

## Copyright law proposal rejected

The European Parliament rejected on Thursday a highly controversial EU copyright law proposal that has pitted Beatles legend Paul McCartney against Internet giants and the creators of Wikipedia.

Lawmakers are now expected to return in September to the plans, which are aimed at ensuring creators of creative content — whether music, movies or news — are paid fairly in a digital world. The draft law was firmly resisted by major U.S. tech giants as well as advocates of Internet freedom, with some campaigners warning it could even spell the end of viral memes or jokes.

“Today’s vote represents a victory for democracy,” said Siada El Ramly, head of EDiMA, a lobby representing Google, Facebook and other U.S. tech giants.

Members of European Parliament meeting in the eastern French city of Strasbourg voted 318 against the measure, 278 in favour, with 31 abstentions.

The vote would have given MEPs the mandate to start negotiations with member states for a finalised law which Austria, holder of the EU’s six-month rotating presidency, would like finished by the end of the year.

“Today’s vote is not a vote against the text itself but a vote to open new discussions in parliament,” said Greens MEP Pascal Durand. “We want a more balanced text that protects copyright, fundamental freedoms and the indispensable freedom of the Net,” he said.

The two most disputed aspects of the reform are an effort to boost revenue for hard-up news publishers and a crackdown on the illegal use of copyrighted material on tech platforms such as Google-owned Youtube or Facebook.

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