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EU Court: Big Tech Must Censor Critics of Politicians, Worldwide

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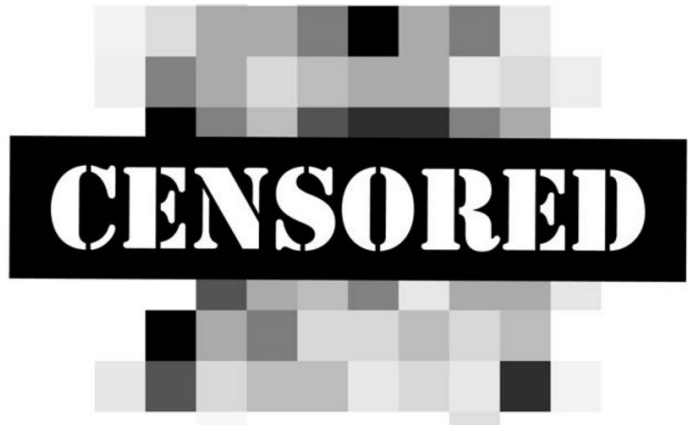
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Calling out inept, traitorous, and corrupt politicians among Europe's ruling class online is officially banned, worldwide. After usurping authority over the peoples and nations of Europe, a European Union court just ruled that U.S.-based social-media companies must comply with anti-free speech decrees by European authorities. Under the [ruling handed down by the so-called European Court of Justice last week](#), judges made clear that the criticism of a fringe political figure must be censored all over the world — not just inside the EU or in the specific nation where authorities consider the speech illegal. Critics called the move Orwellian and crazy.

The case in question involved Eva Glawischnig-Piesczek, a far-left Austrian politician with the totalitarian Green Party who was ridiculed on Facebook by her critics. Among other criticism, she was referred to online as a “corrupt oaf” and a “lousy traitor of the people” for her extreme political views. Obviously these were the opinions of the authors. Another critic blasted her Green Party for being a “fascist” political party. Apparently Europeans thought her demands for never-ending tax-funded welfare payments for refugees were ridiculous, among other positions. But expressing that opinion publicly is now illegal, worldwide, under the ruling from the Luxembourg-based court.

Glawischnig-Piesczek filed a complaint in Austria's courts, alleging that the opinions expressed by her critics were “defamatory.” Facebook complied with a court order to remove the criticism. However, the social-media giant, which has [developed a global reputation for its hostility to free speech and support for left-wing politics](#), only censored the offending views within Austria. That was not enough for Glawischnig-Piesczek — she did not want anyone, anywhere on the planet to be able to read what people thought about her, or to post anything similar. So she appealed. After winding its way through that nation's legal system, the Austrian Supreme Court asked the European Court of Justice to take up the case.

Oral arguments were heard in February. And last week, the ECJ, as the court is known, [ruled](#) that if speech is ruled illegal in one EU member state, then technology companies must censor it all over the





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world. The ruling also noted that duplicate or identical content posted in other countries must be removed, too. That means, for instance, that certain Eastern European governments still largely under the control of “former” communist tyrants will now be able to censor their critics and prevent foreigners from learning the truth. Even Americans may be banned from posting it. Companies will not be held liable, though, as long as they delete the content or “equivalent” opinions “expeditiously” upon being ordered to do so.

In a statement issued on behalf of the EU’s top court, the judges said that under the ruling, EU member states were free to order Internet companies to censor “information [deemed unlawful] worldwide within the framework of the relevant international law.” EU member governments are supposed to take that international “law” into “account” when ordering companies to block access to the material. Officially, there is no way to “appeal” the EU court’s ruling, although it is not clear how the outfit may be able to enforce its rulings on the U.S.-based firms.

In an incredibly Orwellian response, the radical politician claimed the ruling was “a historic success for human rights against web giants.” As analysts pointed out, though, real rights include the right to hold and express an opinion about politicians. On the other hand, there is no right for politicians or anyone else not to be offended. Meanwhile, the victory was not against “web giants,” but against everyday citizens seeking to express their opinions about a Green politician working to rule them and hand their hard-earned money to foreigners.

The claim that the ruling against free speech was somehow a victory for “human rights,” though, does contain [truth if one uses the “international” definition of human rights](#). Unlike in America, where the Founding Fathers said it was a self-evident truth that God created people with certain unalienable rights (life, liberty, property, and so on) and that government is instituted to protect those rights, under the human rights vision advanced by the United Nations and the EU, there are no God-given rights, or any rights at all, actually. As the UN explains in Article 29, your “rights” may in “no case be used contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.”

So in a twisted sort of way, global censorship of political tyrants is actually a “historic success for human rights,” as Glawischnig-Piesczek put it. As the UN has made clear for years, it considers the unalienable rights guaranteed to Americans under the U.S. Constitution and state constitutions — free speech, self-defense, gun rights, due process, and more — to be violations of the UN’s “international human rights law.” Even laws restricting the killing of unborn babies [have been attacked by the UN as a “violation” of “human rights.”](#) So it is no surprise to see totalitarians claim that censorship of political discourse is also needed for “human rights.”

In a bit of unintended irony, a U.K.-based free speech group named “Article 19” — a reference to the UN’s “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and its article on free expression — slammed the controversial ruling. “This judgment has major implications for online freedom of expression around the world,” Article 19 Executive Director Thomas Hughes was quoted as saying in the media, with legal analysts quoted in various press reports noting that the ECJ ruling would apply in the United Kingdom, despite Brexit.

“Compelling social media platforms like Facebook to automatically remove posts regardless of their context will infringe our right to free speech and restrict the information we see online,” continued Hughes. “The judgment does not take into account the limitations of technology when it comes to automated filters. The ruling also means that a court in one EU member state will be able to order the removal of social media posts in other countries, even if they are not considered unlawful there. This



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would set a dangerous precedent where the courts of one country can control what internet users in another country can see. This could be open to abuse, particularly by regimes with weak human rights records.”

In a statement after the ruling, Facebook expressed concerns. “It undermines the long-standing principle that one country does not have the right to impose its laws on speech on another country,” the company complained. The judgment also raises questions about free expression and “the role that internet companies should play in monitoring, interpreting and removing speech that might be illegal in any particular country.” During a meeting with employees after the decision was handed down, Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg reportedly said: “I think it’s a very troubling precedent to set.”

Of course, as regular readers of this magazine know well, the Big Tech social-media giants — especially Facebook — hardly needed to be coerced into helping globalists and totalitarians censor the Internet. In fact, the U.S.-based technology giants willingly joined hands with both Brussels and the UN to squelch voices they disagreed with. As *The New American* [reported in June of 2016](#), the Big Tech companies such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube (owned by Google), Microsoft, and more signed on to the EU’s “Code of Conduct” promising to censor everything from criticism of Islam and concerns about mass migration to support for marriage and biological reality on gender. Just last month, the technology companies [joined with the UN to censor “extremism” online](#).

The EU court’s action is not the beginning of censorship by that entity; it is merely an escalation. Before that, in 2015, [the EU’s police agency vowed to combat “online propaganda” and “extremism” online](#). More recently, in November of 2018, under the guise of promoting “tolerance,” the EU’s Parliament [passed a resolution demanding that critics of homosexuality, gender confusion, Islam, open borders, and more be prosecuted](#). “The right to freedom of speech is not absolute,” the EU resolution reads, repeatedly blasting “right-wing extremism” without any reference to left-wing extremism, communism, jihad, anti-Christian persecution, or any of the real threats facing Europe today.

The EU has long been seeking to impose its totalitarian schemes on the once-independent, formerly self-governing peoples of Europe — even against their will, [as it showed when it forced the European Constitution on France and Holland despite both nations voting “no.”](#) The totalitarian super-state has also been [imposing its decrees on non-members such as Switzerland](#), which [was recently coerced into adopting EU demands on gun control](#). Now, the EU wants to impose its rule on all of humanity. If liberties as fundamental as free speech are not safe, nothing is. It is time for Europeans and Americans and people everywhere to draw a line in the sand.

Image: Ket4up / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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