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Genuine Volkswagens. Unlawful imports?

Volkswagen ID.6, parallel imports from China, and the limits of EU IP rights.



Landgericht Hamburg · 19 March 2026

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1. The dispute

22 genuine Volkswagen ID.6 vehicles were imported from China and offered for resale in Germany.

Volkswagen challenged the imports before the Hamburg Regional Court.



Volkswagen ID.6 · Parallel imports from China

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2. The legal issue

IP exhaustion in the EEA

> If goods are first placed on the EEA market by the rights holder or with its consent, trademark and design rights are generally exhausted.

Where goods are first marketed outside the EEA, that defence may not apply.

First placed on EEA market



First placed outside the EEA



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3. The ruling

The Hamburg Regional Court largely sided with Volkswagen.

The court found an infringement of trademark and design rights.

It also recognised a claim for surrender of the vehicles for destruction.





Landgericht Hamburg · Judgment of 19 March 2026 · 312 O 182/23

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4. Why it matters



Authentic products can still raise IP issues.



Parallel imports are not automatically lawful.



Market-specific goods can create trademark and design risk in the EU.

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Key takeaway

Authenticity does not guarantee lawful resale in the EEA.

Before importing branded goods from outside the EEA, businesses should assess trademark, design and distribution risks.

