

The political compromise on the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty will give a better access to books for blind and other disabled people

The negotiators of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission have reached tonight a compromise on draft legislation to implement the Marrakesh Treaty in the European Union. The objective of the proposals, made by the Commission as part of the ongoing modernisation of the EU copyright law, is to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, have other visual impairments or are otherwise print disabled. The deal will be now subject to the formal approval by the two EU co-legislators.

Following the political compromise, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** said: *“ I am delighted that EU copyright rules will now be adapted to allow visually impaired and people with reading disabilities to access a wider range of reading material in the EU and in third countries that they can use for their education, work and entertainment. I am particularly pleased that our Digital Single Market strategy creates more social inclusion. And I am also confident that this compromise today will pave the way for a rapid ratification of the Marrakesh treaty by the EU”*.

The adoption of the compromise between the EU institutions comes eight months after the Commission tabled the [legislative proposals](#) in September 2016, as part of the copyright proposals to modernise the EU copyright law and help create a truly functioning Digital Single Market. The deal will allow the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty into EU law by introducing a mandatory, harmonised EU exception to copyright rules which will allow the making and dissemination, including across borders, within the EU and with third countries parties of the Marrakesh Treaty, of special formats of print material for people with print disabilities, such as braille or daisy.

Thanks to these new rules, people who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled within the European Union and from other countries will now be able to access more books and other print material in accessible formats, including adapted audio books and e-books, from across the European Union and the rest of the world.

Background

Tonight's political compromise is another achievement under the [Digital Single Market strategy](#). The [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled](#) was adopted at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 2013. It provides for the cross-border exchange of copies under exceptions and limitations to copyright. It is considered an important instrument to fight the 'book famine'. It is estimated that only one to seven

percent of books are available in accessible format across the world.

The compromised text agreed tonight by the EU negotiators must now be formally confirmed by the European Parliament and the Council.

The EU signed the Marrakesh Treaty in April 2014. In February this year, the Court confirmed the Commission's view, that EU has exclusive competence for the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty.

For More Information

[Press release Commission proposes modern EU copyright rules for European culture to flourish and circulate](#)

[Q&A modernisation of EU copyright rules](#)

[Vice-President Ansip's statement on the European Court of Justice ruling on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty](#)