

European Governments Approve Controversial New Copyright Law | Ars Technica

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A controversial overhaul of Europe's copyright laws overcame a key hurdle on Wednesday as a majority of European governments [signaled support for the deal](#). That sets the stage for a pivotal vote by the European Parliament that's expected to occur in March or April.

Supporters of the legislation portray it as a benign overhaul of copyright that will strengthen anti-piracy efforts. Opponents, on the other hand, warn that its most controversial provision, known as Article 13, could force Internet platforms to adopt draconian filtering technologies. The cost to develop filtering technology could be particularly burdensome for smaller companies, critics say.

Online service providers have struggled to balance free speech and piracy for close to two decades. Faced with this difficult tradeoff, the authors of Article 13 have taken a rainbows-and-unicorns approach, promising stricter copyright enforcement, no wrongful takedowns of legitimate content, and minimal burdens on smaller technology platforms.

But it seems unlikely that any law can achieve all of these objectives simultaneously. And digital-rights groups suspect that users will wind up getting burned—both due to wrongful takedowns of legitimate content and because the burdens of mandatory filtering will make it harder to start a new online hosting service.

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