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For Immediate Release

GESAC REGRETS DIGITAL EUROPE'S UNILATERAL DECISION TO ABANDON TALKS ON PRIVATE COPYING LEVIES

GESAC was surprised to learn today through a press release posted on Digital Europe's website that ICT industry representatives have unilaterally decided to abandon talks on private copying levies. The announcement was totally unexpected given that a meeting was to be held in January to finalize a first set of recommendations and agree on a roadmap for future discussions.

As a member of the rights holders' delegation in the Stakeholders Forum on Private Copying Levies set up by the European Commission, GESAC strongly regrets this decision, notably when agreement on a number of issues was so close.

The reason given by Digital Europe to abandon the dialogue – the alleged lack of an Internal Market approach to the exercise – is also hard to understand. In fact, many of the recommendations included in the text under discussion were specifically intended to improve the free movement of goods subject to levies within the Internal Market. This first set of recommendations, on which agreement was in reach, included exemptions and refunds for cross-border movement of goods subject to levies, a regime for distance sales, the call for consistent product definition throughout the EU, etc.

Therefore, the claim that rights holders are opposed to an Internal Market approach could not be further from the truth.

Moreover, a roadmap for future discussions, which included all the topics requested by the ICT industry representatives, was also close to being agreed upon.

In any case, while the statements made in the press release issued by Digital Europe are certainly not helpful, GESAC would hereby stress its readiness to resume talks.

Should the ICT industry representatives remain firm in their decision to abandon the dialogue on private copying levies, they will have to bear full responsibility for this failure and explain why they are not prepared to finalize the work on the first set of recommendations, which addresses many of their longstanding demands.

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About GESAC:

GESAC represents 34 of the main collective copyright management societies (authors' societies) in the European Union, Norway and Switzerland, that administer the royalties of almost 500 000 authors, composers and writers of a variety of sectors (music, audiovisual, literary and visual and graphic arts), as well as of music publishers.

GESAC has been a member of the rights holders' delegation within the Stakeholders Forum on Private Copying Levies.