



*The Coronavirus & COVID19 Emergency
A Call to Action from The Music Sector in your Country*

Monday 20 April 2020

Dear Political Representative,

I write on behalf of ICMP, the global trade organisation for music publishing companies - the backbone of the world's music sector and the industry behind just about every piece of music you have heard.

On this occasion we ask you to listen to us in a different way.

Our companies comprise some of the world's eldest (18th century). Several are household names. The multi-thousand majority are small and medium-sized, including thousands of sole traders. All are characterised by dedicated professionals who - together with their songwriter and composer partners - bring more than 62 million musical works, of all genres, to the world.

They do so by investing millions in musical talent, then licensing music to TV, radio, digital (streaming, games, virtual reality etc.), films, sheet music, public premises, retailers and live concerts.

Without these companies' investment music does not stream, sheet music is unavailable, shops do not have vinyl and CDs, broadcasts are silent, concerts reduce, schools lack teaching tools and young people miss vital development. Some have seen three turns of century, numerous economic crises, withstood wars, (sound tracked peace), met dramatic market changes...even witnessed pandemics.

However, as you know: these days are different. Parallel to the COVID19 public health crisis is a commercial emergency. For many of our businesses in your country it is, or will be, an existential issue.

Many industries are weathering commercial hardship and uncertainty now. What differentiates ours is that it has been among the first to be harmed and will be among the last to feel the crisis' impact.

This is because from Boston to Beijing and everywhere in between, across almost all forms of music usage, our companies often receive remuneration long after the use. Concerts, film productions, contracts, tours, sales, broadcasts, licenses are being cancelled now on an unprecedented scale. Consequently, we will face profound commercial harm deep into 2021, even with the swiftest of recoveries.

Our first phase survey and analysis of the global commercial data is deeply alarming.

Music is a joy by definition. It is commercial by necessity. Heavy investment, risk prevalence, loss-leaders – these are norms of our market. However, COVID19 has – and will continue to - put at risk the very future of so many companies and professionals in this fundamental industry.

Consequently, the national and international industry collectively urges your government to ensure:

1. **Eligibility** for all music publishing companies, full-time and self-employed individual professional music publishers, to national public sector COVID19 financial relief programs and future actions. This can include corporate grants, tax credit schemes, rent/rates holidays, interest free loans etc.
2. **Sustainability.** The music sector needs sustained support – in national budgets, public and private investment schemes and sponsorship programs. An increase in public sector financial support is badly needed to help the future of existing and start-up music companies operating in a marketplace which has gone from difficult to perilous.
3. **Proactivity.** Where international or multinational programs are possible (e.g. the ‘Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative’ for the EU27), push for their launch and application to our sector.
4. **Information:** The provision of centralised, practical, concise information about such programs on either governmental or COVID19 specific websites.

This vast problem hits individuals. Our response must be collective - combining culture *and* commerce. That citizens worldwide have reflexively turned to music in this crisis speaks volumes about the vital need to sustain the sector’s future. Music will be crucial to recovery as it supports the hospitality, retail, creative, tourism and leisure industries, contributing enormously to the overall economy.

I thank you for the resolve demonstrated by your government so far and invite joint cooperation to ensure we all emerge stronger. ICMP and our national association are available at any moment to input expertise, participate in initiatives, follow up with data...whatever is needed.

Yours sincerely,

John Phelan
DIRECTOR GENERAL

ICMP – the global voice of music publishing