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Introduction to the Worldwide Independent Network, and why it's important for Italian independent record companies.

Good afternoon to you all, and thank you very much for inviting me to Medimex. It is an excellent conference, with all sorts of interesting and useful sessions taking place - congratulations on this.

My name is Charlie Phillips, and I am Head of Legal and Commercial Affairs for the Worldwide Independent Network, or 'WIN'. I wanted to say a few words about what WIN is, what it does, and why it's important for Italian independent recording companies.

So, what is WIN?

WIN is a global forum for the professional independent music industry.

It was launched in 2006 in response to business, creative and market access issues faced by the independent sector everywhere.

For independent music companies and their national trade associations worldwide, WIN is a collective voice. It also acts as an advocate, instigator and facilitator for its membership.

Its members include all the main independent music industry trade associations around the world (including PMI in Italy), as well as the European lobbying body Impala, and digital licensing body Merlin. The vast majority of independent music companies are represented in WIN, either directly or through their trade associations, and other members are very welcome, including Audiocoop in Italy.

WIN member companies include Beggars Group, K7, Domino, Sugar, Playground, Naxos, Glassnote and hundreds of others. Its scope is genuinely worldwide, with its membership representing all corners of Europe, the US, Australia and New Zealand, Canada and Quebec, Japan and South East Asia, Brazil and other Latin American countries.

And what does WIN do?

WIN's main task is to pull together the key issues that are affecting the independent music industry. With such a broad and diverse membership, WIN has focused recently on pulling together the common issues affecting the worldwide independent community, and there will be an announcement at

Midem this year regarding WIN's current position on a number of these key industry issues. I won't go into detail on these now, so you will have to wait until January for more information on this, I'm afraid!

Meanwhile, WIN's main area of commercial work – which has the most direct financial impact on its members - is that of assisting companies with managing their performance rights (or 'neighbouring rights').

These are the rights which generate royalty revenues when your recordings are broadcast on the radio and TV, and used in 'public performance' – ie in clubs, bars, shops, restaurants and so on. This area is becoming increasingly important, particularly since revenues in this area continue to increase gradually year on year, while revenues from retail and other areas often do not fare so well.

Performance rights are, in almost every case, managed collectively, through collecting societies, and WIN works very closely with these collecting societies, in every territory where these rights exist (about 60 in total). Our work is to ensure that the independent sector is properly represented in each society, such that local and international indies have their issues addressed properly.

The societies are generally very receptive to a single, international point of contact that they can turn to. It can often be very hard to locate rights holder companies, to communicate outside of their own country. It is also interesting to point out that this is an area where the majors and independents often work together, since we are all rights holders working with the same service providers – ie the collecting societies - to manage our performance rights.

So why is WIN important for Italian indies?:

WIN's commercial work on performance rights has had direct impact on its member companies in almost every country. This may be through accessing revenues from overseas, or working better with local collecting societies. Italy is no exception.

Many companies engage with this initiative, seeking advice on how best to manage this area of their business – particularly in countries outside of their own. Some collecting societies have a good network of reciprocal agreements with other societies, in Europe and worldwide.

However, none have agreements with all. So, what happens if you are getting good broadcast coverage in countries which, for example, SCF has no agreement with? Are you clear on what the options are in this kind of situation?

WIN's knowledge and network offers the solutions needed to manage this area of its members businesses, on a company by company, country by country basis.

So from an Italian indie's point of view, WIN is working to push the wider agenda of issues which affect independent companies in every country. However, our work on performance rights is currently the area which has the most visibility and is providing practical solutions for independent companies, including Italian indies.

Information on WIN's members is available at www.winformusic.org, and I can be contacted on Charlie@musicindie.com.

I'm very happy to take any questions, and will be available after this session, if you'd like to discuss things in a bit more detail.

Thank you very much indeed once again for the invitation to speak to you today, and to introduce some of the work that WIN is doing.

Thank you.