

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

In the coming weeks, the European Parliament will vote on the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market. We would like to draw your attention to a topic that is crucial for all newspapers and magazines, small mid-size and big, but especially local and regional titles across the European Union: the proposed neighbouring right for press publishers, introduced in Article 11 of the Commission's proposal, as there have been misleading claims that the right would be harmful for smaller publishers.

With great concern, we see how our content is being used by large platforms such as search engines and news aggregators for their own business without any remuneration. These companies benefit from the attractive contents and products of newspapers and magazines and thus also achieve higher and higher profits at our expense. This represents an existential threat to the press sector.

The protection of content in the digital age is simply a necessity, especially for the future of the local and regional press which has currently no chance to fairly negotiate with internet giants. It is urgent to strengthen publishers' legal position against systematic and massive exploitation, so that we can at last defend ourselves against the misuse of our content just as the music and film industries have been doing for a long time, as they have been benefiting from a legal recognition at EU level. This legal protection is absolutely necessary for the development of economically sustainable business models in the digital environment. Currently, small press publishers cannot negotiate with internet giants. The Publishers' Right will help redress this unfair situation. Publishers could become more involved in how their content is being used in the digital world and could benefit from a share of the value derived from their investments in the future.

The EU is currently discussing the question of how to deal with "fake news" and populist currents. In our view, the production of reliable and professional journalism is the best tool to address misinformation on the internet. Regional and local press play a central democratic role in Europe. In an internet of opinions and claims, independent digital press offers for which publishers are legally liable are more important than ever to defend democratic values. The legal recognition of press publishers is an important contribution to the financial sustainability of professional journalism.

We therefore welcome the support of a Publisher's Right by the rapporteur MEP Voss in the leading committee on Legal Affairs. He has presented a proposal that would guarantee press

publishers an exclusive right as part of the current EU copyright reform, which affords the investment in quality journalism the much-overdue protection it deserves.

Should it remain possible for third parties to use press contents for their own business without any form of remuneration, the digital press and, with it, the future of the press as a whole will be jeopardized.

This is why we need your support in the current debate surrounding the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market, which is now entering a crucial phase. We hope we can count on you and your vote which is key for the future of local and regional journalism.

Yours sincerely,

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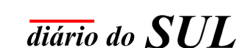
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