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European Parliament rejects ‘absurd’ EU plan to axe Freedom of Panorama

Chris Cheesman July 9, 2015 2 Comments

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An overwhelming majority of **MEPs** have voted against a controversial EU plan which threatened photography of buildings in public spaces.



BREAKING NEWS

A crucial vote took place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France today.

A key piece of text on ‘Freedom of Panorama’, in paragraph 46 of the proposal, was removed, confirmed [Dutch MEP Marietje Schaake](#).

Only 40 of the 751 MEPs voted to keep it in.

However, Schaake’s amendment to extend Freedom of Panorama to all EU countries did not pass.

The EU plan to abolish Freedom of Panorama – which it was feared would hit both amateur and professional photographers, even Facebook users – was first raised by [German MEP Julia Reda](#).

Speaking shortly after the vote, a spokesman for Reda told *Amateur Photographer*: ‘The point on freedom of panorama was deleted decisively, with only 40 out of the 751 MEPs sticking to it.

‘So we managed to deflect the attack on this right – although the Parliament also doesn’t call for its extension to all of Europe.’

Reda’s office added: ‘We’ll have another opportunity to push for this when the legislative proposal comes by the end of the year; for now it’s time to celebrate this success.’

On her website, Reda wrote: ‘... most Europeans will continue to be able to post selfies online and view photos of famous buildings on Wikipedia unencumbered by copyright.

‘We must now continue to fight for an extension of important copyright exceptions such as this one to all member states.’

Campaigners including Wikimedia had protested that several MEPs **were attempting to introduce a non-commercial clause** into the Freedom of Panorama rules.

Wikimedia feared it would have been forced to remove an estimated 40,000 images from Wikipedia if the European Parliament had voted for a rule change.

Reacting to today’s vote, Stevie Benton, head of external relations at Wikimedia UK, said: ‘While I would have liked Freedom of Panorama to have been extended to all member states of the EU, I’m pleased that the amendment to introduce a non-commercial exception was deleted.

‘This means that Wikipedia, the other Wikimedia projects – and, indeed, anyone – can continue to make use of images taken in the UK’s public spaces.’

Yesterday, we reported how UK MEPs were [lining up to blast the proposal](#), first tabled by French MEP Jean-Marie Cavada.

Cavada wanted all European nations to adopt laws that may require permission from a building’s architect before an image is published commercially.

The policy is similar to strict photography rules currently in force in France, for example.

But Reda warned that nations currently protected by Freedom of Panorama, including the UK, would be subject to restrictions demanding that photographers seek a licence from the ‘architect or rightholder of the public artwork’.

The European Parliament’s rejection of Cavada’s proposal came after a campaign against change led by *Amateur Photographer* and Wikimedia.

A [change.org petition](#) against the EU plan gained more than 500,000 signatures.

[Photo credit: Andy Westlake]

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A victory for common-sense. I wonder how Google gets away with publishing pics of French and Italian landmarks on Google Street View though?

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A ridiculous and almost certainly unenforceable, rule, anyway! How on Earth did they think they could stop literally millions of tourists every year?

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