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# PRESS STATEMENT

## Enforcement Directive welcomed as a first step in the fight against piracy and counterfeiting

### - European Parliament adopts law on civil tools to combat piracy -

Strasbourg, 9th March 2004 - The creative sector welcomed a vote by the European Parliament today adopting an Enforcement Directive designed to improve tools for fighting piracy and counterfeiting in the European Union. An improvement of the means required to enforce intellectual property rights in EU Member States is urgently needed and with today's vote, the European Parliament has taken a first step towards combating the massive scale of piracy and counterfeiting in the Community.

Piracy is seriously undermining European culture and business, costing tens of thousands of jobs, depriving governments of billions of Euros in lost tax revenues and ultimately reducing consumer choice. In Europe, film, video, music, business and leisure software and publishing industries suffer billions of Euros in losses annually. Europe cannot compete as a knowledge-based economy if its creative sector is plagued with this illegal activity. The Enforcement Directive provides a uniform level of protection in an EU that encompasses 25 Member States. This Directive harmonises some of the best practice civil enforcement measures available at national level and makes them available Europe-wide.

Organisations from the creative sector working together in an Anti-Piracy Coalition expressed regret that the Directive does not harmonise criminal penalties, despite support from the Commission and the Parliament for criminal measures in the Directive. Creative industries will continue to press for criminal sanctions at EU level and call on the institutions to address this issue urgently. Pirates often use relatively easy profits from piracy to fund other criminal activity such as arms trafficking and drug dealing. International and European police agencies, Interpol and Europol, have recognised the links between piracy and organised crime.

The creative sector also saluted the European Parliament for recognising the seriousness of piracy and counterfeiting in the EU. Members of the European Parliament have been consistent in their commitment to tackling this problem and adopted a Declaration on the Fight Against Piracy and Counterfeiting in the Enlarged EU (June 2003). This Declaration, which was signed by a large number of MEPs, called for concerted action against the alarming levels of piracy in Europe.

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