



The European Consumers' Organisation

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EU IPR Strategy “behind the times”: BEUC leads calls for balanced copyright laws

The European Commission is expected to publish on Tuesday May 24 its EU Strategy on the future of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). In advance, BEUC has published its own ‘IPR Strategy’ which offers the perspective of European consumers, identifies failings with the current status quo and proposes how to establish a copyright framework which benefits both creators and consumers.

To achieve this benefit, the EU must in the upcoming strategy, focus on opening up access to online content, information and knowledge across Europe rather than simply cracking down ever harder on perceived breaches.

Copyright provisions in the EU will remain woefully out-dated without, among others:

- The development of attractive online services for all types of content (music, audio-visual, e-books etc.) where consumers can legally buy the content of their choice irrespective of national borders. Currently, due to copyright obstacles, some online music websites are unavailable in many EU Member States e.g. Spotify is only available in 7 countries;
- Simpler rights clearance and multi-territory licensing facilitating the online distribution of content and increasing consumers’ access and choice;
- Reform of the exorbitant system of copyright levies to reflect actual consumer use;
- Adoption of strict rules on transparency, accountability and the supervision of collecting societies;
- Fair, proportionate enforcement measures which comply with consumers’ fundamental rights and clearly distinguish between individual users and organised criminal activities for profit.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumers’ Organisation commented:

“This is one of the EU’s pillars for the Digital Single Market. Europeans are in dire need of an up-to-date, balanced and future-proof copyright framework. Currently it’s an antique law, applied to some of the most modern services. IPR laws should enable consumer access to online content, protect the artist’s work and promote innovation in Europe. Many of our copyright laws don’t achieve these aims and are hopelessly outdated for the Digital Age. So there’s a lot of pressure on this Strategy to deliver.

“As for how we enforce it, chasing individuals makes good headlines, but misses the point by a mile. Copyright in general needs to be a shield, not the sword right holders often make it into.”

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[CLICK HERE](#) for BEUC's IPR Strategy. Further info & comment via details above.

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