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PUBLISHERS LAUNCH BRUSSELS DECLARATION

BRUSSELS, 13 February 2007 -- A group of major publishers today has taken the unique step of issuing a joint declaration laying out ten principles through which scientific, technical and medical (STM) publishing can continue to work for the benefit of science and society. The declaration has been endorsed by 35 publishing houses (among them the leading European and international STM publishers) and 8 publishing trade associations, representing national, European and international STM values. It was issued in the context of the European Commission's Communication on Scientific Information and its Conference on Scientific Publishing in the European Research Area in Brussels on 15-16 February 2007.

The declaration stresses that STM publishers work to support the research community in Europe, and underlines the role of specialist publishers in ensuring the integrity of scientific research. Publishers organise, manage and financially support the peer review processes of STM journals. Peer-reviewed journals play an irreplaceable role in authenticating articles through registration, certification, dissemination and editorial improvement.

The declaration has garnered support from a wide range of publishers in Europe and outside, from learned society and commercial publishers, as well as a major university press, demonstrating the unity, breadth and strength of the community's views.

Speaking about the launch of the declaration, Michael Mabe, CEO of the International Association of STM Publishers, said: *"I welcome the fact that a wide cross-section of the publishing community has come together to endorse a set of principles that will underpin its leading edge contribution to scientific endeavour. Commissioner Reding has stated that the interest of the European Commission in scientific information is 'to improve access and preservation'. This laudable aim is the raison d'être of STM publishers and we fully endorse it through the declaration. However, the Commission's Communication on Scientific Information in the Digital Age issued this week does not make clear why government intervention is needed and risks promoting one business model over another."*

"Nobody will benefit if a major European industry is undermined and with it the peer review system upon which science and society depend," he said.

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The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers – STM – is a global trade association representing the interest of about 100 scientific, technical, medical and scholarly publishers, collectively responsible for more than 60% of the global annual output of research articles, over half the active research journals and the publication of tens of thousands of print and electronic books, reference works and databases. STM is the only international trade association equally representing all types of STM publishers - large and small companies, not for profit organisations, learned societies, traditional, primary, secondary publishers and new entrants to global publishing.

The Commission Communication on “Scientific information in the digital age” is part of the Commission’s i2010 digital libraries initiative and the Community policy on research. It deals with the functioning of the scientific publication system and its impact on research, addressing the issues of access, dissemination and preservation of scientific information. The Communication announces a series of measures at EU level and underlines the need for continuing debate.

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