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ChatControl return: A dangerous precedent for democracy and privacy

Today, the European Parliament adopted the renewed temporary derogation from the ePrivacy Regulation, also known as ‘ChatControl 1.0’ against the votes of the Greens/EFA Group.

Although the European Parliament had already rejected a further extension of the proposal twice, President Roberta Metsola, the EPP, the Council and the European Commission resorted to an undemocratic manoeuvre to put the original text back on the plenary agenda.

Most MEPs voted against the proposal, but this time, an absolute majority (361 votes) would have been required to reject the file. However, the successful adoption of a Greens/EFA amendment managed to secure the protection of encrypted communication.

Pirate Party **MEP Markéta Gregorová**, Greens/EFA negotiator for the legislation, comments:

“Today is a bittersweet victory for me and for everyone defending privacy. Protecting encryption was one of our priorities, and I am therefore glad that we managed to secure an absolute majority for an amendment that at least preserves encryption. At the same time, however, voluntary mass scanning unfortunately passed.

“I am also appalled by the way the European People’s Party is pushing Chat Control 1.0. We should not have been voting on its return at all. We had already rejected it twice, and the Commission should therefore have withdrawn it. But that did not happen, not least because of European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, which is why we had to decide on the proposal again today under the second reading procedure.”

“The fight to protect privacy does not end here. On the contrary. Today’s vote showed that there is still a strong majority in the European Parliament that rejects at least the weakening of encryption. But that does not change the fact that Parliament approved the possibility of mass spying on millions of messages from innocent citizens. I strongly disagree with this and will continue to fight it. The private communications of millions of Europeans must not be weakened under the pretext of protecting children.”

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