IFRRO Statement on Removal of U.S. Copyright Register, Maria Pallante

The International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO) was surprised to learn that Maria Pallante, who served with distinction as only the 12th Register of Copyrights and the Director of the Copyright Office for the last five years, will be leaving the Copyright Office. This will be a tremendous loss for the Copyright Office and for America’s creators, innovators, and users of copyrighted works.

As an independent organisation established on the basis of the fundamental international copyright principles embodied in the Berne and Universal Copyright Conventions, IFRRO greatly appreciates and respects Maria Pallante’s dedicated service as Register, serving since 2011. She has recognized the importance of copyright to both the U.S. and international creative communities and worked as a steadfast advocate for modernizing the Copyright Office and its technology initiatives. It has been an honor to have worked with Register Pallante.

Copyright industries represent some 4-6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developed countries. In the U.S., according to the Copyright Industries in the U.S. Economy: The 2014 Report, prepared for the International Intellectual Property Alliance, the copyright sector contributes 11.4% to the U.S. economy and 8.3% to overall employment. They are frequently the fastest growing economic sector. Under Pallante, the Copyright Office operated under and embodied the principle that copyright exists to benefit the public by incentivizing new works of authorship, and that the rights of individual creators need to be respected.

We support the selection of Karyn Temple Claggett as Acting Register while the search for a permanent replacement is underway. The new Register of Copyrights should be dedicated to continuing to protect creative rights and deeply knowledgeable on copyright as was former Register Pallante. As the selection process for the new Register of Copyrights begins, we request that U.S. Congressional leaders, as well as the new Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, consider the leadership role America plays in the global intellectual property marketplace and the precedent that will be set in the selection of the individual who will fill this critical role for the U.S. and the world.

About The International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO)

IFRRO is an independent organisation established on the basis of the fundamental international copyright principles embodied in the Berne and Universal Copyright Conventions. Its purpose is to facilitate, on an international basis, the collective management of reproduction and other rights relevant to copyrighted works through the co-operation of national Reproduction Rights Organisations (RROs). Collective or centralised rights management is preferable where individual exercise of rights is impractical.

IFRRO, through its members, supports creators and publishers alike and provides a common platform for them to foster the establishment of appropriate legal frameworks for the use of their works.

Amsterdam, 2 November 2016.