

*Brussels, 17th December 2019*

## **ECSA strongly condemns the malpractices of Epidemic Sound and its disrespect for fundamental authors' economic and moral rights.**

The European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA) represents over 30,000 professional composers and songwriters in 27 European countries. Our main objective is to defend and promote the rights of music authors and we feel compelled to speak out regarding recent harmful developments for the treatment of composers and songwriters in Sweden.

Over the recent years, the Swedish company "Epidemic Sound" has grown extensively by selling "royalty-free music" to various commercial companies, like video-on-demand platforms and TV stations. It uses 100% buy-out contracts - where music creators sell their rights to a piece of music in exchange for a lump sum - and therefore claims that it entirely owns "its music". It even often substitutes the name of music creators with the company's name in the credits.

We also note with great disappointment that the Swedish Public Service TV (SVT) agreed to regularly feature Epidemic Sound in the music credits after a program instead of the creator's names. As a result, SVT is - with Swedish tax-payers' resources - promoting Epidemic Sound through credits and giving it substantial financial value, to the detriment of composers and songwriters.

More importantly, SVT and Epidemic Sound are not respecting the right of attribution which grants authors the right to have their names attached to their works. This moral right of attribution is recognised at international level for decades and is an integral part of Swedish law.

The vast majority of EU Member States grant authors strong moral rights, providing for an unwaivable right of attribution, as well as a right to object to false attribution, a right to integrity, a right to protection of honor and reputation, as well as a right to withdraw the work from public access. The right of attribution does not only constitute a direct link between the author and his or her work but also secures the public's interest in ensuring that our society knows, trusts and honors the creator. In times of fake news, hoaxes, disinformation for entertainment or political purposes, this right of attribution is more important than ever and should be fully respected, especially by public service entities.

As Epidemic Sound continues to grow - from 100 million in 2017 to 234 million SEK in 2018 – ECSA strongly condemns those malpractices and their detrimental impact on authors' rights:

- Any company should refrain from collaborating with an entity which disrespects authors and their basic economic and moral rights.
- In addition, we call on all public service broadcasters with a public service mission to stop spending taxpayers' resources with any company not respecting the fundamental rights of an author.
- All our fellow music authors should refrain from signing any agreement which results in giving up all their economic rights forever, while not even being given credit according to his/her right by law.

As the Copyright Directive is now in the process of being implemented, we also urge all EU Member States to engage in an ambitious implementation of its Articles 18 to 23 to prevent those buy-out practices and ensure that those malpractices from another age cannot longer occur in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

---

**The European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA)** represents over 30,000 professional composers and songwriters in 28 European countries. With more than 60 members organisations across Europe, the Alliance speaks for the interests of music creators of art & classical music (contemporary), film & audiovisual music, as well as popular music.