MUSIC AUTHORS AND PERFOMERS STRONGLY DENOUNCE
*EPIDEMIC SOUND'*S MALPRACTICES AND ITS PROFOUND DISRESPECT
FOR THEIR RIGHTS

23rd September 2020

The Association of European Performers' Organisations (AEPO-ARTIS), the European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA), and the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) collectively represent over 500 000 composers, songwriters and performers. We feel compelled to speak out against the harmful development of *Epidemic Sound* for the ability of these professionals to make a living from their creations.

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 - whereby music authors and performers sell their rights for the full term of protection in exchange for a lump sum payment - depriving them from payment of royalties and equitable remuneration, which are essential to their livelihoods. It also often substitutes the name of music creators with the company's name in their credits, showing a profound disrespect for our members' moral rights to be properly credited for their works and performances.

While our organisations regularly receive complaints from music creators about these malpractices, the tech company *Adobe* has recently partnered with *Epidemic Sound* and *Jamendo* to launch a library of "royalty-free" music. This partnership further hinders the music creators' ability to earn a living from the exploitation of their works and performances. In a context where our members' activities are under existential threat because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the development of buy-out contracts eludes the collective rights management system and prevents guaranteed payments based on remuneration rights. The expansion of *Epidemic Sound* represents yet another threat to the fair remuneration of authors and performers in the music sector and their ability to develop sustainable careers.

We therefore firmly condemn this partnership, which relies on the expropriation of music authors and performers from their rights and legitimate revenues. We call on any public or private company to refrain from collaborating with an entity that disrespects authors and performers and their basic economic and moral rights. Moreover, we urge all authors and performers in the music sector to carefully consider all the potential consequences of buy-out agreements, whereby all their exclusive rights are transferred in perpetuity against no future revenue. The development of such buy-out malpractices, which do not even give credit to authors and performers, have nothing modern nor innovative. They simply prevent music creators from being paid fairly for the use of their works, which should no longer occur in the 21st century.

AEPO-ARTIS is a non-profit making organisation that represents 36 European performers' collective management organisations from 26 different countries. The number of performers represented by the 36-member organisations of AEPO-ARTIS can be estimated at between 400,000 and 500,000. www.aepo-artis.org

The European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA) represents over 30,000 professional composers and songwriters in 27 European countries. With over 60-member organizations across Europe, the Alliance speaks for the interests of music creators of art & classical music (contemporary), film & audiovisual music, as well as popular music. composeralliance.org/

The International Federation of Musicians (FIM), founded in 1948, is the only body representing musicians' unions globally, with members in about 65 countries covering all regions of the world. FIM is recognised as an NGO by diverse international authorities such as WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), the ILO (International Labour Office), the European Commission, the European Parliament or the Council of Europe www.fim-musicians.org/