

Asia Video Industry Association
Submission to the European Commission
August 15, 2024

Public Consultation on the Counterfeit and Piracy Watch List

The Asia Video Industry Association (AVIA) is the trade association for the video industry and ecosystem in the Asia Pacific. It serves to make the video industry stronger and healthier through promoting the common interests of its members. Understanding global trends in media, AVIA is focused specifically on addressing issues in the video markets of Asia. AVIA has approximately 70 member companies operating and investing in 17 different Asian and Australasian markets, providing television programming and curated over-the-top video content to over 600 million homes. In addition to the multinational television networks and programmers, our members also represent leading corporations that are telecom companies, suppliers and manufacturers of cable, satellite and broadband video technology, related business service providers, and new media service providers.

AVIA member organisations include BBC Studios, Canal+, DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga, France24, FriendMTS, the Premier League, TV5 Monde and White Bullet.

AVIA welcomes the opportunity to provide information to the European Commission on the issue of protection of pay TV intellectual property rights in various Asian markets which have been seen to have a huge impact on EU content. Our submission is focused solely on the promulgation of pirated content either via piracy services that provide access to online content through apps and websites, or the use of Illicit Streaming Devices (ISDs).

AVIA notes concerns with the number of high-profile pirate services operating out of Vietnam and the difficulties right holders have in taking enforcement actions in this country which has essentially become a haven for pirate operators. Some of the most popular pirate sites in the world, such as **Chiasenhac** and the pirate anime site **Aniwave**, operate out of Vietnam with relative impunity. We hope that the recent action of partially taking down the **Fmovies** and **BestBuy** pirate services is a sign of things to come in Vietnam. In particular, we would like to highlight the first-ever online piracy conviction in Vietnam that was handed down earlier this year, which represents a significant milestone in the fight against piracy.

Other pirate streaming sites that are of particular concern to AVIA in the Asia Pacific include **Vegamovies**, an English-language streaming piracy site focused on Indian consumers. It receives more than 140 million visits a month and, as with numerous other pirate sites, frequently changes its domain name. In addition, AVIA also notes our concerns arising from the increasing popularity of video hosting provider, **Doodstream**, in India. This video hosting provider has grown enormously in popularity in recent years and is presently one of the largest hosts for pirated content globally with more than 500 million visits in the last three months. Whilst ongoing civil action by a number of rights holders against the operators of Doodstream in India has had some impact, the service continues to be operational.

Anecdotally, AVIA is also aware of a growing number of pirate services in Cambodia, and a number of satellite services based in Laos that are responsible for large amounts of piracy not only locally, but also in surrounding territories like Myanmar and Thailand.

The **Xoilac** family of websites is a major sports Streaming Website that targets a Vietnamese audience and provides links to a wide range of live sporting content, including EU-based sports. The websites are some of the most egregious AVIA members have encountered, with infringement continuing on the site despite Vietnamese authorities attempting to block access to domains associated with the service, and widespread news coverage that highlights these infringing sites. In total, the operators have created over 300 domains within the Xoilac family to try and avoid efforts to disrupt their services. The operators of the site appear to be based in Hanoi, Vietnam and seemingly operate with little concern for enforcement action being taken against them. Since August 2023, the Xoilac family of sites has received approximately 23 million visits.

The **BingSport**¹ family of websites (including the notorious AMZFootball² brand, as well as 247sport and streamshubs) offer paid-for subscription services that provide access to a range of sports through a variety of packages which are globally popular. These packages take streams from a variety of broadcasters based in the EU to provide content. The service appears to be run through a group of individuals and companies based in Hanoi, Vietnam. Since August 2023, the services received over 7 million worldwide visits. In 2022, HSI Baltimore seized the amzfootball.com domain but the service has continued to operate uninterrupted.

Banana TV, an application designed for Android devices and Smart TVs, enables users to stream live and on-demand content from unauthorised IPTV subscriptions. This app provides illegal access to copyright-protected material, including live broadcasts of sporting events, and exclusive content from CANAL+MYANMAR whose parent company is based in France. Lacking an official website, Banana TV is available exclusively as an APK file, which can be downloaded from various illicit sources. The developer has tailored this application specifically for users in Myanmar as well as a global audience.

Since 2023, the rise of the pirate service **LokLok** in the Asia Pacific has become of increasing concern to AVIA and our members, with it now ranking in the top 3,000 most visited sites in Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. Our initial concerns were over the LokLok app which contains an extensive amount of unauthorised AVIA member companies' content. AVIA and its members have had numerous successful conversations with app stores regarding the removal of the app, however, each removal would invariably see the app return with a slightly different name. AVIA continues to discuss this issue with app stores. In the same year, AVIA also became aware of the www.lokllok.com website. AVIA and other rights holders applied to have this site blocked in Indonesia and when it was redirected to www.lokllok.tv, the new site was also blocked. In the meantime, AVIA and other rights holders are looking to have it blocked elsewhere.

Illegal Streaming Devices (ISDs) and illicit IPTV services continue to be a concern for AVIA members in the Asia-Pacific. **EVPad**³ is an illicit IPTV streaming service that operates through a network of online and physical resellers and is one of the most popular ISDs, particularly in the Asia-Pacific. It offers content through multiple hardware models that are loaded with apps capable of providing access to thousands of channels, including many from EU broadcasters. The business is extremely sophisticated and regularly launches new product lines. For example, one such product purchased on our behalf by one of our members was found to provide access to 1,786 channels, including 75 that offer live sports broadcasts. The operators have been very careful to hide their location and identities, although investigations have

1 Currently accessible through bingsport.com

2 Currently accessible through amzlive.tv

3 <https://www.evpadpro.com/>

linked them to a presence in Hong Kong and China. The service has also been found to infringe copyright in a blocking injunction obtained against it in Singapore, but it was able to circumvent all blocks against it through the implementation of sophisticated technical measures. Another ISD of concern is **SVI Cloud**, which is very popular in Southeast Asia. It operates both online and through an extensive list of resellers with over 70 physical locations listed as selling the device on its official website. The devices have also been sold brazenly on popular e-commerce marketplaces. Such devices offer content through multiple hardware models that are loaded with the app “Luca TV” or “Yoghurt TV”, which is capable of providing access to over 1,000 live TV channels, including those of many EU-based broadcasters. Similar to the operators of EVPad, although these operators have also taken steps to conceal their identities, investigations have linked them to a presence in Hong Kong and China.

Finally, we note our ongoing concerns with the **Telegram** platform in facilitating piracy. From new releases to live sporting events, pirates circulate, exchange, and sell illegal videos and subscriber login details via the app. Telegram allows pirates to disseminate pirated videos and content easily to huge, encrypted private chat groups – as large as 200,000 people – and its channels can attract millions of subscribers, causing substantial losses to rights holders. Pirates can easily hide their identities on Telegram, as even users who are members of a closed group or subscribe to a broadcast-only channel can’t tell who the pirate is behind the content being served. The process of removing content on Telegram can take several days or longer and is nowhere near as automated as other social platforms. In addition to the Telegram Ad Platform, pirates have found other ways to monetize their stolen content, including redirecting users to websites and cyberlocker sites with ads. Users can also pay to join closed Telegram groups, or they can pay a subscription to a pirate and in return, gain access to a catalogue with thousands of movies. Pirates also make money by selling subscribers’ stolen credentials to legitimate streaming services over Telegram. Given its very large size and popularity, Telegram must implement better measures to identify and protect copyrighted content on its platform.