

Thirty-five years of *a united voice*.

Celebrating **another Milestone** of Defending and Promoting Europe's Creators



GESAC EUROPEAN GROUPING OF SOCIETIES OF AUTHORS AND COMPOSERS



As GESAC marked its 35th anniversary in 2025, we were reminded of the strength of the community that has shaped our organisation over more than three decades. Together, we represent a united voice for creators across Europe — a voice that continues to play a key role in defending authors' rights and the model of collective management of rights.

This milestone comes at a time of profound transformation. The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence, evolving market dynamics and persistent imbalances are reshaping the environment in which authors create and work. These changes bring both opportunities and significant challenges for the future of Europe's creative sectors.

In 2025 across all major policy discussions, from artificial intelligence to buy-out practices and the music streaming economy, GESAC and its members worked together to ensure that the interests of creators were clearly and consistently represented within the European institutions. GESAC has continuously adapted its positions in response to the evolving EU political landscape, adopting a forward-looking approach that helped shape the European policy agenda. However, the growing need among creators for a new and ambitious legislative framework faced significant pushback in the context of the EU's broader simplification and deregulation agenda, influenced by global geopolitical developments. Therefore, progress has not always met our expectations, although the level of political attention and awareness has significantly increased, which progressively led to more recognition of these priorities by a broader spectrum of EU policy makers towards the end of 2025 and early 2026.

The importance of unity remains constant in this period of transformation and uncertainty. In a complex and fast-moving policy landscape, our ability to act collectively and consistently both in Brussels and across the Member States will remain our greatest strength in achieving GESAC members' common objectives.

I would like to warmly thank all GESAC members for their commitment and engagement within the Madrid Group and PACOM Committee, and the Secretariat for its dedication throughout the year.

As we look ahead, our objective remains clear: to ensure that Europe continues to offer a fair and sustainable environment for authors — one in which creativity is recognised, valued and protected.

David El Sayegh
President of GESAC

2025 was an intense and important year for GESAC, marked by strong collaboration and a shared determination to defend authors' rights in a rapidly changing environment. At the same time, profound geopolitical transformations worldwide challenged the EU's role and position on the global stage, impacting copyright policy in unprecedented ways. Throughout the year the Secretariat was in constant dialogue with policymakers, contributing to consultations, participating in workshops and ensuring that creators' voices were heard at every stage. This work would not have been possible without the expertise, responsiveness and commitment of our members.

Our internal bodies — the Madrid Group, PACOM and the Board — played a key role in shaping our positions and helping us navigate complex policy discussions, from artificial intelligence to buy-out practices and broader cultural policy issues. These exchanges reflect what makes GESAC strong: shared knowledge, mutual trust and a coordinated voice. A sincere thanks to the chairs, vice-chairs and all the colleagues from our different member organizations who actively participate in GESAC internal bodies.

In 2025 we were proud to organise another successful edition of Meet the Authors that brought the policymakers with authors to share their first-hand experiences and daily challenges. It has over the years become the signature event for GESAC and the key gathering of policymakers with creators' community.

2025 was also a special year for the Secretariat, as we celebrated GESAC's 35th anniversary. This was an opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved together over the years — and to look ahead with courage. I would like to warmly thank all our members for their trust, their engagement and their continuous support. None of that would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the GESAC team. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Catherine, Burak, Alexia, and Hanna.

The protection of authors' rights has always faced challenges, today these are closely tied to safeguarding our European pluralistic societies built on democratic and humanist values. Authors' rights and collective management can support society in meeting these challenges and creating an equitable future where technology and creativity enhance each other. Working together, we can valuably contribute to ensure Europe remains a place that respects, values, and protects creative freedom.

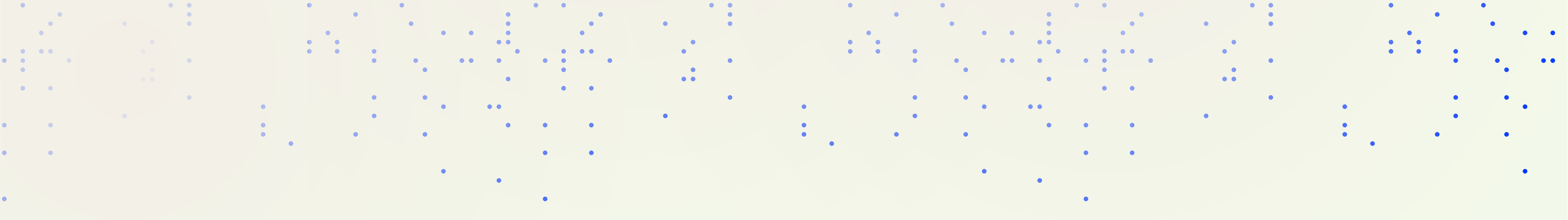
We have a lot of work ahead of us, many improvements to the current EU regulatory framework to achieve. But we are convinced that together, once again, we will succeed.

With warm regards,

Adriana Moscoso del Prado

General Manager, GESAC





I.	A Year in a Glimpse	05
II.	Policy Priorities 2025	09
III.	Visibility, Outreach and Political Engagement	26
IV.	ALAI Authors' Right Award, supported by GESAC	28
V.	Internal Governance	31

I.

A Year in a Glimpse

2025: A Milestone Year for GESAC

35 Years of Collective Strength

The year 2025 marked an important milestone for GESAC, as the organisation entered its **35th year of representing authors' societies at European level**. Over more than three decades, GESAC has evolved alongside profound transformations in the cultural and digital landscape, while remaining firmly anchored in its core mission: to advocate for a strong and balanced authors' rights framework, promote the role of collective management organisations (CMOs), and highlight the importance of the cultural and creative sectors in Europe.

Since its creation, GESAC has established itself as a recognised and respected voice for authors and their CMOs towards the EU institutions. The anniversary celebration held in Brussels on 6 May brought together its 32 member societies from across Europe, providing an opportunity to reflect on this shared journey and reaffirm a common commitment: to continue working collectively towards a fair and sustainable environment in which authors are appropriately remunerated and cultural diversity flourishes.



Meet The Authors: A Catalyst for Political Momentum in the start of a new EU mandate

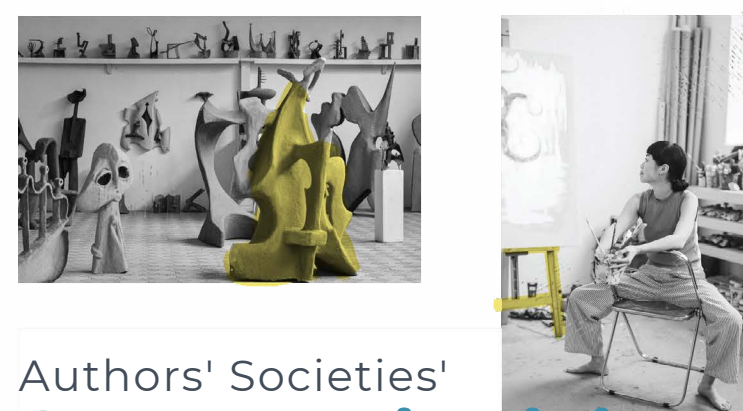
Meet The Authors (MTA) 2025 **generated immediate political momentum**. In the weeks that followed, 45 MEPs from across the political spectrum **co-signed a joint letter** reiterating their commitment to Europe's creators and calling on the European Commission to build on the significant progress made in the previous term on key issues affecting creators, including artificial intelligence, buy-out practices and the music streaming market.

The joint letter represented significant support to GESAC main priorities, it boosted its online presence and reach, engaging with signatories and bringing it to the attention of Brussels media. **This early mobilisation set the tone for 2025 and reinforced the visibility of GESAC as well as creators' concerns at the highest level of EU policymaking.**

Defining Clear Priorities for the New EU Cycle

Alongside this renewed visibility, GESAC presented its **three key priorities for the 2024-2029 EU legislative cycle**, for its advocacy work:

EMPOWERING EUROPE'S CREATORS:



Authors' Societies'
**3 Key Priorities
for 2024-2029**



Artificial Intelligence:

ensuring transparency, copyright compliance and the development of sustainable licensing solutions for the use of protected works

Buy-out practices:

addressing coercive and unfair contractual practices and strengthening authors' ability to benefit fairly from the exploitation of their works

Music streaming:

rebalancing the market by promoting greater transparency, improved remuneration and fairer market conditions for creators



This edition held at the European Parliament on 29 January brought together more than 35 creators, providing a platform for direct exchanges with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), Permanent Representations and European Commission officials.

These discussions highlighted the realities faced by authors in the digital and AI environments and helped shape the policy priorities for the new EU mandate.

The photo gallery of the event can be found [here](#).

A video clip of the event is available [here](#).

These priorities have guided GESAC's activities throughout 2025 and structured its engagement with European institutions, Member States and stakeholders.



MEET THE AUTHORS, 29 JANUARY, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ©ALOHA FRED

II.

Policy Priorities 2025

The following chapters provide an overview of how these priorities are translated into concrete advocacy actions and continued engagement with policymakers across the year.

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI was **the defining policy issue** for Europe's cultural and creative sectors in 2025. As the European Union moved **from the adoption of the AI Act to its implementation** and broader policy reflection, the implications for authors' rights, transparency and remuneration became increasingly central.

Throughout the year, GESAC was closely involved across all levels of the EU policymaking process. It engaged with the AI Office and European Commission on the implementation of the AI Act in a constructive manner, but as this process has started to prove to be unhelpful due to the refusal of the AI Office and other EU policymakers to address copyright-related problems of creators through the AI Act, GESAC started asking for a dedicated legislative intervention and contributing to the works in the European Parliament and the Council on the broader regulatory challenges that generative AI raises on copyright/authors' rights.

1.1 AI Act Implementation Package: from drafts to final adoption

The implementation of the AI Act dominated the EU policy agenda in the **first half of 2025**.

For GESAC and the wider cultural and creative sectors, the central question was whether the new AI framework would effectively ensure transparency, enable the exercise and enforcement of rights, and support the development of licensing solutions for the use of protected works by generative AI services.

The most consequential elements of this process were the implementation tools linked to the General-Purpose AI (GPAI) provisions under Articles 53 of the AI Act, namely:

- the **Code of Practice** for General-Purpose AI models (CoP),
- the **Transparency Template** for model providers, and
- the **Guidelines** on the scope of GPAI obligations.

These instruments were developed by and through the coordination of the AI Office of the European Commission and finalised in July 2025. Although their effective design and implementation were critical to ensuring that the objectives of the AI Act are translated into practice for the cultural and creative sectors, their outcome unfortunately did not deliver those objectives.

2025 was the first full year following the adoption of the AI Act in which implementation choices would determine whether authors' rights are effectively respected in practice.

GESAC engaged continuously with EU institutions and a broad rightsholders coalition to push for meaningful transparency, ensure compliance with EU copyright rules, and support the development of viable licensing solutions for the use of protected works. It also advocated that authors' societies would be key enablers in the growing AI ecosystem.

GESAC Engagement and Advocacy

Given the importance of these implementation tools, GESAC maintained continuous contact with the European Commission and the AI Office. At the same time, it closely aligned with a broad coalition of rightsholders' organisations to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach.

GESAC's actions combined technical input, political engagement and public advocacy, to influence both the substance and the direction of the implementation process.

| GESAC POSITIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS |

GESAC actively contributed to successive drafts of the CoP for GPAI models and the work related to Transparency Template, submitting position papers and detailed comments at each stage of the process. These contributions consistently emphasised the **need for meaningful transparency, full compliance with EU copyright rules, and the development of practical and scalable licensing solutions for the use of protected works by generative AI systems.**

In parallel, GESAC continued to participate in all working groups, plenary sessions and technical discussions with stakeholders organised by the AI Office for the drafting of the CoP, and provided detailed input and proposals based on the work of GESAC members' legal experts (Madrid Group). All this work intended to bring forward the perspectives of authors and CMOs, and the necessity of creation of a functioning licensing market as a key requirement of compliance efforts of GPAI models.

2 AI Act provisions that will protect creators

1 Global reach, local compliance

The EU AI Act requires all generative AI companies, regardless of where they are based, to comply with EU regulations.

This means whether you're in the U.S., Asia, or anywhere else, if your AI operates in Europe, EU rules apply!

2 Reporting source material

AI companies must provide detailed summaries of the datasets used for training their models.

This transparency allows creators to verify if their works are used appropriately and with proper authorisation.

Impact on creators

If implemented properly, creators' intellectual property will be respected and compensated correctly.

fostering a safer environment for innovation and artistic expression across Europe.

A SERIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND VISUAL MATERIALS

In parallel, several national-level studies conducted by GESAC members¹ have highlighted the growing presence of artificial content in traditional markets for music and other creative sectors, in ways that are both unfair and unlawful, thereby underscoring the need for EU-level action to restore a fair and equitable balance.

| ACTIONS IN COALITION |

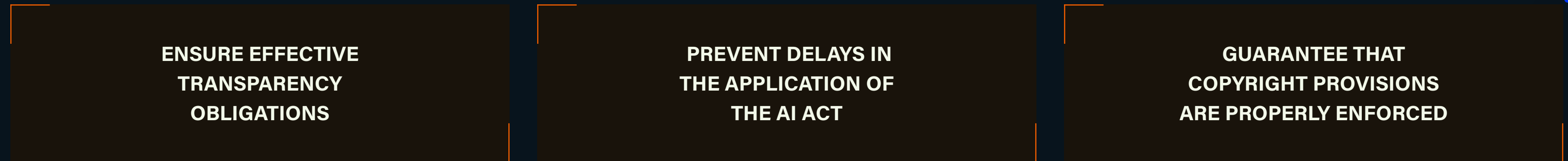
GESAC coordinated closely with a broad coalition of creators' and rightsholders' organisations to ensure a unified and impactful response to the implementation of the AI Act.

This cooperation resulted in a series of **joint statements, letters and policy messages** addressed to the AI Office, European Commission and Member States. The coalition consistently underlined that the proposed measures—especially successive drafts of the CoP—risked undermining the core objectives of the AI Act. While the Regulation aims to ensure that rightsholders can effectively exercise and enforce their rights through transparency and copyright compliance obligations, the draft instruments were seen as creating legal uncertainty, lowering compliance standards and failing to provide meaningful tools for authors and other rightsholders.

The coalition also engaged directly with **senior policymakers**, including Executive Vice-President Henna Virkkunen and Vice-President Teresa Ribera, urging the Commission to ensure that the final framework remains aligned with EU copyright law and the objectives set by the legislator.

In parallel, joint outreach activities, including a **major event at the European Parliament**, helped reinforce the visibility and coherence of the sector's position (see next section).

In the lead-up to the adoption of the implementation package, the coalition intensified its actions through coordinated messages including to the AI Board, stressing the need to:



Following the publication of the implementation package in July 2025, GESAC coordinated a **joint statement expressing deep concerns** about the entire AI Act implementation package. The statement called on the European Commission to revisit its approach and enforce Article 53 of the AI Act in a meaningful and effective way and aimed to alert both Member States and the European Parliament to the highly unsatisfactory outcome of this process.



⁰¹ Spain: study commissioned by SGAE and conducted by Know Media Media Lab and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid: <https://t.co/Vh0J2KNm2s>
 Denmark: Report prepared by Koda in collaboration with IFPI and HBS Economics: <https://koda.dk/om-koda/nyheder/ny-rapport-kunstig-intelligens-vil-koste-dansk-musik-69-milliarder>

| BRINGING CREATORS' VOICES TO EU DECISION-MAKERS |

On 20 May 2025, GESAC put in place a triple action, together with the broad coalition of rightholders, bringing the voice of creators directly to EU decision-makers at a critical stage of the AI Act implementation:

HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS:

At the occasion of a joint meeting that was organised by the coalition of rightholders, in which we played a leading role, GESAC invited CISAC President Björn Ulvaeus and also formed a delegation of authors, from GESAC members, led by him and composed of Marta Kosakowska (ZAIKS), Alice Wonder (SGAE) and Brice Homs (SACEM). The delegation met with the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, representatives of the Cabinet of the President of the Council António Costa, Commissioner for Culture Glenn Micallef and Chair of the Socialist and Democrat Group MEP Iratxe García. Björn Ulvaeus also delivered a keynote intervention at the European Parliament's CULT Committee Hearing on artificial intelligence.



We must never be seduced by the false idea that, in the headlong rush to the new AI world, creators' interests must be cast aside.

The vision has to be a win-win for creators and the tech industry. That can only happen with legislation that truly and effectively safeguards creators.

Björn Ulvaeus

CISAC President and co-founder of ABBA speaking at the EU Parliament 20 May 2025



RIGHTHOLDERS' COALITION EVENT AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:

GESAC, together with the broad coalition of rightsholders and under the patronage of MEPs Axel Voss and Brando Benifei, organised an event in the European Parliament, bringing together policymakers and representatives of the cultural and creative sectors.

Mr. Björn Ulvaeus, was invited to speak on behalf of all the creators' community, alongside the leading representatives of press, book publishing and music industry.

They warned that the draft implementation measures risked undermining the objectives of the AI Act and EU copyright law and called for Transparency, Consent and Remuneration.

CAMPAIGN:

On that day, the "Stay True to the Act. Stay True to the Art" campaign was also launched by all rightsholders forming part of the broad coalition, significantly amplifying the visibility of and recognition for the sectors' concerns.

Throughout July, and right up to the final stages, GESAC continued to advocate for critical improvements to each of these documents. On 23 July, GESAC organised a meeting with **Executive Vice President Henna Virkkunen** and **Mr. Björn Ulvaeus** as a follow-up to ongoing efforts to which both GESAC and CISAC representatives attended to convey the deep concerns of the creators' community on the results of the AI Act Implementation Package and urged the Commission to take immediate actions to address these issues in its future policy actions with a clearer focus on creators and the creative sector.



| OUTCOME |

- The Commission released the **final CoP**. Although some earlier errors had been avoided, the outcome **fell short of creators' expectations**, lacking enforceability and bringing no basis to support or facilitate a functioning licensing market.
- The AI Office published the **mandatory Transparency Template**, which again included only minimal improvements. Key creator concerns—traceability, effective disclosure, and meaningful transparency—remained insufficiently addressed.
- The **GPAI Guidelines** were finalised with broad exemptions and interpretative elements that narrowed the real applicability of the Act in a way to exclude many generative AI providers.

Despite sustained engagement throughout the process, the final AI Act implementation package fell short of addressing the key concerns of authors, particularly in relation to transparency, enforceability, and effective rights management, as anticipated by GESAC early in 2025.

However, GESAC's advocacy significantly contributed to raising political awareness among EU policymakers and strengthening the case for a more robust regulatory approach on copyright which helped asserting more strongly the failure of the process in which generative AI companies only refused any form of compliance or willingness for cooperation.

As a result, the debate has increasingly shifted towards the need for dedicated legislative solutions to address generative AI related problems of the sector through a dedicated copyright instrument, which would enable a functioning licensing market that provides more transparency and delivers fair remuneration to creators.

1.2 The European Parliament's Work on Copyright and Generative AI (Autumn 2025)

As the European Commission's work on AI Act implementation approached its end, considering the overall dissatisfaction of creators' community, and also the difficulties relating to the challenges with implementing TDM opt-out regime of the CDSM Directive to generative AI related usages, the European Parliament launched its own initiative on "[Copyright and Generative AI - Opportunities and Challenges](#)". In June 2025, the draft report, **led by rapporteur Axel Voss (German- EPP)**, was presented in the Legal Affairs Committee (JURI).

GESAC engaged actively throughout the parliamentary process: detailed positions and policy input were shared. This work was complemented by continuous exchanges with the rapporteur, shadow rapporteurs and parliamentary advisors, both in Brussels and during plenary sessions in Strasbourg.

| KEY MILESTONE |

By September 2025, a total of 370 amendments were tabled. Many reflected key priorities consistently advocated by GESAC, notably the presumption of use, the application of EU copyright law to all generative AI services, the creation of a viable licensing market, the harmful substitution effect of AI output and the need for collective management to properly protect and license the rights of authors.

The parliamentary debate significantly strengthened political awareness of creators' concerns and reinforced the case for further legislative action to ensure a functioning licensing market and appropriate remuneration of creators by generative AI services.

On 28 January 2026, the JURI Committee adopted its report, which was subsequently confirmed by a large majority in plenary on 10 March². This sent a clear and strong political message on the need to protect European authors and the cultural and creative sectors in the generative AI market to EU policymakers and, in particular, to the European Commission.

GESAC applauds the Parliament's strong commitment to addressing creators' concerns and welcomes its call for targeted EU legislation to ensure transparency, fairness and respect for authors' rights.

The European Parliament's report has become an important tool for GESAC to more concretely and strongly call for **targeted EU legislative action** to ensure transparency, fairness and full respect for authors' rights in the context of generative AI.

GESAC has set the following priorities to promote through this report:

- reaffirm the full **applicability of EU and national copyright laws** to all generative AI services operating in the EU regardless of where they are established or developed,
- provide **meaningful transparency obligations** for generative AI services,
- introduce a **presumption mechanism** to achieve a functioning licensing market, and
- consider solutions to address the **harmful substitution effects of AI-generated outputs** competing unfairly with the original works of creators

GESAC also advocated for a clear and strong support of **collective management** as the most effective way to guarantee fair remuneration for authors, as well as legal security for users, like in this case generative AI companies.

⁰² press release 28/01/2026 [here](#)

press release 10/03/2026 [here](#)

1.3 Member States: Advancing the Debate on AI and Licensing

Under the Danish Presidency in the second half of 2025, Member States engaged in a forward-looking reflection on the implications of generative AI for copyright.

As part of its priorities, the Danish Presidency launched a policy questionnaire addressed to Member States on **"Fostering a well-functioning framework for licensing in the age of AI"**. The exercise invited governments to reflect on challenges related to AI training, dissemination of content, AI generated outputs, transparency, remuneration and the potential role of collective management solutions. GESAC started a close cooperation with Danish government representatives prior to the Presidency and then contributed to the questionnaire by preparing a coordinated response, developed in close cooperation with its members.

In September, the Danish Presidency organised a conference on AI and licensing, to which GESAC participated as a speaker in the panel discussion on "AI, Value Gap and Collective Licensing".

On the margins of the conference, a bilateral meeting was held with representatives of the Danish Ministry of Culture, together with KODA, to discuss ongoing developments related to AI, copyright and the future of authors' rights in Europe.

| GROWING SUPPORT FOR EU LEVEL ACTION |

The **Summary Report**³, published in December 2025, indicated a growing awareness among Member States of the limits of the current framework and highlighted increasing support for **EU level action**, including the possible introduction of new legislative measures to address transparency in AI training, application of EU laws, and remuneration of creators from AI-generated outputs. The report also recognised that solutions based on collective management could play an important role in achieving a fair and balanced licensing environment.

KEY TAKEAWAY of the Danish Presidency report

- Openness to support **EU action on AI and copyright** by several Member States
- Growing discomfort on the opaqueness of AI services and their refusal to obtain licences
- Recognition of **collective management as part of the solution**



⁰³ [Summary report](#) regarding lessons learned on Article 15 of the CDSM Directive and on fostering a well-functioning framework for licensing in the age of AI

1.5 State of Play at the end of 2025

By the end of 2025, the first wave of the AI policy debate in Europe had intensified, with important implications for authors and their societies.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission's implementation package was completed, but significant shortcomings remained particularly in terms of transparency, legal certainty and the ability of creators to effectively exercise and enforce their rights.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

At the European Parliament, the report led by Axel Voss marked an important political milestone, clearly recognising the need to address this massive unfairness with a dedicated legislative action to support transparency, fair remuneration and the development of licensing solutions.

COUNCIL LEVEL

At Council level, discussions under the Danish Presidency showed a growing awareness among Member States of the limits of the current framework and increasing support for EU-level action, including the possible development of new legislative measures and the role of collective management in enabling licensing.

Taken together, these developments mark a transition from implementation of AI Act to a broader policy reflection on the need to adapt the EU copyright framework to the realities of generative AI.

They also shape GESAC's strategic direction for 2026, with a continued focus on securing a robust regulatory environment that fully delivers for creators and supports sustainable licensing models in the age of artificial intelligence.

2. Buy-out practices

| REVIVING POLITICAL MOMENTUM TO ADDRESS COERCIVE CONTRACTUAL PRACTICES |

GESAC continued to prioritise the issue of buy-out practices, which remain a major concern for authors across Europe. Such contracts, often imposed by large global players, undermine the principle of **appropriate and proportionate remuneration** enshrined in EU copyright law and further weaken creators' bargaining position.

The European Parliament has repeatedly condemned these practices in several resolutions and called for EU-level action. The issue has also been acknowledged by both the European Commission and the Council, including through targeted consultations and independent studies. These analyses converge on the need to address contractual imbalances and to ensure that EU copyright rules effectively apply to all services operating in the EU, regardless of contractual clauses related to jurisdiction or applicable law.

GESAC saw 2025 as an opportunity to **re-establish political attention** on buy-out practices, at a moment when the European Commission was preparing its forthcoming evaluation of the copyright framework and as generative AI further exposed structural imbalances in creators' contracts.

2.1 European Commission Developments

| STUDY AND FORTHCOMING COPYRIGHT EVALUATION |

A key reference point for GESAC's work in 2025 was **the study**⁴ commissioned by the European Commission's Copyright Unit on buy-out and contractual practices affecting authors, performers and producers, published in March.

The study confirmed long-standing concerns raised by creators and reinforced the importance of the issue at EU level. It provides a cross-sectoral analysis, showing that authors and performers are frequently subject to buy-out contracts and face a structurally weak bargaining position. While the nature and extent of these practices vary across sectors — including music, audiovisual, visual arts, literary works and video games — the findings point to persistent imbalances affecting creators throughout the creative value chain.

GESAC consistently asked for a **dedicated copyright instrument to address the private international law aspects of the issue and to include other measures** that would condemn and discourage harmful buy-out practices through circumvention of EU rules.

While the issue of remuneration and contractual practices is now firmly on the European Commission's radar, no concrete policy initiative has yet been announced.

⁰⁴ [Study](#) on contractual practices affecting the transfer of copyright and related rights and the ability of creators and producers to exploit their rights.

2.2 Parliamentary Engagement

In October, Spanish S&D MEP Leire Pajín, member of the Legal Affairs Committee, submitted a written **parliamentary question**⁵ to the European Commission, calling for EU action against coercive buy-out practices. She highlighted how such contracts deprive creators of fair remuneration and asked the Commission to clarify its next steps, including the possible preparation of legislative measures.

In its reply⁶, Henna Virkkunen acknowledged the challenges linked to buy-out practices, referring to the Commission's 2025 study and confirming the importance of existing EU rules on fair remuneration under the Copyright Directive. Buy-out was also one of the three issues raised by the 45 MEPs in their letter to the European Commission as a follow-up action to MTA event, where the MEPs had the chance to hear directly from the creators.

Question from MEP Leire Pajin (S&D) for written answer to the Commission
Subject: Coercive buy-out contracts for authors and creators

Coercive buy-out contracts force creators to give away their authors' rights in full or in part, depriving them of future royalties for their work, and thus of appropriate and proportionate remuneration. Non-EU based platforms typically impose the application of foreign laws and jurisdictions to such contracts, circumventing EU and national laws and raising significant political, legal and economic concerns that threaten the integrity and sovereignty of the EU's rules and values.

Parliament has repeatedly condemned these practices and called for an EU-level initiative. The Commission and the Council have also acknowledged this problem and the need to address it at EU level has been raised on several occasions. The Commission has also conducted targeted consultations and independent studies were published, which provide similar solutions to tackle this critical issue and ensure that EU rules apply to all services, irrespective of choice-of-law and jurisdiction provisions that attempt to circumvent the protections provided for creators in the EU.

In view of the above, what are the next steps to be taken at EU level to put an end to coercive buy-out practices for authors and creators, and when does the Commission intend to start preparing legislative proposals to ensure that EU rules apply to all services?

Submitted: 2.10.2025

2.3 Political Outreach and Awareness Raising

Building on this renewed political attention, GESAC intensified its outreach by implementing a targeted communication campaign to revitalise awareness around buy-out practices.

These actions, launched in the second half of 2025, included:

⁰⁵ See document [here](#)

⁰⁶ See document [here](#)

A SERIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND VISUAL MATERIAL ▼▼▼

Buy-out: What is it?

Coerced circumvention
Buy-out contracts force creators to give away their copyright/authors' rights in full or in part, effectively eliminating the possibility of receiving **future royalties** for the use of their work.
These contracts lead to an abusive and **coercive practice**, circumventing EU rules.

Non-EU norms
Buy-outs also impose the **application of foreign law** and jurisdiction, in order to circumvent European protections.
They **deprive authors** and composers in Europe from **appropriate and proportionate remuneration**, and severely undermine creators' ability to **earn a living** through their artistic work.

Buy-out: Why is it a problem?

Due to its systemic impact
These practices:

1. **Reduce income and bargaining power.**
2. **Threaten our societal cultural fabric.**
3. **Erode authors' rights enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.**

According to the Commission's study:
Authors in the audiovisual music sector are often subject to 'buy-out' or 'work-for-hire' agreements.

Source: European Commission, Study on contractual practices affecting the exercise of copyright and related rights and the creators and producers' ability to protect their rights (published 2025).

Authors, remunerated through such lump-sum payments, **do not benefit** from the **increased economic value of their rights** throughout their exploitation, undermining their financial sustainability.

— Previously cited study of the EC (published 2025).

A growing coercive practice
There are variations across different sectors; however, **buy-outs** have become **increasingly prevalent for music authors in the VOD market**:

- **53%** of audiovisual composers have been offered buy-out contracts.
- **66%** have been asked to sign away at least partial rights.

Nearly half of audiovisual composers see buyout practices as the **main challenge to their fair remuneration**.

Source: European Composer & Songwriter Alliance (ECSA), Mapping the Path to Fair Practice (2023).

Buy-out: What we need

A new legislative measure
A **dedicated** legislative proposal to **tackle coercive buy-out** practices imposed on authors and composers, and circumvention of EU's protective measures by **non-EU-based VOD platforms**.

Buy-outs imposed on creators by **VOD platforms** have become a growing phenomenon, with the **dominance of US-based services** in the market importing only the most harmful part of their national practices into Europe.

The **intervention of EU** decision makers is **needed** to end this unfairness and **ensure that internal market rules** are applied to **all players!**

Buy-out fireside chat: Its impact on European creators

Adriana Moscoco
GM, GESAC

Marc du Moulin
SG, ECSA

THAT IS ALSO, I WOULD SAY, A EUROPEAN INVENTION AND

◀◀◀ COORDINATION WITH ECSA TO AMPLIFY MESSAGES ACROSS COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

“

The **EU** is **built** on **values** and **rights**. **Culture** and **media** are not only identity-forming - they are also **huge employment markets**. We must ensure that **European rules** and **principles** for protecting creators **cannot be circumvented** by the big players in the digital world.

Matthias HORNSCHUH
German composer

#BuyOutAware
#ActNow

“

Coercive buy-out and **work-for-hire** practices of **non-EU-based VOD platforms** are the **number one problem** for authors and composers in **AV sector today!** We need EU rules and strong collective management.

Raminta Naujanyte BJELLE
Lithuanian songwriter and performer

#BuyOutAware
#ActNow

“

Even **well-established authors** face these **conditions** more **frequently** than ever, and **for the young** and **new creators**, it is almost **impossible** to be in a project of non-EU based VOD platforms, **without accepting their coercive practices**.

Vangelis FAMPAS,
Greek guitarist, composer, and producer

#BuyOutAware
#ActNow

TIME FOR EUROPE TO TACKLE BUY-OUT CONTRACTS
MUSIC CREATORS CALL ON THE EU TO ACT

Hosted by Leire Pajin, Member of the European Parliament
Lunch discussion - 3 February 2026

Co-funded by the European Union

AUTHORS' TESTIMONIES AND QUOTES ▲▲▲

This work helped pave the way for a **high-level joint lunch event** bringing together the GESAC and ECSA Boards, held at the European Parliament on 3 February 2026 under the patronage of MEP Leire Pajín. The event reflected the broader political groundwork carried out throughout 2025 and aimed to maintain momentum while helping to structure the policy debate ahead of the European Commission’s forthcoming copyright evaluation.

2.4 Key Outcome in 2025

By the end of 2025, the issue of buy-out had, in principle, been repositioned within EU policy discussions. The combination of the Commission’s study, parliamentary engagement, sustained advocacy by GESAC, and growing links between buy-out practices, generative AI and market power, contributed to renewed political attention.

Even if GESAC closed the year with a strengthened political basis to pursue concrete solutions in 2026, particularly in the context of the Commission’s copyright evaluation and forthcoming legislative discussions, it is not certain whether the Commission will include this in its legislative agenda, especially considering the big pressure they receive against it from producers, the risk of opening the CDSM Directive, the lack of a recent strong push from any of the Member States and the general trend of deregulation.

GESAC efforts will continue along 2026 taking into account in particular how the problem of buy-out clauses takes on an even deeper gravity in the context of generative AI



BUY-OUT EVENT, 3 FEBRUARY 2026, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

3. Music Streaming

| TOWARDS TRANSPARENCY, FAIR REMUNERATION AND A SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL MUSIC ECOSYSTEM |

Music streaming remained a central issue for creators in 2025. While streaming services are now the primary mode of music consumption in Europe, many creators continue to feel excluded from its success. Persistent concerns include **limited transparency** around algorithms, risks of **content manipulation and fraud, worsened now with AI**, and **structural imbalances** between platforms, intermediaries and creators.

Music streaming services operate today in a legal vacuum with no responsibility and accountability of their streaming practices. **A new targeted European regulation** would be needed to introduce transparency to algorithms of streaming services and require streaming platforms to feature and promote European works more prominently.

The **emergence of the generative AI** has further amplified these issues. AI-based algorithms can influence what users listen to, shape content visibility and affect revenue distribution — in some cases to the detriment of creators and cultural diversity.

For GESAC and its members, the streaming debate is inseparable from broader questions of **fairness, cultural diversity and sustainability**.

3.1 Political and Institutional Context

| EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND COUNCIL INITIATIVES |

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) commissioned a study on the [discoverability of European music and books in the digital environment](#), published in April 2026. In parallel, the Horizon-funded research project [FairMusE](#) also addressed issues related to the music streaming market.

Both studies, published in 2026, included extensive exchanges with GESAC and organised stakeholder dialogues throughout 2025. Their findings are closely aligned with GESAC's analysis and longstanding concerns regarding the structure and functioning of the music streaming market.

In parallel, in November 2025, DG CONNECT launched a **Call for Evidence as part of the evaluation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)**, followed by a public consultation in early 2026. This process aims to assess the effectiveness of the current rules.

The upcoming review of the AVMSD, which currently concerns only audiovisual sector, represents an opportunity to address long-standing concerns in the music streaming market. In particular, GESAC has proposed introducing new EU-level provisions on algorithmic transparency and the promotion of European works within music streaming environments.

The European Parliament's 2024 resolution⁶ on music streaming called for greater fairness, transparency and cultural diversity, including improved algorithmic transparency and better discoverability of European works. No legislative initiative has been initiated so far.

⁶ EP report "[Cultural diversity and the conditions for authors in the European music streaming market](#)"

3.2 GESAC's Engagement and Advocacy

Throughout 2025, GESAC maintained a **consistent advocacy effort** on music streaming and actively contributed to ongoing EU

- In the context of the DG EAC study, GESAC engaged with both the European Commission and the consortium responsible for the study and provided written input.
- In response to the AVMSD Call for Evidence, GESAC submitted detailed contributions reflecting the perspectives of both audiovisual and music authors.
- GESAC also shared its views with Member States in the context of discussions under the Polish Presidency, which led to the adoption in May 2025 of Conclusions on the upcoming review of the AVMSD.

GESAC's contributions relating to AVMSD focused in particular on:

- Maintaining and strengthening existing quotas and financial obligations for AV content.
- Extending the prominence and discoverability of European works requirements to music streaming platforms.
- Promoting greater transparency of algorithms across streaming services (i.e. music, VOD, video-sharing platforms/OCSSPs).

3.3 Where do we stand at the end of 2025

By the end of 2025, music streaming remained part of ongoing EU policy discussions, but without concrete regulatory developments. Several institutional processes — including the Commission study and the evaluation of the AVMSD — are expected to further inform the debate.

4. Other Policy issues followed in 2025

Alongside its three main advocacy priorities, GESAC also followed several additional policy developments relevant to authors and CMOs. GESAC contributed to discussions and initiatives where appropriate. These included, in particular:

Private copying where GESAC continued to closely monitor legal and political developments and exchanged views with members and stakeholders.

Broadcast and retransmission related issues were addressed both at EU level with the ongoing study on the evaluation of the Directive (EU) 2019/789 (SatCab II Directive), as well as at national level, where GESAC supported its members with letters to national governments sent directly or jointly with other organisations.

Rules on collective management and extended collective licensing schemes were challenged at national level at certain occasions, where GESAC wrote supporting letters to national governments directly and in cooperation with CISAC.

Cultural policy initiatives, including discussions linked to the Cultural Compass, Agora EU and participation in several stakeholder exchanges.

International and trade-related issues GESAC, together with CISAC, continued its ongoing contacts with DG Trade of the European Commission to represent the interests of authors' societies on copyright-related issues in third countries. A meeting with DG Trade officials responsible for different countries and regions was organised in 2025 in cooperation with CISAC's secretariat and regional directors. Several joint papers and written contributions were also provided, as well as participation of GESAC to several debates with third country representatives organised by the EU institutions.

European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights (EUIPO) GESAC continued to be an active member of EUIPO's working groups, especially on "IP in the digital world". GESAC attended several EUIPO meetings both online and in person and also made presentations relating to streaming fraud cases and infringements of generative AI services.

Copyright infrastructure and metadata related debates has continued to be one of the discussions at EU policy level, in particular with the initiatives such as Copyright Infrastructure Task Force (CITF) led by some Member States, European Commission's ongoing study on "Feasibility of an online repository of opt-outs", AI Office's planned work on setting machine-readable standards for opt-out, and several research projects and studies dealing with the issue.

EUROPE'S MUSIC SECTOR CALLS FOR AGORAEU TO PROVIDE **FUNDING AND A POLICY STRATEGY** REFLECTING THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC

This includes:

- Dedicated calls and programmes tailored to music's specific needs;
- A European Music Observatory to support evidence-based policymaking;
- Ethical and fair principles guiding digital transformation and AI adoption.

III.

ALAI Authors'
Right Award,
supported
by GESAC

In the spirit of inspiring the next generation of intellectual property experts, the International Literary and Artistic Association (ALAI) and GESAC launched in 2019 an annual award on European authors' right for law students and young researchers.

The ALAI European Authors' Right Award celebrates new ideas that strengthen the understanding and future of European authors' rights globally. This award showcases the next generation of intellectual leaders in the field of authors' rights, stimulating new and vibrant discussion on how to safeguard the rights of our creators.

The project, which contributes to promoting authors' rights among the young generation, entered its **7th edition in 2025**. A big thanks to all the applicants and their professors for taking part in this project! Our gratitude goes also to Frank Gotzen, President of ALAI, and Fabienne Brison, Secretary General of ALAI, for handling the project with GESAC on behalf of ALAI since its beginning.

This project rewarding young researchers and students owes a lot to the members of the Jury, who each year analyse and select the essays submitted to identify the best one:

<p>CAROLINE BONIN HEAD OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, SACEM</p>	<p>GÁBOR FALUDI COUNSEL FOR ARTISJUS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT THE CIVIL LAW DEPARTMENT OF ELTE ÁJK</p>	<p>PAUL TORREMANS PROFESSOR OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW AT UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM</p>	<p>YVES GAUBIAC LAWYER, LECTURER AT PANTHÉON- ASSAS UNIVERSITY, PARIS 2</p>
---	---	---	--

This year's award was handed to **Erik Mnatsakanyan** for his essay "Les oeuvres générées par intelligence artificielle : inévitablement considérées comme oeuvres dérivées?" *English translation: "AI-Generated works: Inevitably considered derivative works?"

Erik Mnatsakanyan studies at Nantes University (France), where he is completing his second master in Intellectual Property Law. Read the winning essay [here](#) (only available in French)

| AWARD CEREMONY |

Winners of the two last editions, [Erik Mnatsakanyan](#) (edition 2025) and [Gaël Maupertuis](#) (edition 2024) were honoured during the opening cocktail reception of the annual ALAI Congress on 8 October in Opatija, Croatia. With around 400 delegates attending the Congress, the joint award project received large exposure. A video message on the award was displayed during the two-day Congress.



**ALAI
EUROPEAN
AUTHOR'S RIGHT
AWARD**

SUPPORTED BY **GESAC**

**2024/2025
EDITION**

OPEN TO
STUDENTS/
RESEARCHERS
AGED UNDER 35
YEARS OLD

**APPLY NOW FOR THE 7TH EDITION OF
THE AWARD!**

For application details,
please visit authorsocieties.eu/alai-award

DEADLINE: 15 NOVEMBER 2024

[Interview](#) of the winners who share what their research was about and why they encourage young academics to apply.

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

27

IV.

Visibility, Outreach and Political Engagement

Alongside its policy advocacy, GESAC placed strong emphasis on visibility, outreach and political engagement, ensuring that authors' concerns were clearly articulated, widely understood and effectively reflected across the EU policy landscape. This was supported by continuous engagement with decision-makers and a sustained presence in key public and institutional forums.

Sustained Dialogue with EU DecisionMakers

GESAC maintained continuous and structured engagement with European institutions throughout 2025. These exchanges served to raise awareness of GESAC priorities, provide expertise on the implications of policy developments, and ensure that creators' perspectives were taken into account at different stages of the policymaking process. While closely linked to GESAC's policy priorities, this ongoing dialogue also played a broader role in building trust and **reinforcing GESAC's position as a credible and constructive interlocutor at EU level.**

GESAC held regular meetings and exchanges with policymakers across all EU institutions:

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

GESAC engaged with MEPs, parliamentary assistants and committee secretariats, in particular within the JURI and CULT Committees, both in Brussels and during plenary sessions in Strasbourg. GESAC also followed committee work, contributed to hearings and public discussions when invited.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Regular exchanges took place with Commissioners, Cabinet members and officials from relevant Directorates-General, supporting ongoing policy discussions and implementation processes.

COUNCIL OF THE EU

GESAC engaged with Council Presidencies and Permanent Representations, contributing to Member State discussions on key policy files.



Participation in Conferences, Panels and Public Debates

In parallel to bilateral outreach, GESAC maintained a strong presence in **conferences, panels, hearings and public discussions**, both in Brussels and in other European capitals.

By contributing to these forums, GESAC ensured that authors' voices were represented in wider policy and stakeholder debates, beyond formal institutional settings. Participation in such events also supported dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, industry representatives and civil society organisations.



Campaigns supporting Policy Objectives

Visibility efforts in 2025 were further reinforced through **targeted communication and campaign activities**, designed to amplify political messages and support advocacy objectives.

In the context of **generative AI**, GESAC supported and amplified sector-wide mobilisation efforts, including joint campaigns and public messaging coordinated with rightholders organisations. Campaign materials, public statements and high visibility events helped consolidate a consistent narrative across the cultural and creative sectors.

On **buy-out** practices, GESAC launched a dedicated awareness raising effort in the second half of the year, combining visual materials, authors' testimonies and coordinated messaging. This work sought to prepare the ground for renewed political engagement ahead of the European Commission's forthcoming copyright evaluation.

Events as Platforms for Dialogue and Visibility

In 2025, events remained a key pillar of GESAC's outreach, providing spaces for direct dialogue between creators, policymakers and stakeholders, and bringing authors' voices into the heart of EU decision-making.

The **Meet the Authors** event at the European Parliament in January played a central role in raising the visibility of creators' concerns and strengthening engagement with Members of the European Parliament, Permanent Representations and the European Commission.

GESAC also co-organised a **joint event with the rightholders' coalition** on the implementation of the AI Act, reinforcing the collective voice of the cultural and creative sectors.

Finally, GESAC marked its **35th anniversary** with a dedicated event in Brussels, bringing together its members to celebrate a shared commitment and longstanding cooperation.

Early 2026 (February 3rd), a high-level lunch discussion was scheduled in the European Parliament with ECSA on buy-out practices.

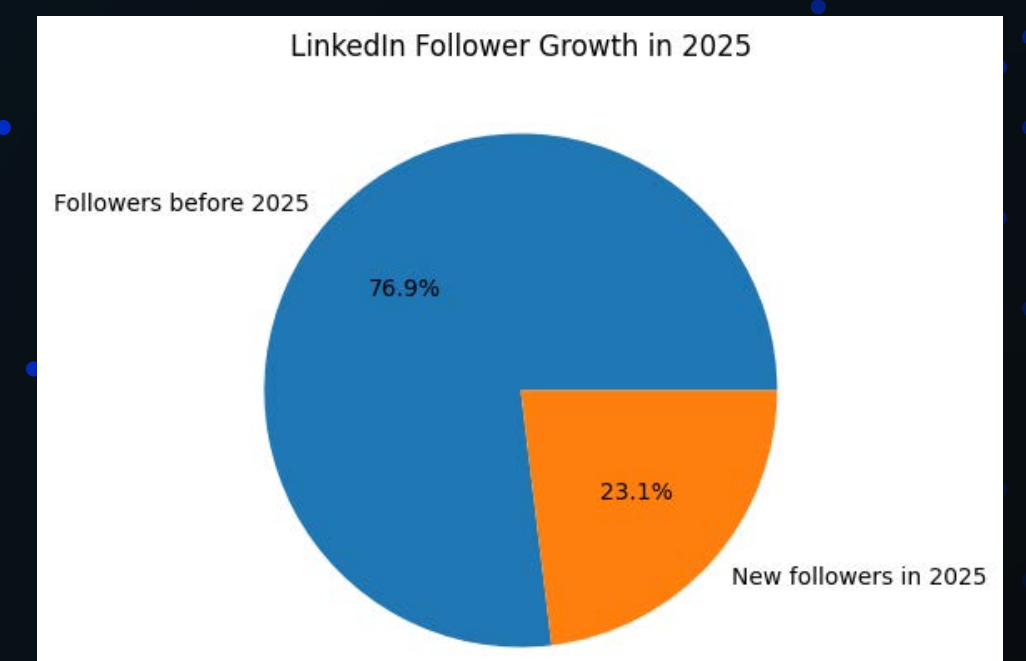
Digital Presence and Political Amplification

GESAC strengthened its online presence in 2025, using its communication channels to **amplify key political messages**, promote joint initiatives and engage with policymakers and stakeholders.

Social media were used to extend the reach of political letters, campaigns and events, ensuring that advocacy messages circulated beyond closed policy circles. This approach also supported coordination with members and the sector, helping to project a **unified and coherent sectoral voice** on priority issues.

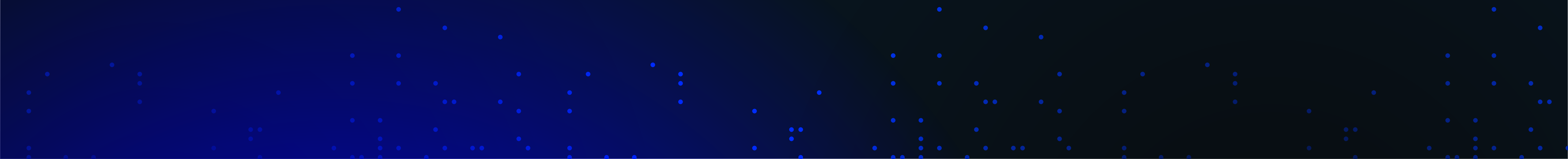


These campaigns played a key role in maintaining political momentum on issues where legislative progress remains uncertain, while reinforcing GESAC's role as a reference point for authors' interests at EU level.



V.

Internal Governance



GESAC's work relied on **continuous internal coordination** between its members, working committees, governing bodies and Secretariat. This coordination was particularly critical in a year marked by **simultaneous policy processes**, most notably the implementation of the AI Act, renewed engagement with a newly elected European Parliament and the start of a new European Commission mandate.

GESAC's positions and actions were developed through **structured internal workflows**, allowing members to contribute expertise, align views and react quickly to fastmoving policy developments.

PRESIDENCY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS: STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND POLITICAL PRIORITIES

Chaired by David El Sayegh, the GESAC Board held quarterly meetings in 2025 (online meeting on 23 January and 18 November, meetings in Brussels on 6 May and 23 September) to discuss the functioning of the Grouping, its current and future policy and governance priorities and to make recommendations for the General Meeting. The meetings were also occasions to exchange views on recent developments at EU level on main files and to hold discussions with prominent EU decision makers.

GESAC GENERAL MEETING

General Meetings took place on 7 May in Brussels (annual statutory General Meeting) and on 20 November (online meeting). The General Meeting included exchanges with external invitees, such as representatives from the European Commission, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and stakeholders' organisations.

THE MADRID GROUP: LEGAL COORDINATION AND TECHNICAL INPUT

The legal committee gathering legal experts from GESAC member societies, whose work results in position papers, contributions to the Commission's consultations, legal analysis of EU priority issues, and more, issued by GESAC, met five times in 2025 (online meetings on and in Brussels on 20 March and 6 November).

Madrid Group discussions fed directly into GESAC's written submissions, coalition statements and technical positions. This ensured that advocacy efforts were **legally robust, internally aligned and reflective of members' operational realities**.

PACOM: COORDINATING ADVOCACY, OUTREACH AND POLITICAL MESSAGING

The **Public Affairs and Communication Committee (PACOM)** played a key role in aligning advocacy strategy, outreach activities and communication efforts. PACOM members met four times (online meetings and in Brussels on 6 May)

In 2025, PACOM exchanges focused on:

- political outreach in the context of the new EU cycle;
- coordination of messaging on AI, buy-out practices and streaming;
- preparation and follow-up of high-visibility initiatives, including Meet the Authors;
- sharing intelligence on national political developments relevant to EU-level discussions.

PACOM also served as a practical interface between EU-level advocacy and **national level mobilisation**, supporting members' efforts to engage their own policymakers in parallel with Brussels based work.



THE SECRETARIAT: DAILY COORDINATION AND POLICY EXECUTION

The GESAC Secretariat ensured the day-to-day coordination of all activities, acting as the operational link between members, committees, governing bodies and external stakeholders.

In 2025, the Secretariat:

- influenced the work of the EU institutions on a continuous basis
- defended authors' rights and GESAC members' interests at EU policy debates
- monitored EU policy developments on a continuous basis
- organised and followed up on meetings with EU institutions and partners organisations
- coordinated coalition work and joint statements
- prepared position papers, consultation responses and briefing materials
- ensured information flows between members and EU decisionmakers
- delivered the messages on GESAC priorities in all relevant policy and industry events

THE TEAM

The past year was marked by some personnel changes and promising developments within the GESAC Secretariat.

Alexia Pickard was promoted to EU Public Affairs and Communication Lead, drawing on her extensive experience at GESAC and expertise in EU advocacy and lobbying. In October 2025, Hanna Koonen joined the team as Legal Adviser, bringing six years of experience at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Prior to her time at WIPO, Hanna worked for nearly three years at Auvibel, the Belgian collective management organisation responsible for private copying remuneration. We warmly thank Alexia and Hanna for their commitment.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

GESAC members received information on developments taking place at European Union level on a regular basis. The General Secretariat's daily work and actions were detailed to the CEOs of GESAC member societies in the reports that were sent out every month. Sébastien GONET, from JOIRIS, ROUSSEAU & Co, was in charge of auditing GESAC's annual financial accounts.





GESAC

REPRESENTS

32 AUTHORS' SOCIETIES
+1.2M AUTHORS & RIGHTHOLDERS
ACROSS **27** EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



WEB
WWW.AUTHORSOCIETIES.EU

EMAIL
SECRETARIATGENERAL@GESAC.ORG

TEL
(32-2) 511.44.54

LINKEDIN
[GESAC - AUTHORSOCIETIES.EU](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gesac-authorsocieties.eu)

REGISTERED OFFICE AND GENERAL SECRETARIAT
23, RUE MONTOYER - 1000 BRUSSELS