Question for written answer P-014430/2013 to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Public consultation on copyright reform

In early December the Commission launched a public consultation on the key issue of copyright reform via the DG MARKT website. The Commission had announced back in December 2012, in its communication on ‘Content in the Digital Single Market’, that it would decide whether to table legislative reform proposals in 2014.

1. Why has the Commission waited a full year to launch a public consultation?

Copyright reform is a very emotive subject since it covers issues such as the rights of Internet users, the protection of creators’ rights, the digitisation of works, permitted usage, broad access to cultural heritage and many other points which are the subject of much debate not just in the United Kingdom but throughout the European Union. A movement was launched in Poland almost two years ago in protest at the signature and ratification by Poland and the EU of ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement), mainly due to concerns about copyright issues and the rights of Internet users. The movement has organised a large number of demonstrations both in Poland and elsewhere, testifying to the level of interest in such issues. I should therefore like to ask the Commission:

2. Why are the documents for a consultation of such key importance available only in English, thus limiting the number of citizens and stakeholders able to comment on the issue?

The Commission has also blatantly failed to comply with Parliament’s resolution of 14 June 2012, in which Parliament asked the Commission to ‘ensure that all consultations are understandable to ordinary citizens and are carried out over a sufficiently long period of time to allow for increased participation.’ The Commission has set a deadline of only two months (which includes the Christmas period) to respond to as many as 80 complicated questions. I should therefore like to ask the Commission the following questions:

3. What concrete steps will the Commission take to ensure that future consultations are carried out in such a way as to involve civil society in lawmaking?

4. Will the Commission extend the copyright reform consultation period until at least 5 April 2014 and translate the questionnaire into all of the EU’s languages in order to allow more citizens and organisations to take part in it?