

IFRRO Statement at WIPO SCCR 21 (8-12 November 2010)

“Thank you Mr Chairman.

IFRRO – the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations – with its 128 member organisations, of which 73 RROs (Reproduction Rights Organisations) which are collective management organisations in the text and image based sector, and 55 creators’ and publishers’ bodies in the same sector, is a strong advocate of developing practical solutions on the basis of existing legal frameworks, whenever possible. We believe this is the preferred way forward also when it comes to providing access to copyright works for people with reading impairment.

The Berne Convention offers an adequate and sufficiently flexible legal framework for its members to establish national copyright legislation that balances the right of creators and publishers and the opportunity to offer access through exceptions or limitations for defined uses of people with reading impairment. We appreciate that WIPO and its member states while paying consideration to the carefully and well crafted instrument that the Berne Convention is, not only protect but also make appropriate use of it. Also, in relation to developing adequate solutions to enhance access to copyright works by reading impaired, that all would wish to see happen, the Berne Convention forms a solid platform internationally for drafting national legislation to contribute to facilitating this.

IFRRO is therefore a strong supporter and an active participant in the stakeholder dialogues that have been established for the purpose of enhanced access to copyright works by people with reading impairment: the WIPO Stakeholder Platform and the EC Stakeholder Dialogue. IFRRO is also one of the six signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), together with EBU, EDA, FEP, EWC and STM, that has been signed under the EC Stakeholder dialogue committing the signatories to contribute to advancing practical, concrete and fast solutions to boost the number of works in formats accessible to people with reading impairment and their exchange across borders.

The system that the stakeholders agree to put in place based on Trusted Intermediaries combined with the joint stakeholder efforts in relation to enabling technologies offers real opportunities to improve substantially the reading impaired’s access to Intellectual Property. This requires that all who wish to see the goal of bettering the offer of accessible format works to reading impaired contribute actively in the ways which are within their potentials to putting the system into place. In this we appreciate and wish also to acknowledge the indispensable efforts of the WIPO stakeholder platform on capacity building efforts to include developing and least developed countries in the system of the making and exchange of alternate format copies. IFRRO looks forward to lending our assistance to this important work.

IFRRO can support the principles on which the proposals of the distinguished delegations of the European Union (EU) and the United States are based provided they offer an enabling legal framework. The joint recommendation presented by the distinguished delegation of the EU also includes clearly the option of an exception or limitation in favour of people with reading impairment in national legislation. IFRRO believes that this opportunity already exists to

members of the Berne Convention on the basis of its Article 9.2. We have, nevertheless, no objection to it being clarified in a WIPO joint statement on reading impairment and consider that the EC Copyright Directive of 2001 sets an apposite standard for such an exception in national legislation.

Thank you Mr Chairman for having had the opportunity to intervene here at the SCCR."

Geneva, 10 November 2010 / Olav Stokkmo (Chief Executive Officer of IFRRO)
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