

Copyright

The European Commission is adapting EU copyright rules to new consumer behaviours in a Europe which values its cultural diversity.



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Digital technologies have radically changed the way creative content is produced, distributed and accessed. Copyright ensures that authors, composers, artists, film makers and other creators receive recognition, payment and protection for their works. It rewards creativity and stimulates investment in the creative sector. Thirty-three sectors of the EU economy are considered copyright-intensive, accounting directly for over 7 million jobs, or 3% of employment in the EU.

What are copyright and related rights?

These are rights granted to authors (copyright or authors' rights) and performers, producers and broadcasters (related rights). They include:

- Economic rights that enable rightholders to control the use of their works and other protected material and be remunerated for their use. They normally take the form of exclusive rights, notably to authorise or prohibit the making and distribution of copies as well as communication to the public. Economic rights and their terms of protection are harmonised at EU level.
- Moral rights include the right to claim authorship of the work and the right to object to any derogatory action in relation to the work. They are not harmonised at EU level.

Licensing is the main mechanism for the exercise of copyright and related rights. Depending on the relevant right, the type of use and the sector, licences are most often granted directly by the rightholder or collective management organisations. The EU has recently adopted legislation to improve the functioning of collective management organisations including through facilitating the provision of multi-territorial licences.

Exceptions to these rights

Copyright systems balance the recognition of exclusive rights in order to facilitate the use of protected content in specific circumstances. The EU copyright rules set out an exhaustive list of exceptions to rights across various copyright directives.

Exceptions allow beneficiaries to use protected material without authorisation from the rightholders. Enforcement of procedures and remedies against infringements of copyright have been partly harmonised at EU level.

The EU's role

EU actions have led to more harmonised protection of rightholders, lower transaction costs and greater choice for users of content, notably through:

- a European regulatory framework for copyright and related rights;
- the promotion of inclusive and dynamic stakeholders dialogues on copyright and related issues, to seek views, concrete experience and contributions from all interested parties;
- a leading role in international negotiations and discussions on copyright and related issues.

Steps have already been taken to facilitate the digitisation and dissemination of cultural heritage in the Orphan Works Directive. The management and licensing of rights are covered in the Collective Rights Management Directive and Licenses for Europe stakeholder dialogue.

Two international treaties in the area of Copyright, the 2012 Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances and the 2013 Marrakesh Treaty on visually impaired persons have been adopted in the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

Latest

PRESS RELEASE | 26 July 2021

Copyright: Commission calls on Member States to comply with EU rules on copyright in the Digital Single Market

The Commission has requested Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Poland,

Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia and Slovakia to communicate information about how the rules included in the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market (Directive 2019/790/EU) are being enacted into their national law.

PRESS RELEASE | 04 June 2021

New EU copyright rules that will benefit creators, businesses and consumers start to apply

This Monday 7 June marks the deadline for Member States to transpose the new EU copyright rules into national law. The new Copyright Directive protects creativity in the digital age, bringing concrete benefits to citizens, the creative sectors, the press, researchers, educators and cultural heritage institutions across the EU. At the same time, the new Directive on television and radio programmes will make it easier for European broadcasters to make certain programmes on their online services available across borders. Furthermore, today, the Commission has published its guidance on Article 17

PRESS RELEASE | 14 October 2019

Copyright: dialogue between platforms and rights holders starts on 15 October

The first meeting of the stakeholder dialogue on the application of Article 17 of the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market on the use of protected content by online content-sharing service providers will take place on 15 October in Brussels. The stakeholders will discuss best practices on how content-sharing platforms and service providers should cooperate with rights holders.

PRESS RELEASE | 28 August 2019

Copyright: Commission launches dialogue between platforms and rights holders

The European Commission opened today a call for expression of interest to participate in the stakeholder dialogue on the application of Article 17 of the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market on the use of protected content by

online content-sharing service providers. The stakeholders will discuss best practices on how content-sharing platforms and service providers should cooperate with rights holders. This dialogue is requested under the new directive and will feed into the preparation of guidance on the application of Article 17.

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Big Picture

Media and digital culture

The Commission is defending European media and digital culture with policies that empower citizens and encourage media pluralism.

Dig deeper

The EU copyright legislation

The EU copyright law consists of 11 directives and 2 regulations, harmonising the essential rights of authors, performers, producers and broadcasters.

Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty in EU law

The Marrakesh Treaty allows people with print disabilities to access more books and other print material in formats that are accessible to them.

Protection of databases

Databases in the European Union are protected under EU Law. The Directive on the legal protection of databases was adopted in 1996 and was evaluated in 2018.

See Also

Audiovisual and Media Services

These days we can watch our favourite programmes not just on TV, but also online. These shows are subject to the rules of the single market.

Digital cultural heritage

Cultural heritage has a new breath of life thanks to digital technologies and the internet. Citizens now have opportunities to access cultural material online.

Media freedom and pluralism

The European Union upholds media freedom and pluralism as pillars of modern democracy and enablers of free and open debate.

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