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Press release | 14.11.2023

Greens/EFA secure encryption and effective child protection in CSA Regulation

Today, the vast majority of Members of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) voted in favour of the mandate for the negotiations on the proposal for a Regulation on Preventing and Combating Child Sexual Abuse (CSAR). MEPs agreed to completely overhaul the European Commission's initial proposal, which intended indiscriminate mass surveillance of EU citizens' private electronic communication, aka "Chat Control". The Greens/EFA were able to achieve fundamental improvements in key areas, such as better child protection with only targeted and suspicion-based monitoring of communications, and voted in favour of the negotiating mandate.

Patrick Breyer, Pirate Party MEP and Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur in the lead Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, comments:

"We were able to avert the mass surveillance of private communications in the draft law, which is a great success for civil liberties. Thanks to our efforts, the Parliament has joined our call to completely rework the Commission's initial proposal away from indiscriminate mass surveillance to a law that will actually protect children and communications online.

"Following our pressure and massive protests from civil society against chat controls without suspicion, we have achieved a broad majority for a new approach to protecting young people from sexualised exploitation and violence online, notably by introducing security by design obligations for service providers. We have also ensured that the monitoring of private communications is only possible in cases of concrete suspicion by judicial order. The winners of the agreement are our children and our civil liberties."

Marcel Kolaja, Pirate Party MEP and Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur in the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, and Culture and Education Committees, comments:

"The Commission's proposed blanket screening of online communication under the guise of child protection legislation was Orwellian, unethical and unfit for purpose. Now, thanks to our efforts, the Parliament stands behind citizen's right to private communication as well as protecting minors online.

"Under the European Parliament's version, only a judge will be able to order the scanning of private communications, and only for specific suspects. We have also protected the end-to-end encryption of private messages and ensured that even minors can continue to use messaging apps like WhatsApp or Matrix. We urge national governments to see the need to protect children and privacy online and to support the version of the text put forward by the European Parliament."

More:

The Committee vote will now go straight to trilogue negotiations.

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Responsible MEPs



Patrick Breyer

Member



Marcel Kolaja

EP Quaestor, Member

Contact person



Helena Hellstrom

Harassment Prevention and Response Officer



Tomáš Polák

PR political expert (Pirates)



Nikolaus Riss

Press & Media Advisor DE (German language press)

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