

# EU's Juncker unveils radical copyright reform

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Pop stars such as Coldplay and Lady Gaga will hail part of the EU copyright plan as a new weapon to bring a fair fight to YouTube, the Google-owned video service that they say is sapping the music business

The EU will overhaul copyright law to shake up how online news and entertainment is paid for in Europe, under proposals announced by European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker Wednesday.

Pop stars such as Coldplay and Lady Gaga will hail part of the plan as a new weapon to bring a fair fight to YouTube, the Google-owned video service that they say is sapping the music business.

But the reform plans have attracted the fury of filmmakers and start-up investors who see it as a threat to European innovation and a wrong-headed favour to powerful media groups.

"I want journalists, publishers and authors to be paid fairly for their work, whether it is made in studios or living rooms, whether it is disseminated offline or online, whether it is published via a copying machine or commercially hyperlinked on the web," Juncker said as he gave his annual State of the Union speech.

The overhaul is meant to bring European [copyright law](#) up to date with the digital age to make the world's largest trading bloc more competitive in a tough global field.

One major change would force internet portals such as Google or Reddit to pay newspaper publishers a licence fee when using small extracts or snippets of news content—most notably on Google News or Huffington Post.

"The commission's plan to create a copyright for news publishers in Europe is a significant and historic step," said Carlo Perrone, head of the European Newspaper Publishers' Association.

But opponents say this idea punishes smaller publishers and is highly ineffective, as proven when both Germany and Spain created similar systems with neither case producing the badly needed life support to starved newspapers.

"How we share and use the news is in danger. (This plan) won't lead to

more income for [news](#) sites, let alone journalists," said MEP Daniel Dalton, a conservative from Britain.

Another divisive proposal is a push to make national broadcasters, such as Sky in the UK or RTL in Germany, provide online content—including films or sports—Europe-wide, instead of just at home.

But film producers warn that national limits are crucial to the financing of European cinema, which survives on the subsidies raised on the success of Hollywood blockbusters.

In another highly criticised change, the commission is asking that video platforms, such as YouTube or even Facebook, use technology that can track violations of copyright and shut them down.

Cracking down on YouTube is a key demand of some the world's biggest music artists who said in a letter to Juncker last June that YouTube was stealing value from streaming services, such as Spotify.

The proposal is sure to attract a furious fight by lobbyists. It must go to the European Parliament and EU states for approval, which could take months or years.

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