

# EU copyright reform must balance rightholders' and users' interests, say MEPs

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**Forthcoming proposals to reform EU copyright law for the digital era and EU digital single market must protect Europe's cultural diversity and citizens' access to it, whilst striking a fair balance between the rights and interests of rightholders and users, say Legal Affairs Committee MEPs in a non-legislative resolution voted on Tuesday.**

"In this report, Parliament recognises that copyright reform is necessary not just to improve the digital single market, but also to promote access to knowledge and information for everyone in Europe. We call on the Commission to consider a wide variety of measures to bring copyright law up to speed with changing realities and improve cross-border access to our cultural diversity", rapporteur Julia Reda (Greens/EFA, DE) said after the vote.

"This report marks a turning point. After decades of introducing new restrictions to protect the material interests of rightholders, this is the strongest demand yet to restore balance in copyright rules and reduce the legal uncertainty that Europeans face when accessing copyrighted works today", she added.

The committee's non-legislative report, assessing the effects of the key piece of EU copyright law, was approved by 23 votes to 2.

## Tackling geo-blocking

User access to certain content services is too often denied on geographical grounds, say MEPs, who therefore urge the Commission to propose ways to improve the cross-border accessibility of services and copyrighted content. Geoblocking should not prevent EU member states' cultural minorities from accessing content or services in their own language, they stress.

However, MEPs also stress the importance of territorial licences, particularly for financing audiovisual and film production. Copyright law reform needs to retain territoriality, so as to enable "each member state to safeguard the fair remuneration principle", they say. Also, even though copyright inherently implies territoriality, there is no contradiction between territoriality and content portability, the text points out.

MEPs call on the Commission to ensure that any initiative to modernise copyright is preceded by a study of its likely impact on the production, financing and distribution of films and television content, and also on cultural diversity.

## A single copyright regime?

When looking at ideas for further harmonising national copyright laws, the Commission should assess the likely impact of a "single European copyright title" on jobs and innovation, the interests of authors and rightholders, and the promotion of consumers' access to cultural diversity, say MEPs.

## Fair and appropriate remuneration for all rightholders

# Press release

MEPs acknowledge that creative work needs legal protection and “fair and appropriate remuneration for all categories of rightholders”. They also call for improvements to the contractual position of authors and performers in relation to other rightholders and intermediaries.

## Exceptions and limitations

The Commission should assess whether to include exceptions allowing libraries to lend works in digital formats, such as e-books and scientists to mine text and data, MEPs say.

Member states’ differing choices of which optional exceptions to enforce may “challenge” the operation of the single market and lead to legal uncertainty, note MEPs. Common rules could therefore be needed for some exceptions and limitations, but differences may also be justified, to allow member states to legislate for their specific cultural and economic interests, they add.

MEPs stress that copyright exceptions and limitations are needed for persons with disabilities and encourage member states to ratify the EU’s signature of the Marrakesh Treaty, which aims to facilitate access for the blind and visually impaired to books.

## Freedom of panorama

On the “freedom of panorama” principle, such as the right to create and share images and photographs of public buildings, the text cautions that the commercial use of such reproductions should require authorization from the rightholder.

## Next steps

The text approved by the Legal Affairs Committee still needs to be endorsed by Parliament as a whole. A plenary vote is scheduled for 9 July (tbc).

A proposal to modernise EU copyright law is to be presented by the European Commission by the end of 2015.

## Further information

- Press conference (16.06.15 at 13:30): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/video?event=20150616-1330-SPECIAL-UNKN>
- Procedure file: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2014/2256\(INI\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2014/2256(INI)&l=en)
- Julia Reda (Greens/EFA, DE): [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/124816/JULIA\\_REDA\\_home.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/124816/JULIA_REDA_home.html)
- Committee on Legal Affairs: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/juri/home.html>
- EP research: Digital Single Market and geo-blocking: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/557002/EPRS\\_ATA\(2015\)557002\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/557002/EPRS_ATA(2015)557002_EN.pdf)
- Commission priority: Digital Single Market: <http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/digital-single-market/>
- Video: Copyright in the age of the internet: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=97a32df5-0d5f-435b-b573-a49f00a8f175>
- Vote on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society:- extracts from the vote and statement by Julia REDA (Greens/EFA,DE): <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?ref=1104582>
- Videoclip: Music licensing : <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=ad140ba1-1558-4931-967e-a26100ce8da2>
- Videoclip: The European Film Industry: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=b05f3dd8-4a6e-44ed-bc8a-a26600e3fcb4>
- Videoclip: Intellectual property rights: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=56707ed6-e27d-4932-b49e-a1f500cab58b>

# Press release

## Contact

**Niina SALORANTA**

BXL: (+32) 2 28 31834

PORT: (+32) 473 84 03 65

EMAIL: [lega-press@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:lega-press@europarl.europa.eu)

TWITTER: EP\_Legal