

THE INTERNET MUST NOT HARM AUTHORS

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What makes authors from such different areas as the cinema, music, the theater and literature sign a petition addressed to Jean-Claude Juncker urging the European Commission, which seems so lost in this divided Europe in crisis, to adopt urgent measures to avoid putting the European cultural sector and its legitimate capacity to create wealth in danger as a result of the transfer of value to online digital platforms? In all, we're talking about more than one thousand signatures of celebrities such as Ennio Morricone, Charles Aznavour, Albert Uderzo, Pedro Almodóvar and Andrea Bocelli, besides dozens of highly respected Portuguese personalities in this area who also wanted to make their critical opinion public, namely through the initiative launched by SPA to collect signatures and send them to the European Commission and the European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (GESAC), of whose board the Portuguese authors cooperative is a member and which is headquartered in Brussels.

The aim here is a feasible sharing of value on the Internet, without the appropriation of vast protected repertoires for a wide online use. The major companies operating in this area believe that they are protected by an exemption scheme in European legislation which hinders the fair and due payment to creators. SPA, namely through its role at GESAC, in Brussels, has been supporting this fight and getting all the help to make it visible and worthy of a wide debate.

Let it be said that this was one of the biggest mobilizations ever achieved by a transnational structure of societies of authors, in spite of the complex political moment, with the materialization of Brexit and with the beginning of summer, which represents a growing absorption of creators and artists into the activities that allow them to live off the art and culture they create and disseminate. Even the authors who usually do not participate on similar occasions quickly made it public that they support and are available to take the fight further for a cause that needs their energy and solidarity.

The Internet must be fair to those who create culture and art; otherwise, it will be creating a wealth it does not own. To that end, the European Commission can't turn away from a problem that is not compatible with the usual ambiguities in its institutional behavior when it comes to managing and creating a balance between national and sectorial interests. Jean-Claude Juncker, who sets budget deficit targets to penalize those who do not deserve to be punished, should be aware of the situation and of the correct way of dealing with it. The European Union has, in this way, been revealing the vulnerability of some fundamental aspects of its operation. It has even sided with many of those who, by making it possible for the Brexit logic to triumph, have harmed the European cultural life, especially that of Britain, a country which is increasingly weaker and doubtful about its future, with Scotland's will in between.

Juncker and his team know how influential culture's leading figures are when it comes to helping models weakened by incurable contradictions and systemic conflicts survive. The names that stand out in these thousand signatures make us think about what Europe may be in the next few years if the Union project manages to resist and survive, and we should always keep this in mind.

The names highlighted by this petition are highly respected and represent, in their stimulating diversity, a good and undeniable part of the cultural life of this continent, which is still far from seeing the signs of peace and security on the horizon that will reassure it and give it (us) a sustainable assurance of a future.

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