

Fair work, fair pay, fair rights: shielding professional authors in the EU

The cultural and creative sectors employ 3.8% of the European workforce and account for 4.4% of GDP. Yet, they are characterised by atypical working patterns, irregular incomes, and limited opportunities for social negotiation. This lack of a genuine protected status for creative professionals results in underpaid or unpaid work, bogus self-employment, and coercive buy-out contracts. Authors, in particular, suffer from these injustices at an exacerbated rate, with their contributions often undervalued and their rights regularly undermined. The massive incursion of generative artificial intelligence into the sector poses immense challenges for the protection of copyright, which the authorship business model is based on. Authors are facing an existential material threat going forward.

On November 21, 2023, the Members of the European Parliament adopted a Resolution containing recommendations to the Commission on a EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors, particularly underscoring our support for authors, who amongst our colleagues often face the most challenging conditions. The European Commission published an answer on February 1st, 2024 strongly affirming its support.

These statements by European institutions raised hope and created expectations among authors which need to be met urgently. We ask for a sped-up implementation of the recommendations contained in the resolution, which will establish a status for artists, enabling:

- Universal, effective, and simplified access to complete social protection ;
- Ensure a minimum standard of remuneration for professional artists-authors, adapted to their fragmented and sometimes multi-status activities ;
- Enshrine the act of creation as a professional activity that must be fairly and adequately remunerated.
- Prohibit abusive contracts ;
- Strengthen trade unions and collective bargaining, with targeted support for artist-author communities ;
- Establish an Observatory of Remuneration for Artist-Authors, which would track the balance between payments for their creative labor and those for the exploitation of their rights, ensuring equity in the financial valuation of their contributions ;
- Regulate artificial intelligence and ring-fence copyrights.

If culture is "part of what defines the unique identity of Europe" and plays a large role in "promoting European values, as a competitive advantage and essential societal" (see call for evidence), authorship is its keystone. Providing a social and economical shield to authors is a required first step to meet the European Commission's Political Guideline.

adaBD - Association des auteur·ices de bande dessinée

ATAA - Association des traducteurs adaptateurs de l'audiovisuel

ATESS - Association pour la traduction en sciences sociales

ATLF - Association des traducteurs littéraires de France

CAAP - Comité pluridisciplinaire des artistes-auteurs et autrices

Charte des auteurs et illustrateurs jeunesse

EGBD - états généraux de la bande dessinée

Ligue des auteurs professionnels

SMC - Syndicat français des compositrices et compositeurs de musique contemporaine

SNAP-CGT Syndicat National des Artistes Plasticien·nes CGT

SNP - Syndicat national des photographes

SNSP - Syndicat National des Sculpteurs et Plasticiens

STAA CNT-SO - Syndicat des Travailleur·euses Artistes-Auteur·ices CNT-SO

UNPI - Union Nationale des Peintres-Illustrateur·e.s