

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](#)

[News story: Looking ahead to the London Somalia Conference 2017](#)

On 11 May 2017, the UK will host a major international conference in London, to support the progress that Somalia has made over the last 5 years.

Ahead of the London Somalia Conference, regional experts Ambassador David Concar and Special Representative Nick Kay share their thoughts on progress in Somalia and the country's future:

- [Ambassador David Concar](#) talks about the future of Somalia and what needs to be achieved

[Ambassador David Concar](#)

- Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa Nick Kay explains why it's important to keep Somalia on the international agenda

[Special Representative Nick Cave](#)

Watch [views from others about the future for Somalia](#).

Opening remarks of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Vice-President Jyrki Katainen on the Reflection Paper on Harnessing Globalisation

First Vice-President Timmermans

It's my pleasure to be here with Jyrki to talk to you about globalisation.

We are in the middle of tectonic changes as we now see the effects of the 4th industrial revolution and people are feeling the brunt of these global shifts. It's very important that we have a debate on how to harness globalisation now, because it will challenge us even more in 2025.

There is no protection in protectionism. But there is isolation in isolationism. And who is isolated will be left behind. Who is left behind will miss out on many opportunities and will suffer for it.

Globalisation carries many benefits and is good for the European economy overall, but this means little to our citizens if the benefits are not shared fairly and evenly.

We want a fair and rules-based global economic development that protects European businesses. And we want Europe to lead in rewriting the global rulebook in line with our own values, interests, and standards. New circumstances – new challenges – new rules.

We must rewrite it so that globalisation works for all Europeans, so that free trade becomes fair trade: transparent, equitable and sustainable.

A global rule book of course needs effective multilateral institutions and fair dispute settlement. We look forward to discussing this in the upcoming G7 and G20 meetings.

We will require that all EU trade agreements include tax cooperation sections as well as binding social and environmental clauses, by lowering tariffs on clean goods and services as a matter of priority, and by introducing trade sanctions in case of violation of social and environmental clauses.

At home we must look seriously at a fairer redistribution of the benefits of globalisation, help our people to become more resilient through lifelong learning and better skills, and build robust social policies and safety nets.

This is absolutely essential to guarantee the social cohesion and solidarity this Union and all its Member States are based upon.

All of these tools can contribute to a fairer redistribution of wealth, but not all of these tools are in the hands of the EU, let alone the Commission.

All levels of government – EU, Member State, regional, and local – have a responsibility to make our societies and economies successful, resilient, healthy and innovative. The EU Semester and strong enforcement of our rules should also play an important role in this respect.

This reflection paper is not a trade policy paper; it is the beginning of a debate on how we will protect and provide for our planet and for our people.

Harnessing globalisation; shaping the world for the better; promoting values and high standards outside Europe; protecting our citizens from unfair practices; making our societies resilient and our economies more competitive.

This is who we are; this is what we believe in; this is how I truly believe we serve Europe's citizens.

Vice-President Katainen

First, globalisation is not, and it doesn't have to be, a zero-sum game. It can be a plus-sum game.

This is dependent on three issues. First, how well the EU can influence the direction of globalisation, how well we can shape globalisation.

Second, how well we manage to bring our forces together in order to help poorer parts of the world to get better economic growth, more inclusive growth, for instance.

Thirdly, how well our Member States can address the negative side-effects of global openness. How well our Member States can strengthen the resilience of societies, especially the resilience of individuals.

When looking at these three elements, shaping or harnessing globalisation means that the EU has power to write the rulebook of globalisation. When we talk about rules-based trade, it is in our hands to negotiate fair trade deals. When creating international investment courts, for instance, it is in our hands to influence this. When fighting against tax avoidance, or when strengthening financial stability, it is in our hands to influence globalisation. When looking at the position of the poorer parts of the world, again, if we put our forces together, we can influence the development in African countries. We can help to address the root causes of migration.

Finally, when looking at the strengthening of the resilience of our people and citizens, all the power is already in the hands of Member States, governments and national parliaments. They are the ones responsible for the quality of education for instance, the quality of teacher training and the modernisation of social security structures.

Globalisation by definition is not a source of inequality if we manage to

address the root causes, and make it work in a fair manner. The truth is that over the last decade, real incomes of middle class households in the EU and other advanced economies have, for the most part, stagnated even as the economy has grown overall. This is an issue which we have to face as a fact. It is also an issue which we have to address in order to make the future more fair. At the same time, if we are looking at the chart presented in the communication, it shows that the more open countries are in terms of international trade, the more equal they are. So, there are contradicting facts which shows that global openness and openness to international trade are not the primary sources of inequality. Quite the contrary, in fact.

We have to manage to make globalisation fair. In many peoples' vocabulary, globalisation means growing inequality. Many people are using the dichotomy that there will be more winners and more losers as a result of globalisation. This can be the case if we don't address difficulties. It is not globalisation itself which leads to this development. We can influence it by, for instance, redistributing the wealth generated by global trade, to the people by strengthening education and creating better social security structures which are more suitable to the modern world.

We try to provide some examples of globalisation in this paper. If you look at the country I know best, Mercedes-Benz started a car manufacturing site in a country considered to be a high-cost country because robots made the work more efficient. If you look at the specific city, it has the most robots per-capita and the most vacancies per-inhabitant in the country. So, modern technologies, for instance robots and digitalisation, can repatriate some manufacturing which we have lost. Globalisation is working in two directions.

We have lots of examples in other Member States where factories have been closed down and many people have lost their jobs, but thanks to the policies of public authorities and the active participation of social partners, many people have already found a new job after factory closures.

The basic message of our paper is that you can and you must influence the future of globalisation and we cannot protect ourselves through protectionism.

[Submersible Jiaolong completes dives in S. China Sea](#)



Jiaolong, China's manned submersible, is about to dive into the South China Sea, south China, May 10, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

Jiaolong, China's manned submersible, conducted its ninth and final dive in the South China Sea Wednesday.

Jiaolong stayed underwater for nine and a half hours in its ninth dive in the second stage of China's 38th ocean scientific expedition, which will last until May 13.

The maximum depth of the dive was 1,897 meters in the Puyuan Seamount.

Three crew in the submersible brought back samples of seawater from near the seabed, sediment, high-definition photographs and video footage.

The 38th oceanic scientific expedition started on Feb. 6. Jiaolong completed a dive in the northwestern Indian Ocean earlier this year in the mission's first stage. It will also conduct surveys in the Yap Trench and the Mariana Trench in the third stage.

Named after a mythical dragon, Jiaolong reached its deepest depth of 7,062 meters in the Mariana Trench in June 2012.

[China provides update on returned](#)

corruption fugitives



An unidentified fugitive returns from Indonesia to China. [Photo/Xinhua]

China Wednesday released an update on the cases of 40 corruption fugitives on the Interpol red list who have either voluntarily returned or been extradited to China, including two spared from prosecution.

As of Monday, 15 returnees had already been sentenced to terms of up to life in prison, according to a statement from the office in charge of fugitive repatriation and asset recovery under the central anti-corruption coordination group.

The cases of another nine fugitives have been accepted by courts, but no sentence has yet been given.

Another 13 cases are still under investigation or awaiting review, including the case of Yang Xiuzhu, the No. 1 most wanted on the red notice list, according to the office.

One case was withdrawn in late 2015 after prosecutors confirmed the death of the suspect, Gu Zhenfang, in Thailand.

Among the 15 fugitives already convicted is Li Huabo, a former local finance official in east China's Jiangxi Province, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in January.

Li's illicit gains worth 4.83 million yuan (700,000 U.S. dollars) were

returned and 5.5 million Singapore dollars (4 million U.S. dollars) was confiscated.

Li, who fled the country in January 2011, remained in Singapore until he was repatriated in May 2015.

In a separate case, Fu Yaobo and Zhang Qingzhao were sentenced to life imprisonment for bribery and embezzlement in August last year.

Zhang Dawei was exempted from criminal prosecution in November 2016 because Zhang had confessed his crime and returned all his illegal gains voluntarily.

Two of the fugitives, Zhu Zhenyu and Zhang Liping, were spared prosecution because Zhu was an accessory to the crime and turned himself in voluntarily, while Zhang's offense involving falsifying value added tax invoices was minor.

The handling of these cases reflects China's policy for the fugitive hunt, namely offering leniency to those who voluntarily return to China while meting out harsh penalties for those who are brought to justice after being arrested, the statement said.

The Interpol red notice of 100 Chinese corruption fugitives was released in April 2015.

As a move to close a loophole in China's renewed anti-corruption drive, which in the past mainly targeted domestic corruption and left out those who have fled the country, China has launched operations such as "Sky Net" and "Fox Hunt" in recent years, focusing mainly on corruption fugitives and assets recovery overseas.