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Ten Leaders in Authentication and Traceability Form the International Tax Stamp Association

New Industry Organisation Launched on 11 November at the Tax Stamp Forum, Miami

To respond to the need for better understanding of the benefits of excise tax stamps and tax stamp technologies, as well as to promote high professional standards in this sector, ten companies have joined together to form the International Tax Stamp Association – or ITSA.

These ten founder companies, leaders in document and product authentication and traceability, are:

- Advanced Track and Trace
- Ashton Potter Security Printers
- Chanwanich Security Printing
- Holoflex
- Hologram Industries
- Holostik India
- Manipal Technologies
- OpSec Security
- SICPA
- Thomas Greg & Sons de Colombia

The seeds for this new not-for-profit initiative were sown at the 2014 international *Tax Stamp Forum™*, amid discussions on whether the time had come to form such an association (given that 250 revenue agencies were now using over 140 billion tax stamps a year to collect excise taxes and fight illicit trade). The discussions were also triggered by the work that had just started on the new ISO 19998 standard for tax stamps.

The results of these discussions laid the foundation for the International Tax Stamp Association (ITSA). The main purpose of ITSA is to provide a collective voice for the industry, advocating the benefits of tax stamps, educating customs and revenue agencies on how they can better secure excise revenues (from, mainly, tobacco and alcohol), sharing best practice, and contributing to the development of the new ISO standard.

Following the formal signing of the articles creating the association, the founder members elected a five-member Board of Directors. They are Michel Mariton of Hologram Industries, Zbigniew Sagan of Advanced Track & Trace, Manoj Kochar of Holoflex, Christine Macqueen of SICPA and Juan Yanez of Thomas Greg & Sons de Colombia, who was elected Chairman.

Commenting on this major new initiative to advance the use and benefits of tax stamps, Juan commented: 'I am honoured to be taking part in the formation of the International Tax Stamp Association and look forward to working with the Board and members to deliver on our core objectives of support, education and advocacy in the development of standards and the promotion of tax stamps.'

Reconnaissance International has been formally appointed as the Secretariat. Nicola Sudan of Reconnaissance will be the Secretary General.

Membership of ITSA is open to legally incorporated companies and businesses that supply tax stamp components and features, as well as finished tax stamps, equipment for stamp design, manufacture, application and authentication, and systems for coding and marking stamps.

The benefits of being a member of ITSA include the opportunity to contribute to the development of standards and solutions for tax stamp programmes, and to demonstrate leadership in this dynamic and rapidly evolving field.

The formal launch of ITSA on 11 November took place immediately before the opening of the 2015 Tax Stamp Forum, which runs from 11-13 November at the Trump National Doral Hotel in Miami.

To learn more about ITSA, please visit www.its-association.org or contact:

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Note: About Tax Stamps

Tax stamps consist of small strips, usually made of paper, which are sold by revenue authorities to manufacturers of excisable products such as cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. The manufacturers affix the stamps to their products to signify that tax has been paid on them.

The main purpose of excise tax stamps, therefore, is to provide a physical means of collecting tax. However, tax stamps have always taken on additional roles – albeit unintentionally – just by the fact of being attached to a product. As well as providing visible proof of tax payment, their very presence acts, to some extent, as a guarantee that the product is genuine. Furthermore, by being positioned over the opening of a tobacco package or alcohol bottle, they act as an anti-tampering/anti-reuse seal.

Another role that tax stamps have started to assume is that of a carrier of unique identification for item-level production monitoring and supply chain track and trace.

Today, tax stamps have evolved into sophisticated security devices with high-security authentication features and encrypted serialisation codes.