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Why the Creative and Media Industries Must be Put at Centre Stage of the Lisbon Agenda

*An informal grouping of some of Europe's top media and creative businesses and industry associations has united today to found the **Creative and Media Business Alliance** to give the sector a strong and united voice in Brussels. We call upon the European Commission, the European Parliament and the 25 EU Member States to focus on our sector in their joint efforts to foster innovation, growth and employment in the Information Society. The creative and media businesses are more than a mere driver for technology deployment or an 'added value' to the Lisbon Agenda. They are the true value of the Information Society.*

Europe's economic reform agenda is in deep trouble. The results achieved so far are unsatisfactory, or even "a failure", according to the just-published Kok Report. No substantial progress has been made with growth and employment in Europe in the past five years, let alone with competitiveness.

One of the failures of the Lisbon agenda is its one-sided focus on new technologies. This approach neglects the fact that a dynamic and competitive Information Society will not be created by hardware technology and distribution networks alone. Instead, those who make the new roads of the Information Society worth travelling must be put at centre stage of the Lisbon agenda: the creative and media businesses.

The creative, media and information businesses have always been a crucial sector of the economy. Together, the creative and media business sectors invest in, produce and disseminate a huge array of content that educates, informs and entertains Europe's citizens. They include newspaper, book, magazine, database, portal and web-publishers, music companies, broadcasters and film producers as well as advertisers – all of which help create content (songs, music, information, articles, stories, poems, films, shows) and make it commercially successful. It is this creative content which people are looking for when they are connecting



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to the internet, activating their broadband connection, switching on their 3G mobile phone or choosing a channel on their digital TV service. The creative and media sector is thus the true heart of the Information Society. Without it, the Information Society would be nothing more than empty pipes and boxes.

If Europe wants to become more competitive by the year 2010, it must dedicate its full attention to the growth potential of the creative and media business sector. The sector is one of the most successful and fastest growing in Europe, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs and contributing positively to Europe's trade balance. The creative and media businesses are some of Europe's most professional and most inspired enterprises, while at the same time playing a pivotal role in contributing to cultural diversity, a well-informed pluralist society and innovative content development.

The Lisbon agenda will only become a success story by 2010 if both the EU institutions and the EU Member States give due prominence to the needs of the creative and media businesses. Talent and creativity must be nurtured, promoted and respected. Content first must be created – before it can be made available anywhere, anytime and in any platform. However, not all players of the “knowledge economy” invest in content. Those who do (either on their own or by bearing the financial risks) are the real driving force of the Information Society. From a regulatory perspective, this requires in particular a thorough understanding of the cultural and commercial value of copyright and its robust protection along the entire value chain, as well as a liberal regulatory framework which secures a sound commercial basis for the creative and media industry, including for advertising, which creates revenues to support an independent and pluralistic media across Europe.

Only such due prominence and understanding of our sector by Governments and the European Institutions at the highest level will foster innovation, growth and prosperity of Europe's creative and media businesses. It is vital that we are able to increase the current level of investment that has made Europe a world centre for creative and media businesses.