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COMBATING DIGITAL PIRACY: STRATEGIC ENFORCEMENT THROUGH DNS/IP BLOCKING AND OSINT TOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This contribution describes the enforcement model adopted by the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania for combating online copyright infringement, combining DNS (Domain Name System) and IP (Internet Protocol) blocking with open-source intelligence (OSINT) investigations. The Commission has implemented a range of measures such as DNS blocking, blocking of mirror sites and associated IP addresses, fines for copyright infringement and freezing of bank accounts connected with pirate activity. The contribution further highlights successful examples of enforcement in 2025 and suggests that the unique approach taken by Lithuania to protecting copyright and neighboring rights online could be replicated in other jurisdictions.

* The views expressed in this document are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Secretariat or of the Member States of WIPO.

I. INTRODUCTION: RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMISSION OF LITHUANIA

1. The Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania (the Commission) is the national audiovisual services regulator. One of its functions is to tackle digital piracy. Since 2019, the Commission has worked to protect copyright online. That involves implementation of Domain Name System (DNS) blocking, followed by the blocking of pirate mirror websites and Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, and imposing fines for infringement of copyright and neighboring rights. The Commission has frozen bank accounts used to monetize pirate activities, delisted URLs, domain names and IP addresses from the Google search engine, removed advertisements from pirate websites (also using the WIPO ALERT platform) and suspended illegal Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) services from the Google Play and Apple Store platforms.

2. The Commission has blocked more than 400 domain names and 7,000 IP addresses where copyrighted content was published without the consent of rights holders. Since 2023, it has also imposed fines in over 250 cases of copyright infringement. To ensure the effectiveness of the blocking process, the Commission has developed a centralized, automated domain-blocking system that minimizes the chance of human error. The system automatically distributes binding instructions to Internet service providers (ISPs). When the Commission identifies a violation, such as a “mirror” site of a previously blocked piracy domain, the instruction is pushed simultaneously to all providers. When the Commission decides to restrict access to certain domain names or IP addresses, that information is uploaded to a centralized system. Within 20 minutes, the domain names or IP addresses are automatically blocked (or unblocked in the same timeframe).

3. 2025 was a successful year for the Commission in terms of enforcement: Several decisions regarding illegal IPTV services were made including:

(a) The Commission fined hosting service provider UAB Melbikomas €10,000 for breaching European Union (EU) sanctions, including for the illegal hosting and streaming of more than 50 sports channels. That marked the first Lithuanian case targeting a host for enabling illegal content distribution. Following a violation in 2023, the 2025 investigation revealed continued hosting of content that breached sanctions.

(b) The Vilnius Regional Court upheld the €1,900 fine imposed by the Commission on UAB Consilium Optimum for illegally distributing Go3 programs. The company was found to have illegally distributed programs such as Go3 Sport, Go3 Sport 2, and Go3 Sport Open to its subscribers. The Commission imposed the fine under Article 122(3) of the Code of Administrative Offences of Lithuania, on the unlawful public distribution of copyrighted or related rights content. The Court upheld the ruling in June 2025, dismissing the company’s appeal and confirming that the Commission’s measures had been lawful and justified.

(c) The Commission fined an individual €3,100 under Article 515(1) of the Code of Administrative Offences, on non-compliance with international sanctions, for violating EU sanctions. The individual concerned had illegally distributed prohibited television channels via a website, in a package that included more than 30 sports channels and other content from broadcasters under EU sanctions.

4. Those enforcement actions were part of an ongoing mission to prevent the retransmission of prohibited content and ensure compliance with international sanctions in the country.

II. OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE: A MODERN APPROACH TO COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT INVESTIGATIONS

5. Among the conventional regulated measures, the Commission has developed open-source intelligence (OSINT) skills for tracking perpetrators online. Experience shows that online intermediaries providing services such as hosting, VPNs, online financial transactions, cloud services and DNS resolvers are at the heart of copyright infringement investigations. To track digital infringements, the Commission uses tools such as [domaintools.com](https://www.domaintools.com), oxylabs.io, epieos.com, Wireshark and SimilarWeb to help identify perpetrators and assess illegal activities.

6. Commission officials also hold or participate in OSINT training for national and EU judges, IT experts, national regulators, prosecutors and police. The Commission believes that sharing good practices and know-how has made the task of tracking digital infringement much easier.

III. COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENTS AS A HYBRID THREAT: PRIVATE DATA LEAKS

7. The Commission has found that piracy in Lithuania is closely linked to leaked private data. Sometime in 2019 or 2020, the Lithuanian illegal movie streaming service Filmai.in suffered a data breach exposing 645,000 email addresses, usernames and plain text passwords. The breached database is available on the darknet¹. When a user registers with a pirate website, its administrators receive data that can include the IP address, indicating the user's location, ISP, passwords, pseudonyms (login names), email addresses and telephone numbers. If the services are paid for, users also leave their bank card details. Since the administrators of pirate websites do not comply with even the minimum requirements for data security, let alone regarding copyright violations, users' personal data ends up on the black market, where it is sold or distributed for free. Such data is extremely useful, for instance, to financial fraudsters, who use it to target their victims. Therefore, in addition to copyright infringement, there is also the risk of illegal use of personal data, fraud and identity theft. It has even been found that Government officials had registered on the Filmai website using official email addresses, creating security concerns, such as the potential for unauthorized access to State institutions, the signing of documents, or responding to residents' inquiries. The website is now blocked but sensitive information such as passwords was made public².

IV. COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT AS A HYBRID THREAT: DISINFORMATION

8. The Commission also monitors illegal television channel distributors on the Internet (IPTV), which often operate from hostile countries. That is done through the SimilarWeb search engine optimization (SEO) tool to automatically monitor illegal IPTV services with the highest user traffic. It then conducts manual analysis of domain names, IP addresses and Internet intermediaries (such as hosting service providers, proxies and VPNs) in order to apply the appropriate measures. Those channels include EU-sanctioned outlets that not only spread propaganda and disinformation, but also broadcast numerous national channels and live sports without the consent of the rights holders. In blocking broadcasts because of copyright infringement, the Commission also blocks access to hostile information (and vice versa), which is a method of hybrid warfare.

¹ Have I Been Pwned (2026). Filmai.in Data Breach. Available at <https://haveibeenpwned.com/Breach/Filmailn>.

² Jokubaitis, Marius (February 20, 2021). Kaip rodo nutekinti „Filmai.in“ duomenys, piratinėje svetainėje naudodami Seimo ar ministerijų el. adresus registravosi ir valdžios atstovai. LRT. Available at https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1348778/kaip-rodo-nutekinti-filmai-in-duomenys-piratineje-svetaineje-naudodami-seimo-ar-ministeriju-el-adresus-registravosi-ir-valdzios-atstovai?srsId=AfmBOraqvuyysUNo3f3V_Ha8nWCZB3eDiryazKGCNFi-qr4e249ggD (Lithuanian only).

V. CONCLUSION

9. Since 2020, the Commission has developed a robust national legal framework and IT capabilities for safeguarding copyright and neighboring rights online. Given the country's geopolitical situation and its history of legal practice regarding copyright infringement, the Commission has developed a distinctive approach to addressing such violations that could serve as a model for other national authorities and rights holders.

[End of contribution]