



Media Release

Six Wikimedia Chapters Rejected as Observers to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

May 10, 2022 Geneva, Switzerland - Yesterday, Wikimedia CH and five other Wikimedia chapters - independent Wikimedia movement affiliate organizations - were rejected from gaining accreditation to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR).

[WIPO](#) is the specialised United Nations (UN) agency that determines global policies on copyright, patents, and trademarks. The Wikimedia chapters of [France](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Mexico](#), [Sweden](#), and [Switzerland](#) applied as ad hoc observers to [the WIPO committee](#) that is responsible for shaping the future of global copyright policy. Wikipedia and Wikimedia projects rely on open, flexible [copyright policies](#) to ensure knowledge can be accessed and shared freely across its platforms.

“Wikimedia chapters have first-hand experience of the legal barriers to sharing information in their countries and deep expertise in copyright policy. Their presence at WIPO would help guarantee a global and diverse presence of civil society organisations in the SCCR, ensuring that copyright policies reflect the needs of the global web ecosystem,” said Amanda Keton, General Counsel of the Wikimedia Foundation. “We ask member states to recognise and support the value that the Wikimedia free knowledge movement brings to WIPO.”

China was the only country to oppose the accreditation of the Wikimedia chapters - it received support from several states that recalled the need for consensus (including Russia, Iran, Venezuela)- inaccurately claiming that chapters were complicit in spreading disinformation. These allegations are unfounded and misrepresent Wikipedia's model, which prioritizes neutrality and requires citations to reliable secondary sources in its content.

China has also objected to the application of the Wikimedia Foundation twice for observer status, first in 2020 and again in 2021. The Wikimedia Foundation is the nonprofit that operates Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects globally.

The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) is composed of WIPO country representatives, non-governmental organisations, and private companies, which offer expertise in helping the specialised UN agency realise its global mandate. With this rejection, the Wikimedia chapters will be prevented from participating in international discussions on copyright that profoundly affect their work in Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects.

The Wikimedia Foundation is the nonprofit that supports Wikipedia, Wikimedia projects, and its free knowledge mission on a global scale. Wikimedia chapters are independent, nonprofit organizations which support and promote Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects in a specific geographic location. While the Wikimedia Foundation and Wikimedia chapters collaborate in our shared free knowledge mission, each organisation operates independently with its own bylaws, Board, and organisation plan.

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