

Press release

European Commissioner Oettinger calls for Europe-wide copyright law as basis for fair competition in Europe

Ancillary copyrights guarantee plurality of opinions and media diversity in Europe

Brussels, 18 June 2015. VG Media invited people to attend an event on the topic of ‘The importance of ancillary copyrights for media diversity in Europe’ held at the Bavarian Representation in Brussels on Wednesday.

In her welcome address, Maren Ruhfus, Managing Director of VG Media, highlighted the huge economic significance of ancillary copyrights for private TV channels and radio stations and also for press publishers. *‘These work mediators play a significant part in promoting creativity and in maintaining media diversity and a plurality of opinions. On the one hand, TV channels, radio stations and press publishers see to it that content is compiled and distributed, and also facilitate the classification of information, news, culture and entertainment. And on the other hand, they guarantee the financial and organisational parameters required for the many creative individuals they employ. In all the upcoming proposals for reforms in Europe, there needs to be some recognition of the interdependence of work originators and users,’* said Maren Ruhfus. She went on to say that robust ancillary copyrights for press publishers on the one hand and broadcasting companies being allowed to benefit from private copy remuneration on the other are important prerequisites for safeguarding quality and diversity – something which is in the interests of the work originators too.

In his opening words, Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, stressed that the digital media markets are in need of thorough and fast reform, adding that he would be presenting a proposal for copyright reform at the end of the year. *‘Global Internet enterprises such as Google, Facebook and other platforms are, of course, more than welcome here! But what we need is a level playing field.’* He therefore also expressed a clear interest in the progress made with enforcing press ancillary copyrights in Germany.

In the panel discussion which followed involving MEP Julia Reda and MEP Sabine Verheyen, the VG Media Advisory Board members Christoph Keese, Executive Vice President of Axel Springer SE, Dr Matthias Kirschenhofer, General Counsel at Constantin Medien AG, and David Wood, Legal Counsel at ICOMP, discussed the European reform plans.

VG Media already licenses ancillary copyrights for media companies throughout Europe. With its legal expertise and many years of experience with exercising and enforcing ancillary copyrights, VG Media will henceforth play a more active part in the debate regarding the upcoming copyright reforms at the European level alongside its partners in Brussels.

Contact

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VG Media based in Berlin is the copyright collecting society of private media companies. It represents the copyright and intellectual property rights of almost all German and several international private TV and radio stations and more than 200 digital publishing sites.