

Gallo report: Copyright dogmatism wins a battle, not the war

Press release from La Quadrature du Net

Brussels, June 1st 2010 - **The vote, in JURI committee of the European Parliament on the Gallo report "Enforcement of intellectual property", including the rapporteur's repressive amendments, reflects the asphyxiating influence of corporate lobbies on EU policy-making. The ALDE group, which had stood for fundamental freedoms on several occasions, this time sided with the entertainment industries. This vote should make EU citizens react and convince MEPs about the stakes of our evolving digital societies. Beyond the vote of the Gallo report in plenary session, there are other upcoming legislative battles where the public interest of creativity and access to knowledge can be upheld against an obsolete vision of copyright.**

This time, the ultra-repressive, dogmatic approach of a continued war against the sharing of cultural works over the Internet has prevailed in the JURI committee of the European Parliament.

The ALDE group, which had in recent occasions valued the defense of fundamental freedoms over private interests, has sided with the sarkozyst rapporteur Marielle Gallo. This is a disappointing regression, when the recently elected liberal-democrat deputy Prime-Minister of the UK government just expressed a strong rejection of such policies. The acceptance of this repressive stance, confusing online filesharing with industrial counterfeiting, was adopted after a locked-down vote of amendments crafted to circumvent an open debate on possible alternatives.

Though the Gallo report is a non-legislative text, it shows that the Parliament may be unable to appreciate the need to reform copyright and its enforcement in a direction that serves the development of a creative economy and society. Whether or not the final report is adopted in its present form, citizens will express their views on the upcoming legislative projects and value policy makers who demonstrate their independence and forward thinking.

"The Gallo report shows how powerful the lobbying of a few anachronic industries can be on the European Parliament. Their influence on policy-making runs counter to the general interest and prevents the EP from exploring paths to a new creative economy. It must be offset in the next fights: the upcoming discussion of the ACTA agreement, the discussions on new criminal sanctions with the future revival of the IPRED2 directive¹, etc. Measures designed to enforce obsolete business models at the expense of fundamental freedoms won't bring any good to authors or to their public and must be continuously opposed" concludes Jérémie Zimmermann, spokesperson for citizen initiative La Quadrature du Net.

¹This directive which went up to criminalize "inciting and aiding" IPR infringement was stuck in the Council, and will soon be presented again by EU Commissioner Michel Barnier, encouraged by the Gallo report.