

## Towards reform of the EU Copyright Directive

The European Parliament has long called for the modernisation of the legal framework on copyright. A Commission proposal to amend EU copyright law is expected by the end of 2015. On 16 June 2015, the Legal Affairs Committee adopted an own-initiative report on the implementation of one of the main pieces of legislation governing copyright in the EU, the 2001 Copyright Directive.

### Current EU copyright law

The [2001 Copyright Directive](#) is one of the main texts governing copyright law in the EU. Copyrights and related rights are exclusive intellectual property rights (IPRs) that protect, except in specific cases, the author's or creator's original work (e.g. book, film, software) and the interests of others such as publishers and broadcasting organisations who contribute to making the works available to the public. The Directive was enacted in order to adapt copyright legislation to technological developments, especially the emergence of the digital environment, as well as to harmonise certain aspects of the law on copyright within the internal market. However the question is [posed](#) of whether such legislation remains appropriate in today's increasingly online environment. The Parliament, whose Legal Affairs (JURI) Committee has set up [a working group on Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright Reform](#), has already pleaded for EU copyright legislation to be reviewed in a number of resolutions including on [online distribution of audiovisual works](#) (2012) and on [enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights](#) (2014). The aim of the own-initiative (INI) report (rapporteur Julia Reda, Greens/EFA, Germany) is to steer the debate on the revision of the 2001 Copyright Directive, ahead of the Commission's [forthcoming](#) proposal for EU copyright reform.

### The expected reform proposal

Following a series of [consultations, communication and green papers](#), the European Commission concluded that the EU's copyright legislative framework must be modernised. In the 2014 [public consultation](#) on the review of EU copyright rules, stakeholders raised several concerns related, inter alia, to cross-border accessibility of online content services including geo-blocking, discrepancies in defining the exceptions and limitations to copyright protection (e.g. for research and education purposes), and challenges in enforcing copyright and allowing appropriate remuneration for authors in a digital environment. On this basis, the Commission has identified a number of [actions](#) in the field of copyright, as part of its strategy to achieve a fully functioning [Digital Single Market](#), in particular the modernisation of EU copyright law.

### The Reda report

On 16 June 2015 the JURI Committee adopted its [report](#) on copyright reform, after consulting the Internal Market and Consumer Protection ([IMCO](#)) and Industry, Research and Energy ([ITRE](#)) Committees. The report [calls](#) upon the Commission to present an ambitious proposal for reform. The report gathered broad support following protracted negotiations to find compromise on a number of disputed issues. The main controversies included the question whether the principle of [territoriality of copyrights](#) (i.e. they are acquired and enforced on a country-by-country basis) should be amended. Another controversy was the extent to which the rules governing [exceptions and limitations](#) to copyright protection should be extended to the online environment and further harmonised. The text of the report invites, inter alia, the Commission to study the impact of the introduction of a single [European Copyright Title](#), to strengthen some exceptions to copyright protection (especially for institutions of public interest such as libraries and for research and education purpose) and to examine carefully the possibility of making certain exceptions [mandatory](#). The report also urges the Commission to propose ways to improve the cross-border accessibility of services and copyrighted content for consumers and in the interest of cultural diversity.