

Canadian Intellectual Property Council welcomes the EU's ratification of WIPO treaties

Ottawa, December 16, 2009- The Canadian Intellectual Property Council (CIPC) applauds the European Union for ratifying the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), together known as the WIPO Internet Treaties.

The treaties provide a framework that better protects the intellectual property (IP) rights of creators and the creative industries in the digital age. They offer modern and robust standards for the distribution, public communication, and “making available” of content online.

CIPC Chair Bob Weese stated, “This is promising news for the creative sector in Canada as it will stress to the Canadian government the importance of updating our copyright laws so that we are in a position to join the international consensus and ratify the WIPO Treaties”.

Prior to ratification, each of the EU's 27 member countries had already implemented the WIPO Treaties by modernizing its copyright laws. Many of them completed this step several years ago. As a result, numerous websites that facilitate massive illicit infringement of property rights have been shut down in the EU, and many innovative legal online offerings have been developed. Today, EU consumers have far more legitimate choices to access movies, music, software, games and other creative content when they want, on the device they want, and in the format they want.

This week's step by the EU brings the total number of countries that have ratified the WCT to 88 and the WPT to 76.

Canada, however, continues to stand apart from these countries, including the EU and the entire G12 group of industrially advanced countries, for its failure to implement the WIPO Treaties.

The treaties were internationally agreed upon more than 10 years ago to address the exploding use of digital technology. Canada played a key role in drafting the treaties and signed a commitment to adopt them over a decade ago.

“The need for ratification of the WIPO Treaties by all countries is today stronger than ever in order to protect creators, creativity, innovation and economic development,” added Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. “The EU's ratification is a sharp reminder that Canada must move quickly to place itself on a level playing field with its trading partners.”

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