

# Europe's publishers want ad freedom... and more

Europe's publishers call for advertising freedom and 21st century copyright for the digital age.



The European Publishers Council, representing the main publishers in Europe, took part in a major conference in Madrid on 4th June organised by the Spanish government as part of their programme for the rotating presidency of the European Union. Convening at the Cervantes Institute in Madrid on 4th June, and opened by the President of Spain José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, a group of invited experts representing media companies, journalists, consumers and academia focused on the challenges brought by the internet and the future for professional journalism in Europe.

EPC's executive director Angela Mills Wade said "The Spanish Government has taken a crucial and welcome first step towards tackling online piracy and towards strengthening the future of the media and professional journalism in Europe. Europe's publishers call on the EU to continue to protect copyright and to secure fair and transparent ways to ensure the future funding of independent media in a competitive marketplace."

The EPC is also calling for new forms of licensing models fit for the 21st century media, an end to the over-regulation of advertising content and greater transparency in the online advertising sector.

With Commissioner Barnier poised to publish a new document on EU copyright, and the new Digital Europe Strategy newly published, the EPC has been working to highlight that copyright underpins the creative economy. The EPC's copyright vision was recently presented to Barnier, the key elements being:

- Fair Competition: Recognise and promote investment by Europe's publishers.
- Fight Piracy: combat all forms of piracy of copyright content and ensure full implementation of the EU Enforcement Directive.
- Freedom of Choice: preserve publishers' freedom to choose licensing solutions to give business users and consumers access to products and services across digital platforms and devices while respecting the principle of authorised use ensuring a fair and competitive marketplace.
- Technical Solutions: recognise that technology is an enabler of rights management, not a replacement for copyright and encourage the development of technological solutions for rights management like ACAP ([www.the-acap.org](http://www.the-acap.org)) that are effective in practice and in law to deal with the simplification of licensing in the digital age.
- Exceptional Solutions: resist the extension of mandatory exceptions to copyright - work with rights-holders to develop projects to digitise collections.
- Adaptive Innovation: apply a test of 'adaptive innovation' to the development of the copyright framework because

copyright has a long-proven track record of economic and cultural success. Avoid the introduction of inappropriate or untested measures which could damage well-established creative businesses.

### **Online offers great potential for publishers**

On advertising, the EPC said the online sector offers great potential for publishers, both for charging fair prices for quality content and also for charging fair rates to advertisers for access to our readers via our content. But in order to meet this potential, the EPC said that a competitive marketplace is essential to ensure fairness of commercial conditions between publishers and new intermediaries and that authorities should gain a clearer understanding of the competition issues on the online advertising sector. The EPC also urged the authorities to follow a light and proportionate touch when it comes to advertising regulation - of content, and of new opportunities to target readers with relevant advertising

The EPC is concerned that the continued use of public money to subsidise public service broadcasters now threatens medial pluralism. With public and commercial competing in the same digital space, the public purse is effectively supporting the demise of the independent media that is struggling to compete with the seemingly bottomless pit of public funding enjoyed by the public service broadcasters.

### **Media must continue working as a bulwark**

Recognising the "revolution which is obliging the media to reinvent itself given the impact information technologies are having on the very substance of media models' Zapatero supported the traditional role of media in democracies saying the media "must continue to serve as an effective bulwark of freely formed, informed and reflective public opinion, in the face of any and all abuses and usurping of power'.

Angela Mills Wade concluded: "We feel encouraged that our messages are getting through - that an independent media can only thrive and indeed survive if the right conditions are there to allow and encourage investment, innovation and the continuing costly production of high-quality, authoritative, diverse content that promotes democracy and diversity in Europe."

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