



## **EUROPEAN AUTHORS' SOCIETIES: CALL TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

As a co-organiser of the Conference on Collective Management of Copyright and Related Rights in Europe being held in Brussels on 24 and 25 November 2008, GESAC <sup>(1)</sup> and its members would like:

- Firstly, to emphasize that:
  - Collective management of copyright exercised through authors' societies is the best way to ensure an adequate protection and income for authors, composers and music publishers. Collective management is not only beneficial for rights holders, it also makes it easier for users to clear rights, thereby increasing cost-efficiency and legal certainty;
  - Collective management of copyright is an important economic activity, which generated in excess of €4 billion in 2007 in the EU alone, for distribution between more than 500 000 rights holders in Europe and over 3 million worldwide. However, authors' societies play a role that goes beyond being a major operator contributing to economic growth through the exploitation of copyrighted content. They play a cultural and sometimes a social role, too;
  - Authors' societies foster culture in many ways. On the one hand, they offer easy access to a wide variety of copyrighted content. On the other hand, they guarantee that copyright fees are set at a level that recognises the value of culture in general and copyrighted content in particular. Finally, authors' societies also provide funding for projects that might otherwise not be viable, helping up-and-coming creators to find an outlet for their art and thus contributing to a thriving and diverse cultural offer in the future;
  - Authors' societies are the extension of their members (authors, composers and music publishers), whose active participation in the life and decision-making process of authors' societies should be supported. The efforts made by collective management entities to continually improve levels of good governance and transparency for the benefit of their members should be recognised;

- Authors' societies play an important role in the development of technological tools, which are key for the identification of works, monitoring of use and distribution of monies collected, hence authors societies' high levels of investment in information technologies;
- Secondly, to request that the public authorities within the European Union:
- 1) Acknowledge and take into account in all relevant policies the specificities of collective management and the important role played by authors' societies and copyright both in economic and cultural terms;
  - 2) Not regard competition as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve efficiency, and to realise that any initiative related to authors' societies and how they administer copyright should be preceded by a thorough consultation and be based on a coherent approach;
  - 3) Recognise that a robust copyright framework is key to the development of the information society. The fact is that appealing content is the main driver of the information society. Without the protection granted by copyright, there would be no incentives to create and invest in creativity. This is all the more important if we consider that 2009 will be the European Year of Creativity and Innovation;
  - 4) Address the problem of online piracy, which is the single most important threat to the cultural industries, notably by adopting or amending legislation, in order to introduce ISP cooperation in the fight against online piracy. Awareness-raising campaigns are also needed, in order for consumers to realise the harm that online piracy does to the creative community. New online services that meet consumers' demands while ensuring an adequate remuneration for creators can only thrive and flourish if online piracy is eradicated.

---

(1) The European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (GESAC) links together 35 of the biggest authors' societies in the European Union, Norway and Switzerland, which administer directly the royalties of more than 500 000 European authors, composers and writers in a range of sectors (music, audiovisual, literary, visual arts, etc.), as well as of music publishers, and indirectly through the network of representation agreements of another 3 million rights holders world-wide.