

EC Steps into Digital Music

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The European Commission (EC) hopes to bolster the European digital music industry with a proposal streamlining the way agencies collect royalties for copyright holders-- making the sale of digital music across the 27 EU nations much easier.



The EU has tried to bring about pan-European licensing for a while, following the antitrust decision in 2008 against national royalty collecting agencies. That decision allows rights holder to issue pan-European licenses.

European collecting agencies collect an estimated €6 billion annually from radio stations, restaurants, bars and other music users. However according to the EC less than 50% of collected royalties are distributed within the 1st year.

Currently music copyrights are still granted on a national basis within the EU-- meaning customers can only purchase digital music from an online store (such as iTunes or Spotify) operating within their home country. As a result, music pirates find a niche in customers who are unable to legally purchase digital music.

Apple managed to roll out iTunes stores in 12 European countries (including Poland and Hungary) in 2011... only 7 years after iTunes first opened its digital floodgates in Germany.

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