

Brussels, 14 December 2009

European Commission welcomes ratification of the WIPO Copyright Treaties

Today, the European Union and its Member States ratified the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, the so-called "Internet" Treaties. These Treaties were concluded to make the world's copyright laws 'fit for the internet'.

Internal Market Commissioner Charlie McCreevy commented on the WIPO ratifications: *"Today is an important day for the European Union and its Member States and WIPO. We, as a group have shown our attachment to the international system of protection of copyright and related rights. These two treaties brought protection up to speed with modern technologies. As the technological evolution accelerates, protecting creators and creative industries is more urgent than ever."*

By ratifying these Treaties, the European Union and its Member States hope to breathe new vigour into the current treaty-making work of WIPO and encourage renewed commitment to moving forward on a high level of protection for creators and creative industries.

The European Union and its Member States participated fully in the Diplomatic Conference of 1996 that aimed to upgrade the rights of authors, performers and phonogram producers to withstand the challenges of the digital age. The two WIPO copyright treaties contain rules on distribution, rental, the right of public communication and the "making available" of protected content online.

In 2000, the European Union and its Member states took the formal decision¹ to ratify the WIPO Treaties together. Indeed, negotiations on these two Treaties marked the first time that the European Union was accorded full Contracting Party status in the field of copyright, as opposed to the observer status it enjoyed so far in WIPO on copyright issues.

Immediately after the Diplomatic Conference in 1996, work started at the European level to adapt European copyright law to the WIPO "internet" Treaties. A European Copyright Directive² was adopted in 2001. All EU Member States have meanwhile transposed the provisions of the 2001 Copyright Directive into their national legislation.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations. It is dedicated to developing an international [intellectual property](#) (IP) system, which rewards creativity, stimulates innovation and contributes to economic development while safeguarding the public interest.

¹ Council Decision of 16 March 2000 on the approval, on behalf of the European Community, of the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, Official Journal L 89 of 11 April 2000, p. 6

² Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society. Official Journal L 167 of 22 June 2001.

WIPO was established by the [WIPO Convention](#) in 1967 with a mandate from its [Member States](#) to promote the protection of IP throughout the world through cooperation among states and in collaboration with other international organizations. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.