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Parliament calls for end to surveillance spyware

Pegasus

Today, MEPs adopted the conclusions of the Pegasus Committee (PEGA) calling for an end of abusive practices by Member States when using spyware. The PEGA Committee was set up in the wake of the revelations that spyware had been abused inside and outside of the EU to target journalists, activists and politicians across Europe, including Greens/EFA Group MEPs Diana i Riba and Jordi Sole. The report contains clear recommendations to the EU and Member States on the use of spyware and calls for an immediate end of its use by the end of the year unless a number of basic conditions are fulfilled.

Saskia Bricmont MEP, Greens/EFA Coordinator in the PEGA Committee, comments:

"Violating the fundamental rights, particularly the right to privacy, of elected representatives, lawyers, journalists and activists is a serious attack on democracy and the rule of law. It can have a dramatic chilling effect, dissuading them from doing their job or asserting their rights. The EU cannot accept such practices, which call into question European values and principles.

"While the committee inquiry officially ends its work, the abuses continue worldwide. It will be up to the Commission and Member States to follow-up with meaningful legislation in order to stop these abuses, which have attacked democracy inside and outside of the EU. No one should be spied on or have their privacy invaded just for doing their job or sharing their views in a democratic society."

Diana i Riba MEP, Greens/EFA Vice Chair of the PEGA Committee, comments:

"As a victim of surveillance spyware, it is very welcome to see that the Parliament is united in calling for an end to the invasions of people's lives and privacy using this technology. We are calling for a very strict set of conditions to be put in place for the use of Pegasus-type spyware, with strict safeguards to ensure that it does not result in a breach of fundamental rights.

"The report proposes mandatory subsequent notification of individuals whose data has been consulted. It also calls for a common legal definition in the EU for the use of national security as a justification for surveillance. Lastly, we are calling for the creation of a European technology laboratory, along the lines of

Citizen Lab, to provide assistance to citizens, journalists and activists."

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Responsible MEPs



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