



## GUE/NGL members on the Culture & Education Committee (CULT) of the European Parliament



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- Mutualised schemes for the funding of and reward for creative activities must be encouraged;
- Alternative licences such as Creative Commons give authors and users more freedom and must be encouraged;
- Specific exceptions such as for people with disabilities, for public institutions and for educational purposes must be supported;
- The terms of protection for creative works (up to 70 years after a creator's death) need to be reduced. The aim of a protection period is not a guarantee for additional income for distributors but to secure an effective remuneration for creators.

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# Copyright in the digital age

## Towards the right balance between creators and users



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Issues of copyright affect nearly every citizen, business or institution today. The development of new technologies and the wide use of social media blur the lines between creators and users. If we want to resolve the crisis in the legitimacy of copyright, we have to ask the crucial question: who should profit from copyright and in which way?

The GUE/NGL Group supports a copyright strategy that enables creators to live from their work while ensuring the user's right to access creative content. The issue of copyright cannot be answered unless it is viewed as an alliance of creator's and user's rights which supports freedom of access and use and, at the same time, values creative work.

### Need for change in copyright laws

Digitisation is changing the way we perceive production and distribution of works. Works available online can be reproduced and distributed with no loss of quality, and a whole variety of creative works are available with two clicks on the internet. The days when a few players managed access to, and choice of, music and other creative content will soon be gone and intermediaries will have to play a different role.



### Strengthening the position of creators

To date, much of the profit goes to those who make use of a work such as the entertainment industry and its intermediaries that exploit creators and their work, or a small number of film makers, singers or writers. Without denying them the value of their work, their position at the centre of current copyright law is too powerful, when the great majority of creators receive very low compensation for their work and many often have to take on a second job to earn a living. Structurally weaker creators must be placed in a better position vis-à-vis the industry when concluding contracts in order to ensure fair compensation for creative content and truly respect the creators and their work.

### Strengthening users' rights

Users must be given a central role in modern copyright law. They are the customers and creators in turn, creating new works from existing ones by remixes and mashups. Their right to access available works must be protected, not restricted by severe penalties or negative campaigns. Yet the old copyright law, which centred on analogue creative works, cannot simply be transferred to the digital world. The citizens of Europe share millions of music files via the internet. That should not be viewed as a crime. GUE/NGL strongly opposes unjustifiable criminal sanctions which are negotiated behind closed doors – such as was the case with ACTA (Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement). GUE/NGL does not support those who claim to be fighting for artists' and authors' rights, but instead make a fortune by imposing fines on users.



## GUE/NGL calls for a modern copyright strategy

- To ensure that the authors of creative works can earn a living from their work, an effective copyright contract strategy will have to be introduced Europe-wide. Creators need copyright that can be implemented with their and the users' interests at heart, not the interests of the entertainment industry and their intermediaries;
- To encourage an open dialogue between decision makers, the entertainment industries, the creators and users in order to exchange ideas on new business models so as to make creative content available for an acceptable price for both consumers and creators;
- Greater transparency in the internal management of the collecting societies, in particular where it concerns remuneration policies, must be ensured;
- It is the users who use, pay for and process creative works. We need to make sure that their fundamental rights such as data protection or access to internet are respected;
- Blocking internet access on the grounds of alleged infringements of copyright is just as much a breach of freedom of communication as policing the internet through internet service providers;
- File sharing on a private level must not be criminalised;
- In cases of IPR infringements, all investigations or sanctions must be carried and imposed only by the legal system without any private sector involvement;
- Open-access models in science are the future of knowledge dissemination and must be supported;

