

Therefore, the committee recommends that the European Parliament declines to give consent to ACTA. It hopes the European Commission will therefore come forward with new proposals for protecting IP.

EU/Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and United States Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)

The European Parliament adopted a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Mexican States, the Kingdom of Morocco, New Zealand, the Republic of Singapore, the Swiss Confederation and the United States of America.

Parliament declines, by 39 votes to 478, with 165 abstentions, to consent to the conclusion of the Agreement.

This was the first time that Parliament exercised its Lisbon Treaty power to reject an international trade agreement. Its rejection means that neither the EU nor its individual member states can join the agreement.