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SROC's response to the consultation on Geo-Blocking and other geographically-based restrictions when shopping and accessing information in the EU

SROC naturally shares the Commission's goal to enable more Europeans to legally consume and enjoy more content: delivering our competitions to as many fans as possible is at the heart of what we do. Our members have long embraced this objective, thereby generating growth that allows them to further produce successful competitions, innovate with their broadcast partners and reinvest into their sports.

SROC recognises that the Commission's consultation on geo-blocking primarily wishes to identify and address geographically-based restrictions faced by users, consumers and businesses when accessing or providing **non-copyrighted/non-licensed offers**. Indeed, failing to make this important distinction between copyrighted and non-copyrighted content would inadvertently lead stakeholders to comment on and propose 'one-size-fits-all' solutions for different issues and contexts. In this regard, SROC particularly welcomes the Commission's decision to exclude practices related to the provision of copyrighted and licensed offers (such as sports events) from the scope of its questionnaire.

However, we remain concerned about potential legislative changes based on the idea that territorial licensing is an impediment to the cross-border consumption of content in Europe. Therefore, we would like to provide the Commission with our perspective on the matter and once again warn EU policy-makers of the risks of weakening the principle of territorial exclusivity, which may lead to the adoption of pan-European copyright licensing arrangements. Such a regime would ultimately threaten our members' ability to offer rich and culturally-diverse content and would hurt our consumers as the price of the content EU level is likely to increase.

Territorial exclusivity is and will continue to be the most efficient model for the sports sector as it suits the diversity of our business models and brings the greatest benefits to our consumers:

- It enables consumers to enjoy quality offers that respond to local needs, particularly as sports are territorial by nature;
- It generates revenues that sports bodies redistribute and invest in the further growth and development of their sports, particularly at grassroots level;
- It enables stronger and fairer competition between broadcasters in Europe and prevents the largest media corporations from gaining disproportionate levels of market power;
- It benefits many commercial partners and local/national businesses who can seize the associated opportunities which arise from the diversity of advertising and sponsorships offers.

Sports organisations in Europe face few or no barriers to distribute their content online and when they do not find interest from traditional broadcasters they usually partner with online platforms or develop their own offering online. Because our market is thriving, sports fans largely have access to tailored services wherever they need them at a price which reflects the very different valorisation of the same sporting content in the various Member States (think Cricket, Rugby, Winter Sports etc.)

We understand the political desire to promote a digital single market in Europe. However, we would urge the Commission not to try to create one where it does not exist and to rather take a sensitive approach which simply opens up opportunities to all content providers and creators, whilst maintaining the core principles of a framework that has enabled the European sports and wider creative industry to flourish so far.

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