



19th October 2018

EPAL FRANCE: ACTION TAKEN AGAINST EPAL PALLET COUNTERFEITERS

For many years EPAL France (formerly QUALIPAL until April 2017) has supported the 210 French EPAL licensees with marketing EPAL pallets, which are produced and repaired in accordance with quality provisions and are subject to strict inspections by the independent inspection company, Bureau Veritas. Unfortunately however crude "copies" are also placed on the market by counterfeiters, who mainly go unpunished. EPAL France has set its sights on bringing a prompt end to these fraudulent practices and is taking action against these counterfeiters. This action has already yielded results.

EPAL is a protected trademark

EPAL is the owner of two "EPAL" German collective trademarks, as well as an international trademark registered in March 1994, which is also valid in France, and a European Union community trademark, registered in February 1997. This means that a licence is required to produce and repair EPAL pallets as well as for trade with EPAL pallets.

Many trademark infringements uncovered

Market observations carried out regularly by EPAL France have shown that a large number of pallets, repaired under the EPAL trademark and put into circulation, are not subject to a licence. These practices constitute infringements of EPAL's trademark rights, and the pallets are legally to be considered as counterfeits.

When buying counterfeit EPAL pallets, new or repaired, the user cannot be sure that the quality of these pallets meets the applicable technical specifications. Furthermore, these counterfeit pallets pose a potential risk to the goods transported, as well as to employees.

EPAL France's action

For over two years, to protect the EPAL trademark against counterfeits and with the support of the law firm, FIDAL (in particular Frédéric Bourguet, a lawyer specialised in intellectual property), EPAL France has initiated reinforced action against unlicensed repair operations and dealers and urged them to apply for licences. If these prompts are not followed up and these activities continue, compulsory measures can be implemented, according to the applicable legal provisions.

Extremely positive first results

In the space of 10 months, a total of 7 out of 10 firms suspected of counterfeiting have already applied for and received a licence (for repairs or dealing); for the remaining 3 firms, the licensing procedure is underway. The continuous efforts by EPAL France aim to guarantee compliance with the quality provisions for EPAL pallets for licensees and users, and to strengthen trust in the brand.

In 2019 EPAL France is aiming to take again strengthen action against counterfeiters, to stabilise the market for EPAL pallets, a powerful tool in goods and transport logistics for the industry and retail sectors.

About EPAL

The European Pallet Association e.V. (EPAL) ensures a smooth flow of goods in the logistics world with over 450 million EPAL Euro pallets and 20 million EPAL box pallets in the world's biggest open exchange pool. Founded in 1991 as the umbrella association of licensed producers and repairers of EPAL load carriers.

Contact details EPAL France: Patrice CHANRION – Manager

