

PRESS RELEASE

World Book and Copyright Day on April 23, 2026

The Authors' Rights Initiative, which represents the interests of some 140,000 authors and performing artists, is calling for greater support for Europe's third-largest economic sector on World Book and Copyright Day on April 23, 2026: the cultural, creative, and media sectors, which also serve as a guarantor of democracy and cultural diversity. In particular, the regulation of generative AI must be Europe-centric, according to the umbrella organization.

Berlin, April 22, 2026. “If the digital economy were a country in its own right, it would be the third-largest economy in the world after the U.S. and China, ahead of Germany,”¹ we read in *Das Parlament* last week, and the article goes on to emphasize: “The ten largest digital corporations spend a total of 48 million euros more on lobbying than the ten largest corporations in the pharmaceutical, financial, and automotive industries combined, which spend 42.75 million euros.”

The influence of Big Tech continues to grow, and EU lobbying spending on digital policy has reached a record high: “The digital industry now spends 151 million euros annually on lobbying in the EU—a 33.6% increase since 2023 and a 55.6% increase since 2021. “This is the highest lobbying budget ever recorded for the technology sector in Brussels,”² LobbyControl reported at the end of last year. Global developments are leading to a “dangerous mix” that threatens “years of progress in regulating the internet and curbing the monopoly power of Big Tech,” the organization explains, even suggesting that for “the big tech companies like Google, Meta, Amazon & Co ... this is the political opportunity they have been working toward for years.”

In addition to the tax compliance of Big Tech companies, criticism has focused on their direct challenge to European data protection standards, as well as their unauthorized and uncompensated use of the works and performances of creators and performing artists—who form the economic foundation of the entire cultural, creative, and media industries—posing a tremendous risk to the European economy. At the same time, entire professional groups are at risk of being replaced by the use of AI systems. Katharina Uppenbrink, Managing Director of the Authors' Rights Initiative, notes: “With the so-called Voss initiative report³, the European Commission has received a mandate from parliamentarians to pay greater attention to our sectors when regulating generative artificial intelligence; among other things, licensing markets must finally be created.”

Matthias Hornschuh, spokesperson for the Authors' Rights Initiative, composer, and journalist, comments: “The cultural, creative, and media sectors—and creators in particular—are the driving force behind social change; they are an indispensable prerequisite for European innovation and thus a vital component of the national economy. Given its lack of oil, rare earths, and cheap labor, Europe should turn its attention to its creative minds.”

Save the Date: The **14th International Authors' Rights Conference** organized by the Authors' Rights Initiative will also address the pressing topic of “The Digital Economy and Copyright.” It will take place on November 9 at the Academy of Arts in Berlin.

¹ <https://www.das-parlament.de/wirtschaft/finanzen/gruene-fordern-digitalsteuer-fuer-apple-google-amazon-und-co?hib>

² <https://www.lobbycontrol.de/macht-der-digitalkonzerne/eu-lobbyausgaben-der-digitalindustrie-auf-rekord-niveau-122920/>

³ [Entscheidung für Demokratie und Innovation im Europäischen Parlament | Initiative Urheberrecht](#)

Initiative Urheberrecht (Authors' Rights Initiative)

The initiative represents the interests of some 140,000 authors and performers in the fields of acting, composition, dance, design, documentary film, fiction and non-fiction, film and television, game development, illustration, journalism, orchestra, photography, visual arts, and many more.

Die Initiative Urheberrecht vertritt über ihre mehr als 40 Mitgliedsorganisationen die Interessen von rund 140.000 Urheber:innen und ausübenden Künstler:innen in den Bereichen Belletristik und Sachbuch, Bildende Kunst, Design, Dokumentarfilm, Film und Fernsehen, Fotografie, Illustration, Journalismus, Komposition, Orchester, Schauspiel, Spieleentwicklung, Tanz und vielen mehr.

Ansprechpartnerin:

Initiative Urheberrecht

Katharina Uppenbrink, Geschäftsführung

info@urheber.info

www.urheber.info

SAVE THE DATE:

14. Internationale Urheberrechtskonferenz am 9.11.2026 in der Akademie der Künste in Berlin (hybrides Format)