**EU Copyright Directive**

**Write to your MEPs**

The vote on the proposed Copyright Directive that took place in the European Parliament on
5 July was extremely tight, with 51% of MEPs voting against sending Parliament’s draft text on to ‘trilogue’ negotiations (with the Council and Commission) at that time.

After further debate, the MEPs will vote again on **12 September** but there is fierce opposition to the directive from activists, backed by internet giants who stand to lose from sharing their revenues with creators. Misconceptions and misinformation have been widespread, causing fear and confusion, and we expect more on and after a day of action by the #SaveYourInternet campaign on 26 August. We believe the best way to ensure the EU’s pre-digital copyright laws are updated is to engage directly with MEPs and set the record straight.

The voting figures of UK MEPs on 5 July closely matched those of EU MEPs as a whole, with 51% wanting the directive to receive further debate, while 47% gave it their backing. It is therefore essential to be in touch with MEPs either to thank them for their support and ask them to encourage their colleagues to do likewise on 12 September. For those MEPs who didn’t vote or wanted another look at the proposals, we must put the case strongly for the directive. With elections for a new Parliament around the corner in 2019, we believe this is the last chance to update laws for the digital age and bring much-needed fairness and balance to the online marketplace.

We have drafted suggested letters below (one for those MEPs for voted in favour and one for those who voted against or weren’t present in Parliament). Please encourage your members to contact their own MEPs and to adapt the letters, if possible making it relevant to their own experiences, eg where work has been posted online without permission or the disparity between the wealth platforms that host copyright content and their own ability to make a living from such works. MEPs have been flooded with emails from the campaign against the directive, most of them apparently automated, so the more personalised the approach, the better.

A list of UK MEPs and how they voted, organised by region, with email addresses is provided.

**Draft template letter to MEPs who voted in favour**

[If you can, please customise your letter to include your own experience, eg of works being used without consent, the economic pressures of working as a creator today etc. Personal accounts are always most powerful and contrast with automated emails being sent by coordinated campaigns against the directive.]

Dear [insert name of MEP]

I am writing as [insert trade/profession/craft] to thank you for supporting the proposed Copyright Directive on 5 July and trust that you will give this important legislation your renewed backing when it returns to Parliament on 12 September.

As you know, EU copyright laws were last made before online services such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter existed and are in urgent need of updating to enable a fair and sustainable future for creativity in the digital era.

However, we have seen an intense campaign against aspects of the directive that would ensure the content on which digital platforms thrive is properly respected and valued, just as it is offline. I am really concerned that these campaigns are supported by large tech companies, whose economic interests are now dwarfing the interests of creative rights owners, whom the directive’s proposals were intended to protect in the interests of long-term investment in cultural developments and diversity across the EU.

A careful reading of the text clearly shows the purported fears of some internet users and multinational corporations are misconceived, and that the interests of individuals are expressly balanced against those who own the rights to creative works.

It is untrue, for example, to suggest the draft directive will lead to censorship; it introduces no new restrictions or responsibilities on internet users, seeking only to make commercial content-sharing companies accountable for the use of copyright works on their platforms. Where those companies buy licences to use copyright works, individuals can upload content just as before. Likewise, users will remain free to share links to articles (hyperlinking being explicitly excluded from the draft) and to engage in parody (which is already covered by a copyright exception).

Support for the creative sector matters for people [like me] whose livelihoods depend upon it but also for the wider UK economy, to which the creative industries now contribute around £92bn a year. As we head towards Brexit, we cannot afford to risk a sector so central to prosperity at home and to our influence abroad.

Thank you once again for your support. I hope you may also be able to encourage colleagues in your party and across the EU to join in backing the draft directive on 12 September, so that we do not miss this vital opportunity to promote expression, innovation, fairness and success in the digital age.

Yours etc

**Draft template letter to MEPs who voted against or did not vote**

[If you can, please customise your letter to include your own experience, eg of works being used without consent, the economic pressures of working as a creator today etc. Personal accounts are always most powerful and contrast with automated emails being sent by coordinated campaigns against the directive.]

Dear [insert name of MEP]

I am writing as [insert trade/profession/craft] to urge you to support the Copyright Directive when it returns to Parliament on 12 September.

As you will be aware, EU copyright laws were last made before online services such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter existed and are in urgent need of updating to enable a fair and sustainable future for creativity in the digital era.

However, we have seen an intense campaign against aspects of the directive that would ensure the content on which digital platforms thrive is properly respected and valued, just as it is offline. I am really concerned that these campaigns are supported by large tech companies, whose economic interests are now dwarfing the interests of creative rights owners, whom the directive’s proposals were intended to protect in the interests of long-term investment in cultural developments and diversity across the EU.

A careful reading of the text shows the purported fears of some internet users and multinational corporations are simply misconceived, and that the interests of individuals are expressly balanced against those who own the rights to creative works.

It is untrue, for example, to suggest the draft directive will lead to censorship; it introduces no new restrictions or responsibilities on internet users, seeking only to make commercial content-sharing companies accountable for the use of copyright works on their platforms. Where those companies buy licences to use copyright works, individuals can upload content just as before. Likewise, users will remain free to share links to articles (hyperlinking being explicitly excluded from the draft) and to engage in parody (which is already covered by a copyright exception).

Support for the creative sector matters for people [like me] whose livelihoods depend upon it but also for the wider UK economy, to which the creative industries now contribute around £92bn a year. As we head towards Brexit, we cannot afford to risk a sector so central to prosperity at home and to our influence abroad.

I hope you will not let pass this vital opportunity to promote expression, innovation, fairness and success in the digital age and that following further debate you will support the Copyright Directive on 12 September.

Yours etc

[insert name]