

EU Parliament dances to the tune of major record labels

The European Parliament today voted to extend music copyright from 50 to 70 years, less than the 95 years proposed by the Commission, but still a blow for artists and consumers. MEPs rejected Green amendments, first to reject the directive outright and subsequently to ensure that copyright would return to the artist for the extended period. (1)

UK Green MEP Caroline **Lucas** said:

“I am disappointed that MEPs chose to ignore the voices of the artists they claim to be helping. It is clear that action is needed to better reward performers for their work, but the legislation approved today is absolutely not the solution. The copyright extension to 70 years will fill the pockets of a limited number of powerful corporations and harm performer rights and artistic creativity.

Every independent voice in this debate, including all the academic experts and two independent reports (one paid for by the Commission and the other by the UK Government) agree that the money for the recording industry will come almost entirely out of the pockets of consumers. Consumers and DJs who sample will also be hit by a more restricted choice of music in the public domain.”

Austrian Green MEP and legal affairs committee member Eva **Lichtenberger** , who submitted the key Greens/EFA amendments, commented:

"Parliament's vote will be music to the ears of the big record companies and top-earning artists. If the legislation was truly about helping artists and consumers, MEPs would have agreed to give 100% of its benefits to performers and not just 20% - most of which will be gobbled up by a handful of already super-rich superstar performers.

“In the digital music age, record companies can no longer justify taking a huge cut of royalties, leaving only leftovers for the artists. They are pocketing money that in the past would have been spent much more on physical distribution and promotion. We need copyright rules relevant for the digital age and innovative solutions to ensure that artists and music lovers get the best possible deal, not the middle men.”

Notes to editors:

(1) Vote on Crowley report as a whole: 317 in favour 178 against 37 abstentions. Vote on Greens/EFA amendment to reject the report: 222 in favour, 370 against, 10 abstentions.