

# How Commons made a quality photographer out of me



by Diego Delso ([[User:Poco a poco]] in Wikimedia)  
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# Let me introduce myself

## Diego Delso

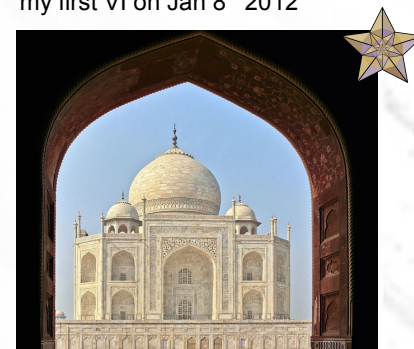
- World citizen born in Spain, electrical engineer, based in Munich, Germany
- Passionate for free knowledge, travelling and photography.

**[[User:Poco a poco]]** (step by step, Schritt für Schritt, peu à peu)

-  Usual reader of Wikipedia since middle of 2006.
-  December 9<sup>th</sup> 2007: Got registered in the Spanish Wikipedia, the first edit came one day later.
-  10 days later I discovered the special page NewPages and started maintenance tasks.
-  April 19<sup>th</sup> 2008: first edit and image upload in Commons.
-  In May 2009: bureaucrat and administrator in the Spanish Wikipedia.
-  October 2010: 1,000 new articles.
-  November 2011: 100,000 edits in the Spanish Wikipedia; first QI
-  February 2012: First FP
-  November 2012: 1,000 Quality Images in Commons
-  December 2013: 10,000 uploaded images to Commons and became there also administrator
-  March 2014: 100 Featured Pictures in Commons.
-  Est. August 2014: 5,000 Quality images in Commons.



The Delicate Arch in Arches National Park, Utah (USA) was my first QI on Nov 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 and my first VI on Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 2012



Taj Mahal in Agra (India) was my first FP on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2012






The Catholicon in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, was my second FP on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2012

## What I hope you take with you after 30 min

- Get to know a little about Commons (history, stats, awards)
- ...and a bit about the Quality Images process in Commons.
- Get an idea what are the criterias for a Quality Image.
- An idea of some of my first (and last) experiences in Commons.
- Examples of the recurrent problems in QIC.
- Enjoy some interesting pictures
- ...and, of course, have a good time 😊

# A few numbers about Commons

| Type of files                 | Amount            | % vs total files |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Audio                         | 307,005           | 1,40%            |
| Video                         | 46,568            | 0,21%            |
| Images                        | 21,347,948        | <b>97,29%</b>    |
| Office                        | 240,461           | 1,10%            |
| <b>Total files on Commons</b> | <b>21,941,982</b> | -                |

| Award   | Background  | Amount | % of total images | Relation vs total images |
|---|---|--------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Featured picture<br> | Images that the community has chosen to be highlighted as some of the finest on Commons.  | 6,274  | 0,03%             | 1 out of 3000            |
| Quality image<br>  | Images which meet certain quality standards (which are mostly technical in nature) and which are valuable for Wikimedia projects. | 72,406 | 0,34%             | 1 out of 300             |
| Valued image<br>   | Images considered especially valuable by the Commons community for use in online content within other Wikimedia projects.         | 9,255  | 0,04%             | 1 out of 2500            |

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:MIME\\_type\\_statistics](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:MIME_type_statistics) on July 21<sup>st</sup> 2014



# Digging a bit into the history of Commons

- By September 2004 there was a process in place in 3 wikipedias for featured images: English (since May 2003), German (since June 2004) and Chinese (since July 2004).
- September 7<sup>th</sup> 2004: Wikimedia Commons went live.
- November 9<sup>th</sup> 2004: Featured picture (FP) process started in Commons, first FP awarded on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2005.
- June 25<sup>th</sup> 2006: Quality image (QI) process started in Commons, first QI awarded on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2006.
- April 10<sup>th</sup> 2008: Valued image (VI) process started in Commons, first VI awarded on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2008.



This head of a *Pavo cristatus* became the first Featured Picture on Feb 5<sup>th</sup> 2005, CC-BY-SA 3.0 by M. Betley, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pavo\\_cristatus\\_head001xx.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pavo_cristatus_head001xx.jpg)



This landscape in Kaçkar Dağları (Turkey) was the first QI on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2006, CC-BY-SA 2.5 by Wikimol, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KackarDagi\\_fromNorth\\_hory.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KackarDagi_fromNorth_hory.jpg)



Manhattan bridge under construction in 1909 First VI on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2008, in public domain by Irving Underhill, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manhattan\\_Bridge\\_Construction\\_1909.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manhattan_Bridge_Construction_1909.jpg)

# Origins of Quality Images in Commons

The Quality Images process was created in Commons because mainly **3 things came together in a short time window** back in June 2006:

- The **spark**: one of the very first Commons users, Pfctdayelise, who wanted to locate suitable images by Commons people for a calender, had a hard time to gather 12 good images of a single theme.
- The **idea** came from user Gngarra, who was then very involved in the Good Article process in the English Wikimedia and introduced the idea into Commons.
- The **means** were provided by user Dschwen who automated the process with bots making it efficient and robust for a high amount of nominations. Those bots are still active today and take care of dozens of QI candidates everyday.

“

*The idea was to identify our own work in Commons that we can be confident of in terms of quality. It differed from Featured Pictures in being solely for Commons contributors and was focused on technical value over the wow factor because many of the subjects that Commons need photos for could never wow enough people to pass FP despite their technical aspects. The hope was in recognising these efforts we would be encouraging continued provision of the "boring/plain/dull" subjects as well as rewarding our people for that effort.*

”

User Gngarra

The mechanism and philosophy of the Quality images process has not changed since then.

# Commons as a learning platform

- **Can Wikimedia Commons be considered as a learning platform?**
- **Without any doubts!**, Commons, especially QIC, has been the best „course“ I've ever visited!

## **First experiences:**

- One of my criterias to nominate pictures was their beauty (wrong!).
- I was not aware of the problems that would prevent a picture of becoming QI (adversity is the school of wisdom!).
- I couldn't realize some problems pointed out by a reviewer (crazy people! ☺).
- I didn't know how to prevent or solve those problems.
- I didn't have the software to solve the problems.
- I didn't know how to use the software to solve the problems.

## **...and the experiences after a lot of QIs:**

- When taking the picture I bear in mind the result I aim (e.g. proper frame to avoid problems when applying perspective correction).
- Before a nomination I proactively search for the typical problems in my pictures.
- I can fix those problems without problems.
- As an experienced reviewer I point out problems to help other users and if needed fix the problems for them.

Still, I learn from Commons every day thank to the technical discussions and get inspired with the great work of other photographers!!!








**Hint:** Get a good technical basis in QIC and look in a next step for FP's wow.

# How does the QI process work?

- **Visit** the QI candidates page in Comons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Quality\\_images\\_candidates](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Quality_images_candidates),
- **Nominate** on the top your own pictures (or of another Commons user) that, you believe, meet the QI criteria (a breeze with help of the QINominator gadget).
- A reviewer decides whether:
  - It **meets QI** requirements level => **Promote** (if nothing happens will automatically become QI 2 days later)
  - It **fails** to reach QI level => **Decline** providing the reason/s for that (that's feedback! will be cleaned up 2 days later)
  - It **could reach QI** level but not quite yet => Makes a comment pointing out the problem/s (this process could take some loops), color does not change and remains **blue**. In this way the reviewer can help the author step by step to reach the QI threshold (will be cleaned up latest after 8 days).

- Pictures that have been promoted or declined by one reviewer are put on consensual review by **another reviewer who does not agree** with the initial judgement, the nomination becomes **yellow** and awaits additional reviews in a different section.
- At the same time those nominating (and with some experience) shall review the pictures of others.

July 28, 2014

|   |  |  |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|   |    |    |    |    |    |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination:</b> Field crops in Raszków -- Jacek Malicki 23:01, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Review</b> ⓘ</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> Some burned highlights. See notes. After that, QI for me -- Halavar 23:14, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination:</b> Herb of Stanislaus Pawlowski on the church tower. Saint John the Baptist parish church in Pawlowice, Silesia, Poland. --Halavar 22:51, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Review needed</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination</b> Sky during the sunset. Kharkhorin, Ovorkhangai Province, Mongolia --Halavar 22:33, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Promotion</b> Good quality --Poco a poco 19:51, 29 July 2014 (UTC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination</b> Sky during the sunset. Kharkhorin, Ovorkhangai Province, Mongolia --Halavar 22:31, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Promotion</b> Good quality --Poco a poco 19:51, 29 July 2014 (UTC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination</b> Dettifoss, Iceland, July 2014 --Martin Falbisoner 21:49, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Decline</b> Overexposed areas in the sky --Poco a poco 19:51, 29 July 2014 (UTC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination</b> Godafoss, Iceland, July 2014 --Martin Falbisoner 21:49, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Discussion</b> Overexposed sky -- Poco a poco 19:51, 29 July 2014 (UTC) Bright, but not overexposed, ok to me --Poco a poco 19:51, 29 July 2014 (UTC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nomination:</b> Guilfoss, Iceland, July 2014 --Martin Falbisoner 21:49, 28 July 2014 (UTC) ⓘ</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> There are four spots in the sky, easily removed - see notes. This is a dark image, but I suspect that's the way it was? -- Geniec1139 22:41, 28 July 2014 (UTC)</li> <li>• <b>Review needed</b></li> </ul> |

Screenshot of the QI candidates page...colorful!



# Criteria to meet QI requirements

- **Non-technical requirements:**

- Good description (incl. Taxa for organisms)
- Accurate categories
- Author must be a Commons user

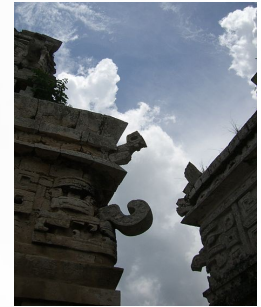
- **Technical requirements** (same like for FP, although a big wow of a FP could compensate lower quality):

- **Resolution** > 2 Megapixel (don't confuse with the size in Megabytes)
- Low **noise** level and no JPG artifacts
- **Good exposure** (neither underexposed nor overexposed), this can be tricky in scenes with high contrast
- Free of **dust** (damned dust spots in the sky! ☺), lens flares, vignetting and, of course, water marks
- Good **composition** (clear subject, no disturbing elements, tight crop...)
- No **color** problems (especially chromatic aberration in borders and white balance)
- **Focus** shall be on the main subject and sufficient depth of field
- No **distortion** (vertical/horizontal perspective, barrel/pincushion)

**Try it yourself and nominate your pictures in QIC!!**

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Image\\_guidelines](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Image_guidelines)

*How Commons made a quality photographer out of me*



The Church, Chichén Itzá, Mexico



Horseshoe Bend, Arizona, USA



Sansedoni Palace,  
Siena, Italy



Bunk beds in  
Auschwitz I, Poland



View of Lisbon from St  
George Castle

# Typical problems under QI candidates

## **Usually fixable problems** (feedback):

- Description or categories too general, need to be more specific
- Dust spots
- Noise (both luminosity and chromatic), especially in darker areas
- Chromatic aberration

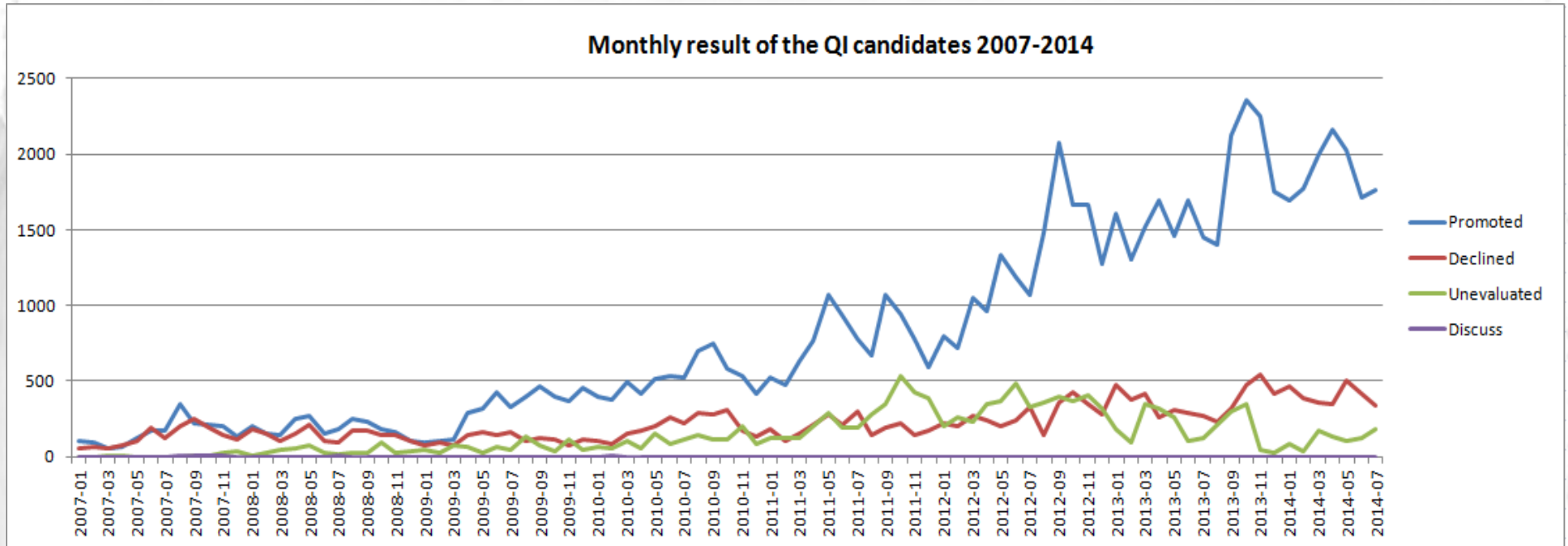
## **Sometimes fixable problems** (feedback):

- Distortions, especially vertical perspective with falling lines that should be vertical
- Overexposed areas, especially the sky (trade off to ensure good exposure of the subject), more difficult to solve with JPEG

## **Rarely fixable problems** (decline):

- Lack of sharpness
- Wrong focus
- Motion blur
- Composition problems (cluttered image, unclear subject, tight crop)

# A few more numbers



| Result QIC  | Total amount | % of QIC |
|-------------|--------------|----------|
| Promoted    | 72406        | 68,69%   |
| Rejected    | 19843        | 18,82%   |
| Unevaluated | 13166        | 12,49%   |

# How is the learning process fostered?

These are the keys of QIC:

- Prompt feedback on your work and how to improve it.
- There is a bunch of experienced users, many of whom have gained that experience in Commons
- Good faith of everybody to help others and share know-how with the benefit of the project in the first place.
- Simple process = clear and fair rules + easy to understand
- An online platform that enables the interexchange, incl. Dschwen's bots to keep it running
- An awarding system in place (QIs, but also FPs, VIs, POTY,...) as a recognition of the performed work.

There are also other initiatives outside QIC (WM chapters) that help:

- Some chapters actively organise photographic learning workshops or photo events (WLM, Wikitakes, aerial photography,...)
- Equipment lending programs or equipment purchasing assistance.



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**over-/underexposure**



Horseshoe Bend, Arizona, USA



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**good exposure**



Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ, Podgorica, Montenegro



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons... **perspective problems**



Bunk beds in Auschwitz I, Poland

# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**corrected perspective**

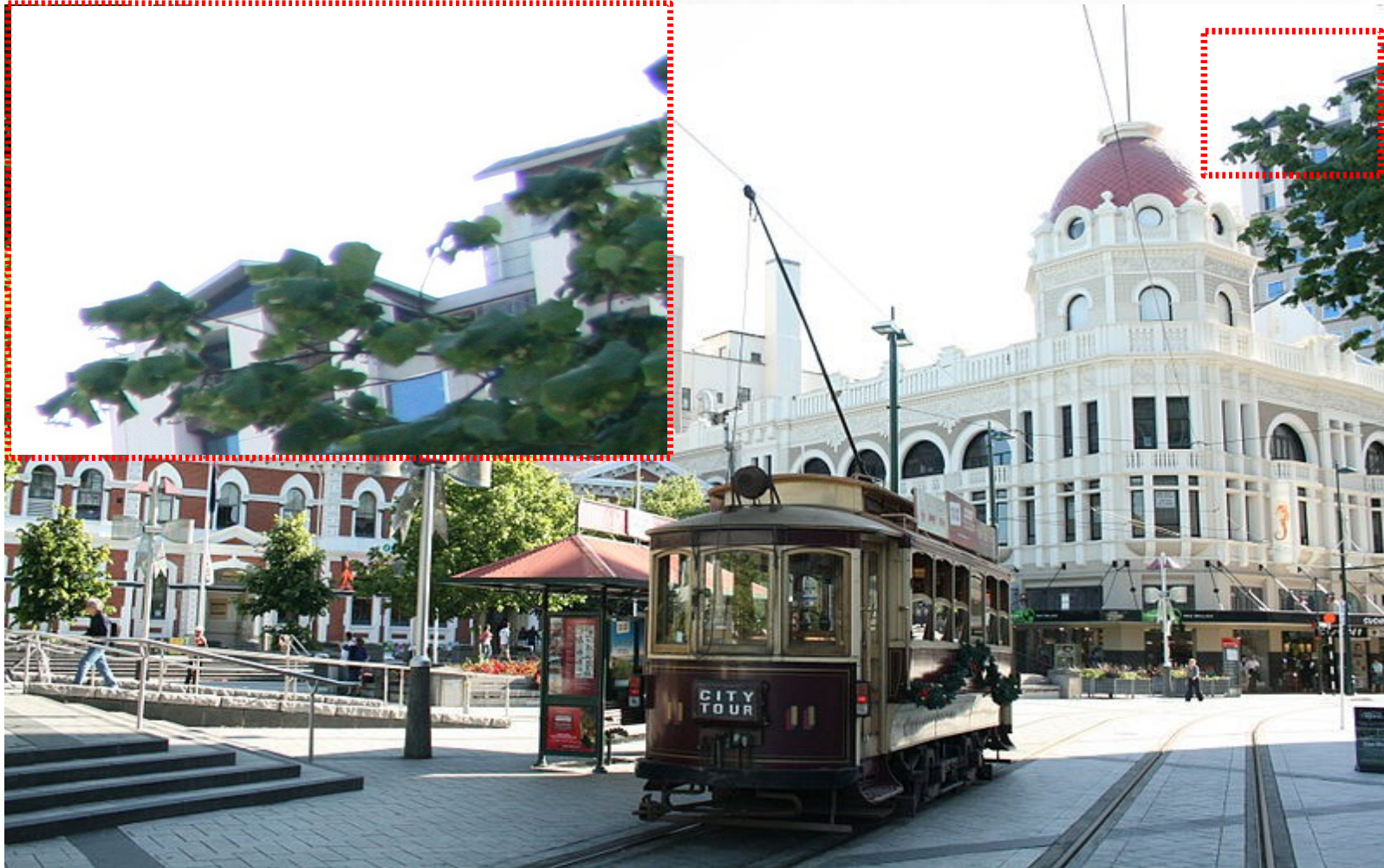


Mercedes-Benz dealership in Munich, Germany



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**color problems**



Tram in the center of Christchurch, New Zealand



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons... **truthful colors**

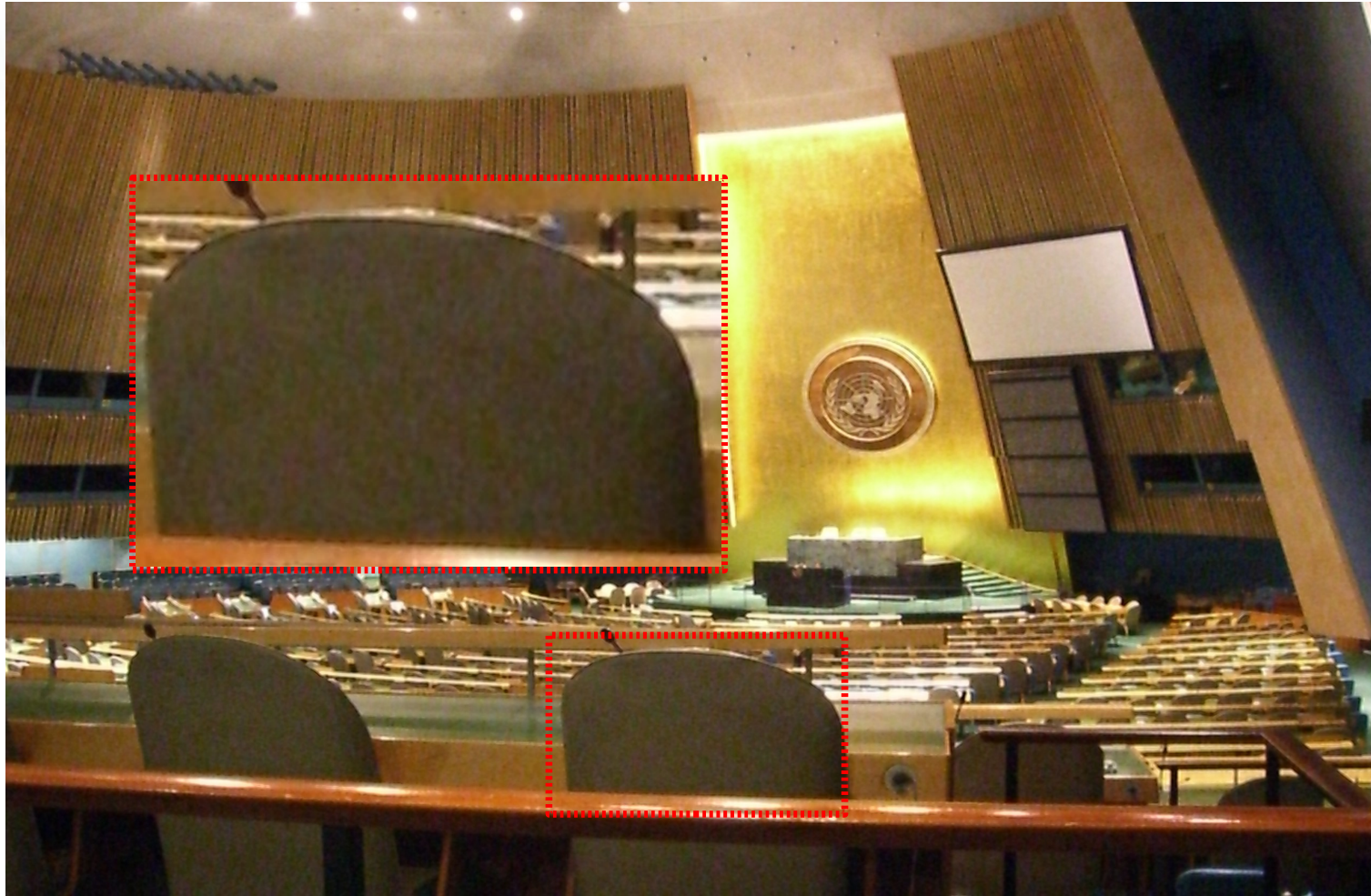


Field of sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) in Cardejón, Spain



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**noise and sharpness problems**



United Nations General Assembly hall, New York, USA

# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**noisefree crispy pictures**



Specimen of Julia Butterfly (*Dryas iulia*)



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons... **composition issues**



Great Wall of China

# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons... **good composition**



Mavrovo Dam, Macedonia



# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons... **diverse other problems**



Unidentified *Lepidoptera* shot in Spain

# The result? Comparison before-after QI

Examples of some of my contributions in Commons...**a few of my favourites**



View of the village of Moros, Aragon, Spain



# One last thing...

Happy first 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary to



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•[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuvola\\_cake\\_5.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuvola_cake_5.png)

That's it, thank you!



# Questions?

## Contact

- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Poco\\_a\\_poco](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Poco_a_poco) or email me [diegodelso@gmx.net](mailto:diegodelso@gmx.net)

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