

Press Release



June 29th 2023

Dr. Tobias Holzmüller to succeed Dr. Harald Heker as GEMA CEO

Change at the top: After 17 years, the GEMA CEO, Dr. Harald Heker, will retire on September 30, 2023. Dr. Tobias Holzmüller, chief legal counsel of the collective management organisation since 2013, will succeed him on October 1, 2023.

The new GEMA CEO will be Dr. Tobias Holzmüller, replacing Dr. Harald Heker on October 1, 2023. This was announced by the GEMA Supervisory Board following its meeting on June 28. Holzmüller, a 48-year-old lawyer has headed GEMA's legal department since 2013 and was appointed CEO for ZPÜ (Zentralstelle für private Überspielungsrechte, Central Organisation for Private Copying Rights) in 2016. He was responsible for key licensing contracts and projects such as establishing the joint venture ICE with sister societies PRS for Music and STIM, as well as the acquisition the digital distribution company Zebralution. In the process of copyright law modernization, he played a decisive role in the adoption and implementation of the DSM Directive, which GEMA actively promoted in Berlin and Brussels. Previously, he worked as a lawyer at Gleiss Lutz.

Dr. Ralf Weigand, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, says, "With Tobias Holzmüller, not only an excellent, globally respected copyright expert but also an extremely well-connected and committed advocate for our concerns is taking over GEMA management. We look forward to continuing GEMA's successful trajectory with him and tackling the immense challenges that lie ahead for us and the entire music industry. In particular, the topic of artificial intelligence in creative processes will keep us creators fundamentally busy in the coming years. This will be comparable to the challenges of digitalization over the last decade. The entire Supervisory Board and I myself are very much looking forward to working with Tobias and are convinced that we have found the best person for this tough job."

Dr. Tobias Holzmüller says, "I am very much looking forward to the new task and to working with the entire team and my fellow board members. From my predecessor, I am taking over an excellently positioned organization that achieves economic success for our members and is committed to a strong copyright law. I would like to continue the process of modernization, growth and openness. The music industry is in a state of upheaval. We want to accompany our members on their path into the future with attractive remuneration, modern service and development of new market opportunities."

Dr. Harald Heker: A tireless campaigner for copyright

Dr. Harald Heker has been a member of the Executive Board since 2006 and Chairman of the GEMA Executive Board since 2007. Heker's outstanding achievements include the enforcement of music authors' copyright on digital platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, and the EU

Copyright Directive adopted in 2019. Since 2006, GEMA has consistently increased overall revenues for its members and ended the fiscal year 2022 with record earnings. For the first time in its history, GEMA will distribute more than one billion euros to its beneficiaries.

Commenting on Dr. Heker's departure, Dr. Weigand says, "For 17 years, Harald Heker steered GEMA with a crystal-clear, analytical eye and a sure hand through turbulent and, most recently, very disruptive times. Under his leadership, GEMA has mastered the profound changes incurred by the world's move from analog to digital music very successfully. His great achievements in enforcing and strengthening copyright for music authors set standards that will remain, as will GEMA's organizational and cultural development, which bears the hallmark of his creative power. He thus leaves his successor a well-ordered house, but also the challenge of similarly successful strategic action. We sincerely thank Harald Heker for his outstanding work and wish him all the very best for the future."

In Germany, GEMA represents the copyrights of almost 90,000 members (composers, lyricists, music publishers) and of more than two million rights owners from all over the world. It is one of the largest authors' societies for musical works in the world.

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