



**All-Party Intellectual Property Group meeting with  
Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Chris Skidmore**

**Date:** 1 July 2019

**Time:** 3.40 pm

**Location:** Room M, Portcullis House

**Attendees:** Chris Skidmore MP, Pete Wishart MP (Chair), Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP, Rupa Huq MP, Lord Clement-Jones, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, IPO officials

**Policy issues covered**

- Challenges around IP enforcement, particularly in the digital environment
- Resources for Trading Standards
- Implementation of the Copyright Directive
- IP and future trade policy
- Online Harms White Paper

**Challenges around IP enforcement**

- The Minister said that IP is vital to the UK's industrial strategy and that as a country we need to back creators. He added that it's vital we work with universities to deliver IP.
- He stated that owing to the UK's strong IP system, we have a role on the international stage to support protections for IP and improving ways of tackling infringement.
- He suggested he wants an IP system that is approachable and is less bureaucratic.
- He said that there are uncertainties on new technology and IP intersect due to the changing nature of innovation, and that existing legal frameworks, designed in an analogue age, weren't necessarily sufficient.
- By highlighting that we need to resolve the tech transfer, he said that a new approach might be required to protect IP and gave the example of AI.
- The Minister recognised the issue of funding for Trading Standards but said it wasn't something he could directly control.
- He did say, however, that if creative solutions could be developed, as with PIPCU, he was open to such ideas. He also recognised that long term funding for PIPCU was important and noted that the IPO has just committed to another two year funding round, with an additional three posts added.

**Brexit**

- On Brexit he said the Government were looking to maintain the status quo where possible but said that if there was a No Deal Brexit then it might still be possible to mutually agree recognition of entire pillars of the existing legal IP framework with the EU.
- The Minister said that IP is a critical part of the Withdrawal Agreement.

### **EU Copyright Directive**

- The Minister said that they are keen to maintain some form of alignment and that the Government would seek to transpose into UK law beginning with a consultation in the new year. The consultation would include full impact assessments.

### **Future Trade**

- He stated that he is keen to make sure that IP doesn't get sidelined in trade deals, and to ensure that IP is considered from the beginning of future negotiations.
- The Minister said that he is keen to play a leadership role with the IPO and that they have been considering setting up a conference or IP Summit. It would look to develop a leading group of countries who would seek to drive forward the IP agenda.
- There would be the opportunity to arrange secondary events which would maintain that dialogue and help build bilateral relationships.
- The Minister referenced established IP attaches, including in China, and said that if you look at the number of IP registrations coming out of China, you can see they have a growing incentive to protect IP.

### **Design rights**

- On design rights, he said that the IPO would be looking again at the issue of protection for unregistered design rights which he knew many in the design community were concerned about.
- He also said he understood the issue of where designs were shown first in a post-Brexit landscape and he recognised a solution needed to be sought.

### **Online Harms**

- On online harms, he said that the scope had been clearly defined by Government not to include economic harms.
- He said he thought in time that online economic harms would have to be dealt with, and that the knock on effects from this Bill would encourage that.
- The Minister said that there is the recognition that we are living in different times and regulation needs changing and future proofing