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## European Parliament approves new copyright rules for the internet

- Internet platforms are liable for content that users upload
- Some uploaded material, such as memes or GIFs, now specifically excluded from directive
- Hyperlinks to news articles, accompanied by “individual words or very short extracts”, can be shared freely
- Journalists must get a share of any copyright-related revenue obtained by their news publisher
- Start-up platforms subject to lighter obligations



MEPs adopt copyright rules for the internet © AP Images/European Union-EP

### **Creatives and news publishers will be empowered to negotiate with internet giants thanks to new copyright rules which also contain safeguards on freedom of expression.**

MEPs adopted the directive in plenary by 348 votes in favour, 274 against and 36 abstentions. This marks the end of the legislative process for the European Parliament that began in 2016. It will now be down to member states to approve Parliament's decision in the coming weeks. If the member states accept the text adopted by the European Parliament, it will take effect after publication in the official journal and then member states will have 2 years to implement it.

The directive aims to ensure that the longstanding rights and obligations of copyright law also apply to the internet. YouTube, Facebook and Google News are some of the internet household names that will be most directly affected by this legislation.

The directive also strives to ensure that the internet remains a space for freedom of expression.

A press conference with the rapporteur Axel Voss and MEPs Helga Trupel and Sajjad Karim will be held at 15.00 and can be viewed [here](#).

### **Tech giants to share revenue with artists and journalists**

The directive aims to enhance rights holders' chances, notably musicians, performers and script authors, (creatives) as well as news publishers, to negotiate better remuneration deals for the use of their works when these feature on internet platforms. It does this by making internet platforms directly liable for content uploaded to their site and by automatically giving the right to news publishers to negotiate deals on behalf of its journalists for news stories used by news aggregators.

### **Locking in freedom of expression**

Numerous provisions are specifically designed to ensure the internet remains a space for freedom of expression.

As sharing snippets of news articles is specifically excluded from the scope of the directive, it can continue exactly as before. However, the directive also contains provisions to avoid news aggregators abusing this. The 'snippet' can therefore continue to appear in a Google News newsfeeds, for example, or when an article is shared on Facebook, provided it is "very short".

Uploading protected works for quotation, criticism, review, caricature, parody or pastiche has been protected even more than it was before, ensuring that memes and Gifs will continue to be available and shareable on online platforms.

### **Many online platforms will not be affected**

The text also specifies that uploading works to online encyclopedias in a non-commercial way, such as Wikipedia, or open source software platforms, such as GitHub, will automatically be excluded from the scope of this directive. Start-up platforms will be subject to lighter obligations than more established ones.

### **Stronger negotiating rights for authors and performers**

Authors and performers will be able to claim additional remuneration from the distributor exploiting their rights when the remuneration originally agreed is disproportionately low when compared to the benefits derived by the distributor.

### **Helping cutting edge research and preserving heritage**

The directive aims to make it easier for copyrighted material to be used freely through text and data mining, thereby removing a significant competitive disadvantage that European researchers currently face. It also stipulates that copyright restrictions will not apply to content used for teaching or illustration.

Finally, the directive also allows copyrighted material to be used free-of-charge to preserve cultural heritage. Out-of-commerce works can be used where no collective management organisation exists that can issue a license.

### How this directive changes the status quo

Currently, internet companies have little incentive to sign fair licensing agreements with rights holders, because they are not considered liable for the content that their users upload. They are only obliged to remove infringing content when a rights holder asks them to do so. However, this is cumbersome for rights holders and does not guarantee them a fair revenue. Making internet companies liable will enhance rights holders' chances (notably musicians, performers and script authors, as well as news publishers and journalists) to secure fair licensing agreements, thereby obtaining fairer remuneration for the use of their works exploited digitally.

### Quote from the rapporteur, Axel Voss (EPP, DE)

"This directive is an important step towards correcting a situation which has allowed a few companies to earn huge sums of money without properly remunerating the thousands of creatives and journalists whose work they depend on.

At the same time, the adopted text contains numerous provisions that will guarantee that the internet remains a space for free expression. These provisions were not in themselves necessary, because the directive will not be creating any new rights for rights holders. Yet we listened to the concerns raised and chose to doubly guarantee the freedom of expression. The 'meme', the 'gif', the 'snippet' are now protected more than ever before.

I am also glad that the text agreed today shelters start-ups in particular. Tomorrow's leading companies are the start-ups of today and diversity depends on a deep pool of innovative, dynamic, young companies.

This is a directive which protects people's living, safeguards democracy by defending a diverse media landscape, entrenches freedom of expression, and encourages start-ups and technological development. It helps make the internet ready for the future, a space which benefits everyone, not only a powerful few."

[Opening statements](#) by Axel VOSS (EPP,DE), rapporteur, Nicola DANTI (S&D, IT) for IMCO committee and Mariya GABRIEL, Commissioner in charge of Digital Economy and Society

[MEPs debate](#) Part 1 and [MEPs debate](#) Part 2

[Closing statements](#) by Andrus ANSIP, Vice-President of the EC in charge of Digital Single Market and by Axel VOSS (EPP, DE), rapporteur

## Further information

[Q and A on issues about the copyright directive for the digital single market](#)  
[Video recording of the debate \(26.03.2019\)](#)

[Adopted text \(26.03.2019\)](#)  
[Profile of the rapporteur, Axel Voss \(EPP, DE\)](#)  
[Procedure file](#)

[Repository of information products by the European Parliament on the copyright directive](#)  
[European Commission Questions & Answers](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: Free photos, video and audio material](#)


[Press conference after the agreement negotiated in trilogue](#)


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