

Q&A: DANCERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

Image rights at tango events — your questions

Free Q&A, which you may share freely. It explains French law in plain terms and is not a substitute for legal advice. In case of dispute, consult a lawyer.

Consent, refusal and removal

1. I don't like how I look in a photo. What can I do?

Kindly ask the photographer or the organiser to remove it: most will agree without any problem. Legally, a photo that is simply unflattering is not forbidden. But if you are clearly recognisable, you can rely on your image rights and ask for your data to be erased.

References: Article 9, French Civil Code; Article 17, GDPR.

2. Can I refuse to be photographed?

Yes. Tell the photographer clearly, or wear the sign provided by the organiser (wristband, badge). In a private place, your consent is only presumed if you did not object.

References: Article 226-1, French Criminal Code.

3. By attending an event where photographers are announced, have I given my consent?

Partly. Your presence means you accept being photographed and appearing in general shots published to promote the event. It does not mean you accept a portrait that singles you out, commercial use or a degrading image. And you can object at any time.

References: Article 226-1, French Criminal Code; Articles 9 and 16, French Civil Code; Article 21, GDPR (right to object).

4. I was photographed without noticing. Is that legal?

At an event announced as photographed, it is generally accepted. But presumed consent requires the photo to be taken in full view of the person. A photo taken secretly in a private place may be a criminal offence.

References: Article 226-1, French Criminal Code.

5. I agreed to photos when I registered. Can I change my mind?

Yes, at any time. Withdrawing your consent applies to future publications, and you can also ask for photos already online to be removed. However, printed materials that have already been handed out, such as flyers, cannot be recalled.

References: Article 7, GDPR (withdrawal of consent).

6. My photo is on a poster without my consent. Is that allowed?

No, if you are singled out and recognisable. A poster or an advertisement requires your prior consent. You can ask for removal and, depending on the harm, for damages.

References: Article 9, French Civil Code.

7. A photo shows me in an embarrassing situation. What can I do?

A fall, clothing in disarray or a mocking caption can harm your dignity. This is where your removal request is strongest, even if you had agreed to be photographed.

References: Articles 9 and 16, French Civil Code.

Real-life situations and remedies

8. My partner wants the photo removed, but I don't. Who decides?

Each person has their own image rights. If your partner is recognisable, their refusal is enough for the photo to be removed. One solution: a crop that only shows you, if the photographer agrees.

References: Article 9, French Civil Code.

9. Can I post a photo of myself on my social media?

You have rights over your image, but not over the photo: it belongs to the photographer. Sharing the original post is fine. To download and repost the photo, ask for the photographer's permission and credit them ("© Name").

References: Articles L122-4 and L121-1, French Intellectual Property Code.

10. I danced a performance. Do I have extra rights?

Yes. As a performer, you have rights over your performance. The organiser must get your consent to use photos of your performance in their promotion.

References: Article L212-3, French Intellectual Property Code.

11. Hundreds of photos are posted the same night, unsorted. How can I know if I'm in them?

It is not up to you to check everything: whoever publishes is responsible for what they post, including a degrading image posted without sorting. You can:

- ask the photographer which photos you appear in (your right of access to your data);
- ask them to remove the ones you are not happy with;
- ask the organiser to have photos sorted before publication.

References: Articles 9 and 16, French Civil Code; Articles 15 (right of access) and 17 (erasure), GDPR.

12. A photographer takes suggestive photos and makes me feel uncomfortable. What should I do?

Your discomfort matters: you do not have to justify it.

- Tell them clearly to stop photographing you.
- Alert the organiser straight away: they can exclude the photographer.
- Note the time, what happened and the names of witnesses; take screenshots if photos are posted.
- Ask for the photos you appear in to be erased.
- Photos taken under clothing or focused on intimate body parts, inappropriate gestures or remarks: these are criminal offences. You can report them to the police.

References: Articles 226-1 (image capture without consent), 226-3-1 (voyeurism) and 222-33 (sexual harassment), French Criminal Code.

13. Must the photographer tell me before posting a photo of me?

Not individually. But they must inform all participants of their presence, how the photos will be used and how to object, for example on the ticketing page or at the entrance. For a portrait or a couple singled out, your consent is still required. Before tagging you by name, it is good practice to ask.

References: Article 13, GDPR (information); Article 9, French Civil Code.

14. They refuse to remove my photo. What can I do?

Go step by step:

- report the photo to the platform (Facebook, Instagram);
- send a written erasure request: the controller has one month to reply;
- if there is no reply, file a complaint with the CNIL (the French data protection authority);
- as a last resort, a judge can order urgent removal (summary proceedings).

References: Articles 17 and 77, GDPR; Article 835, French Code of Civil Procedure.

In short: the photographer is the author of the photo, but you remain in control of your image. In the vast majority of cases, a polite request is enough.