

EU Parliament votes to take down illegal sports streaming

May 19 2021

European legislators adopted a proposal Wednesday to combat online piracy of live sporting events that includes the option to block illegal broadcasts within half an hour.

EU lawmakers also called on the European Commission—the EU's executive branch—to amend the legislation on [intellectual property rights](#) for live sporting events, which are not protected by the bloc's copyright rules.

The report was adopted with 479 votes in favor, 171 against and 40 abstentions.

MEPs said the new rules should not target viewers, who are often not aware that the content they are watching is illegal.

"Given that illegal streams are most harmful in the first 30 minutes of their appearance online, the text calls for such streams to be removed or disabled immediately and no later than 30 minutes following a notification by rights holders or a certified trusted flagger," the EU Parliament said.

According to the EU Parliament, about 80% of right owners' [revenue](#) comes from [broadcast](#) rights, but live sports broadcasts are often transmitted illegally online.

EU lawmaker Geoffroy Didier, a member of the legal affairs committee,

said online piracy of sports events also has severe consequences for amateur clubs and sports federations.

"For the French football industry, for example, this means a loss of nearly 500 million euros (\$610 million) each year for our amateur clubs," he said. "We must stop these [illegal activities](#)."

In a study published last year, the EU said 7.6 million subscriptions were made to illegal broadcasting platforms in 2019 across the bloc, generating illicit revenues of an estimated 522 million euros (\$637 million) leading to annual value added tax avoidance of 113.5 million euros (\$138 million).

"If the same number of subscriptions were made legally, legal broadcasters' revenues could increase by 3.4 billion euros (\$4.1 billion) each year," the study found.

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