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Press release | 30.01.2015

EU counter-terrorism policy

Constructive EU security measures undermined by mass surveillance preoccupation

Commenting on the outcome of the informal meeting of EU interior ministers on counter-terrorism in Riga, Green home affairs spokesperson **Jan Philipp Albrecht** said:

"European governments and the EU are rightly focusing on what can be done to improve cooperation and prevent future terrorist attacks. Home affairs ministers in Riga have outlined a number of measures for EU action that could help to this end but their deliberations are undermined by the preoccupation with stepping up mass surveillance, which is a false solution that creates the pretence of security but risks undermining serious security measures.

"The emerging plans to strengthen cooperation between police and security services are welcome. Improving the exchange of information about individuals under suspicion is crucial for improving our response to terrorist threats. The same is true for the plans to take joint action against the spread of illegal firearms and the financing of terrorism. It is also encouraging that home affairs ministers are looking to address the roots of radicalisation in Europe: this will require concerted action and resources, particularly in areas or institutions (like prisons), which are known to be used for radicalisation.

"Thankfully, mooted plans to facilitate far-reaching 'backdoor' access to internet and other communications data appear to have been shelved for the time being. This senseless measure would do nothing to improve security but would seriously compromise the privacy of citizens across Europe.

"Regrettably, the misdirected focus on mass surveillance remains, with home affairs ministers renewing the push for a disproportionate air passenger data surveillance system (PNR). Blanket mass data retention does not help catch terrorists: there was no shortage of data on the Paris attack perpetrators. With the EU Parliament having rejected this scheme and following the crystal clear judgement by the European Court of Justice last year, which declared blanket mass surveillance measures as incompatible with EU fundamental rights, it is unthinkable to bulldoze through a PNR scheme based on blanket data collection.

"The European Commission has been tasked with presenting a European security strategy by April. We hope that, by then, all counter-productive proposals will have been shelved."

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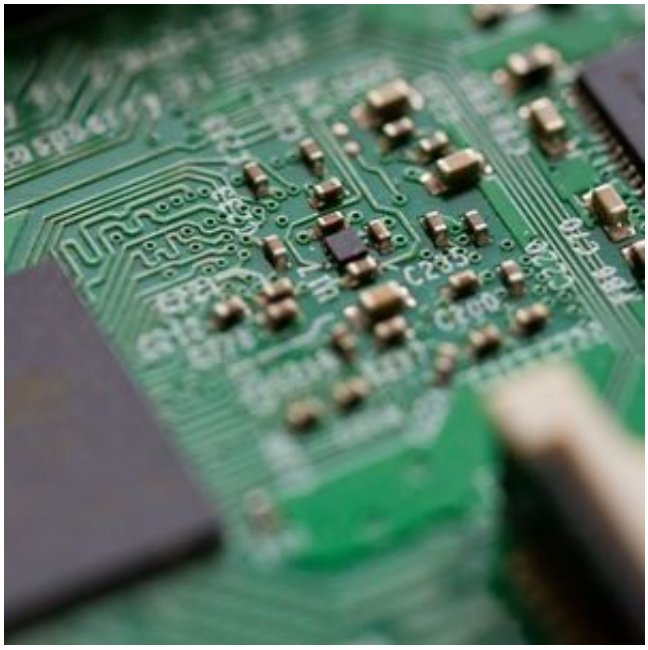


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