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EU copyright reform needs more work

Press release from EFA MEPs Ian Hudghton & Alyn Smith (Scotland)

The European parliament today, by 438 votes to 226 against with 39 abstentions, voted to approve the negotiating mandate for the next stage of complex negotiations over the reform of Copyright in the digital Single Market. MEPs **Ian Hudghton** and **Alyn Smith**, supported a workable compromise between the most contentious elements of the Directive, in particular Articles 11 and 13, and the right of copyright holders to receive fair remuneration for their work when published online.

On Articles 11 and 13 they supported amendments to the proposals on the basis that however well-intentioned the proposals to close the so-called 'value gap' for artistic producers are, in reality they will not protect the entirety of the industry and overlook the rights of consumers to upload and share their own personal creations.

The most controversial provision is Article 13 which will force platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to automatically filter all uploaded content. These filters could prevent consumers from uploading legitimate content that contains copyrighted material, for instance homemade videos that includes music.

However, the attempt to improve the text was unsuccessful and the majority of MEPs approved the package, which now moves on to detailed line by line negotiation with the Member States.

MEPs **Ian Hudghton** and **Alyn Smith** said:

"Throughout the negotiation process, we have fought to get the right legislative balance for creators to get their fair share of remuneration, and for public digital users. However the current text of the Directive includes some provisions that have far reaching consequences for digital users, for example due to the potential imposition of content filters. We remain concerned that unless changed these proposals could create an entirely new surveillance system that will impinge on the privacy and commercial rights of individual European citizens.

"There is the undeniable right for creators to be properly compensated for their work, and we have always supported that right. On the other hand we must also seek to protect the public who have the right to freedom of expression. To date, we do not have the necessary legal framework that balances these two principles.

"There is also a distinct risk that without further refinement, the proposed text of the Directive would close

down many digital platforms to new and emerging artists who have not yet licensed their work professionally. Additionally, many academics and experts have been voicing concern over the potential negative impacts of Article 13.

"It is important to remember that today's vote on the copyright directive was not a vote for or against copyright reform, but rather about the best means to achieve a balance between the interests involved. On balance we could not support the proposals today, but we will continue to pay close attention to this dossier as it progresses to its next stage."

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