



PRESS RELEASE:

Creators await legislation against coercive buy-outs

European music creators and EU policymakers gather to discuss how to end coercive buy-out practices as the EU anticipates dedicated rules to strike fair balance in copyright framework

Brussels, 3 February 2026 – This afternoon, European songwriters and composers as well as representatives of their collective management organisations came together with key EU decision makers to address the long-standing and growing phenomenon of coercive buy-out practices affecting audiovisual composers.

Hosted by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Leire Pajín (S&D, Spain) in the European Parliament, this high-level meeting jointly organised by the European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA) and the European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (GESAC), provided a platform for authors to share their experiences and rally EU policy makers on the necessary measures against these harmful contractual practices.

Buy-out practices in contracts force music authors to give away all or part of their rights in exchange for a typically low one-time upfront payment. This means that they lose the control of their rights and any opportunity to be fairly remunerated from any of the exploitations of their works in the future. Despite previous efforts from ECSA and GESAC to tackle such practices, buy-out clauses in contracts still persist and strongly affect music authors' livelihoods. Often imposed by non-European global players – mainly US-based VOD platforms – such clauses circumvent EU law and its principle of appropriate and proportionate remuneration.

In today's geopolitical context, strengthening European sovereignty and ensuring EU law applies to all market players is more important than ever. Global digital giants, mainly based outside the EU, must not be allowed to circumvent European law. Europe is built on values and principles - fairness, transparency, and respect for creators' rights - which must continue to guide EU policymaking in the digital age.

MEP Leire Pajín said: *“The European Parliament has worked intensively to address coercive buy-out practices that affect music creators across Europe. In the response to my parliamentary question, the European Commission has confirmed the importance of key principles enshrined in the Copyright Directive, including appropriate remuneration, which should be ensured also vis-à-vis non-EU-based services operating in Europe. The EU must now move towards firm commitments to ensure fairness and to prevent circumvention of EU rules through foreign laws and jurisdictions. The Parliament stands firmly behind creators, and we now expect concrete follow-up from the Commission to effectively tackle these abusive practices.”*

Songwriter and ECSA President Helienne Lindvall stated: *“As highlighted by ECSA’s report on audiovisual composers’ contracts, the harmful use of buy-out contracts has become a widespread and urgent issue. With the rising dominance of a few large US-based streaming services, these practices form a huge obstacle to fair remuneration for our members. Articles 18 to 23 of the 2019 Copyright Directive, including its principle of appropriate and proportionate remuneration, are of vital importance to European music authors. It is absolutely crucial that these provisions are not circumvented by big market players. We must ensure a sustainable future for composers, where they get properly credited and are able to participate financially in the success of their works.”*

David El Sayegh, President of GESAC, said: *“Ending abusive buy-out practices and securing fair, proportionate remuneration for creators is a European imperative. Collective management organizations are key to enforcing this principle and protecting creators’ rights across Europe.”*

Jesper Hansen, film composer and ECSA Vice-President, stated: *“As a composer, it is impossible to predict the success of a work at the point of creation. Royalties based on the exploitation of the work are therefore a crucial source of income. Buy-out clauses fully contradict the concept of fair remuneration for creators. Composers often do not have the bargaining power to stand up against such practices, as we face the risk of being blacklisted and excluded from future work opportunities. This is why we need solid legislation at EU level in order to be protected from harmful contractual practices.”*

Roque Baños, film composer, stated: *“Among other things, the major problem with these abusive practices is that for a fixed price, you are forced to relinquish the rights to your work to the point of losing absolute control over it, especially when these types of contracts include fixed clauses that require you to allow your work synchronized in other, different, and future audiovisual productions, of which you will never be aware. As an author/ composer I am forced to allow third parties to profit from my work through other exploitation without receiving any income for it, because I also relinquish my moral rights about it.”*

About [ECSA](#)

The European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA) represents over 30,000 professional composers and songwriters in 28 European countries. With 57 member organisations across Europe, the Alliance speaks for the interests of music creators of art and classical music (contemporary), film & audiovisual music, as well as popular music.

About [GESAC](#)

GESAC stands for European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (or *Groupement Européen des Sociétés d’Auteurs et Compositeurs*). Currently, GESAC comprises 32 authors’ societies in the EEA and Switzerland. Together, we represent over 1.2 million creators and rightsholders – from musicians to writers, visual artists to film directors and many more, in the areas of musical, audiovisual, visual arts, and literary and dramatic works.

The event is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.