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EU Parliament votes in favour of ending surveillance spyware.

The European Parliament has today approved the recommendations to the Member States and the Commission included in the findings report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pegasus(PEGA) and other cyber espionage systems.

The PEGA Committee was created in the wake of the CatalanGate espionage scandal and the espionage cases in Poland, Hungary and Greece. The revelations of the espionage scandal showed that the spyware had been abused inside and outside of the EU to target journalists, activists and politicians across Europe including EFA MEPs Diana Riba and Jordi Solé.

The report contains clear recommendations to the EU member states on the use of spyware and calls for an immediate end of its use by the end of the year, expect those cases that pass the criteria.

Another of the report's positive points is harnessing the concept of national security. The report raises the need to agree on a meaning for this concept at a European level. EFA MEPs also supported that the recommendations demanded the creation of a Europe-wide technological laboratory with the power to scan the phones of citizens who suspect they have been infected so that they can have reliable and recognised evidence to be used in the respective judicial processes.

Beyond the specific case of Spain, the text does not contemplate a ban on these programmes or a moratorium until an adequate legal framework is in place, as demanded by the Greens/EFA, but it does require Member States to carry out a series of specific actions and reforms by the end of the year with the aim of considerably if not totally, restricting their use.

In addition, it also proposes to the European Commission specific measures to amend existing EU legislation to help set limits on the use of these weapons of war.

Diana Riba i Giner, EFA MEP and Vice-President of the PEGA Committee, said:

“Our political group, the Greens/EFA, was able to introduce a large number of amendments to keep Spain on this indecent list of countries with vulnerable fundamental rights, along with Poland, Hungary, Greece or Cyprus".

“The country where the biggest espionage case in Europe has taken place was almost left out of the scrutiny of this committee thanks to the maneuvres of the common front formed by PSOE-PP-VOX-Ciudadanos

"We have managed to put Spain on the list of leading countries in the violation of fundamental rights".

“We demand a full, fair and effective investigation, in which full clarity is provided on all cases of the use of spyware, including the 47 cases of the Catalan Gate for which it is still unclear who is behind them.

Jordi Solé, EFA Group President and member of the PEGA Committee, said:

"We are positively satisfied with the outcome of the Pegasus Inquiry Committee Recommendations, because it sends a clear message to the Spanish authorities calling them to properly investigate, disclose and redress the victims of the CatalanGate scandal, one the largest cases of certified cyber-surveillance in Europe recent history. "

"Spain cannot deny, not only our call, but what is today the call from the European Parliament to cooperate with the judicial authorities, to speed up the processes and to bring light to an unprecedented attack on a democratic movement as a whole inside the European Union."

"Today we are also celebrating a victory over the attempts of PP, VOX, C's and PSOE to waterdown the text and the ambition of the Committee, and to discredit the gravity of the CatalanGate and Citizens Lab investigations. Europe is today pointing to Spain and its responsibilities so it should stop looking the other way."

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Responsible MEPs



Diana Riba i Giner

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group



Jordi Solé

Member

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