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Press release | 16.06.2015

Copyright reform

Legal Affairs committee demands ambitious reform

The European Parliament's Legal Affairs committee today voted by a broad majority on a report reviewing the EU's current copyright framework. The report is authored by Pirate Party MEP and vice-president of the Greens/EFA group **Julia Reda**. The vote follows intense debate, multiple delays and the consideration of over 550 amendments. Commenting after the vote **Julia Reda** said:

"This report recognises that copyright reform is necessary not just to improve the Digital Single Market but also to promote all EU citizens' access to knowledge and information in the EU. The report calls on the European 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.

This report marks a turning point: After decades in which the focus was on introducing new restrictions to protect the material interests of rightholders, this is the strongest demand yet to reconsider the rights of the public – of users, cultural heritage institutions and scientists and of authors who build on existing material. It is an effort to reduce the legal uncertainty Europeans face in their everyday online interactions with copyrighted works.

Currently, copyright exceptions, whose purpose is to safeguard important rights such as quotation, parody or research and education, are entirely optional for the Member states. Instead, the report proposes minimum standards to protect users and creators across Europe and a review of the exceptions to ensure they are adapted to the digital environment. The report takes a strong stance against their restriction by technical or contractual means.

The report also calls for the protection of the public domain and for making it easier for libraries to lend e-books and digitise their collections, as well as for scientists to conduct text and data mining. A further demand is increased protection of authors in contract negotiations."

Greens also welcome the committee's rejection of the introduction of EU ancillary copyrights for press publishers. **Julia Reda** comments:

"It is encouraging that the committee wants to avoid making the mistakes of the German and Spanish ancillary copyright laws (news snippets) that have had a devastating effect on the freedom to link.

However, reaching a broad compromise came at a cost. An adopted amendment stating that commercial use of recordings of works in public spaces should require express permission from the rightsholders could threaten the work of documentary filmmakers and the legality of commercial photo-sharing platforms.

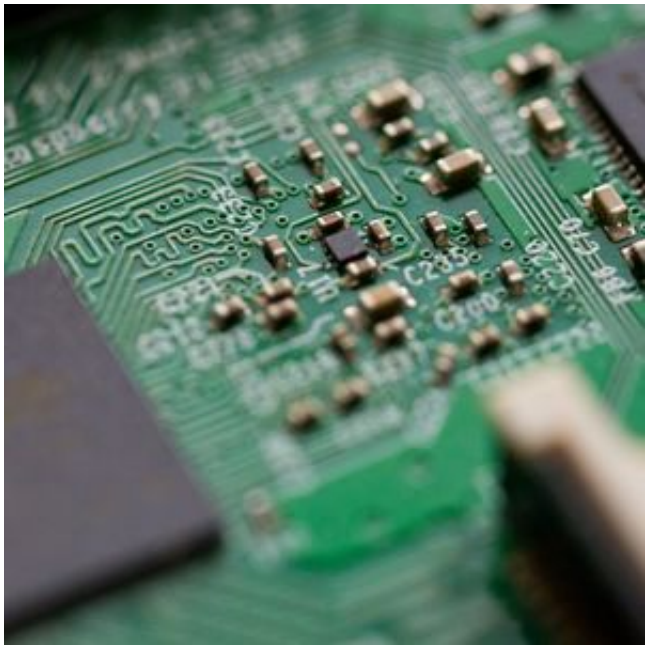
Furthermore, it is disappointing that no Parliamentary majority could be found for several proposals that were demanded by the majority of respondents to the Commission's public consultation on copyright last year: A flexible open norm for example would have allowed the legislation to adapt to future developments and making all exceptions mandatory across the EU would have ensured that people's rights can't end at national borders. It is deeply unfortunate that the big political groups have turned their backs on the results of the most successful citizen participation action on copyright issues ever."

The plenary will vote on the report on July 9th. Commissioner Oettinger is expected to present a legislative proposal on copyright reform by the end of the year.

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Felix Reda

Vice-President

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