Press release | 27.07.2009

SWIFT bank data

Barroso seeks to bypass EU Parliament on data transfer agreement with USA

Today, the Council of EU foreign ministers is set to grant the European Commission a mandate to negotiate a bank data sharing agreement with the US authorities. Greens/EFA Co-Presidents **Rebecca Harms Daniel Cohn-Bendit** comment:

"It is unacceptable that the EU Commission is attempting to bypass the European Parliament in its haste to seal an agreement with the US on bank data transfers. (1)

The collection and transfer of sensitive information, such as SWIFT (2) bank data, represent a clear transgression of citizens' fundamental rights. The planned agreement offers no data protection safeguards; it neither imposes the condition of a judicial decision nor makes legal provision against abusive use of the data by US authorities. This is a further reminder why Barroso should not be returned as EU Commission President in autumn. This handyman of the US and EU national governments is using his remaining time in office to push through the agreement before the Lisbon Treaty comes into force. This is a conscious move to bypass the European Parliament, which has a strong track record in defending fundamental rights and data protection.

The Lisbon Treaty will grant the European Parliament substantial co-decision powers in justice and home affairs. This rush decision, timed during the summer recess, speaks volumes of Barroso's disregard for Parliament. We urge EU foreign ministers not to give the Commission a mandate to negotiate this data transfer agreement."

Notes to editors:

(1) The European Commission requires a mandate from all 27 Member States to be able to negotiate an agreement on the future use of EU bank data.

(2) SWIFT - Society of Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications

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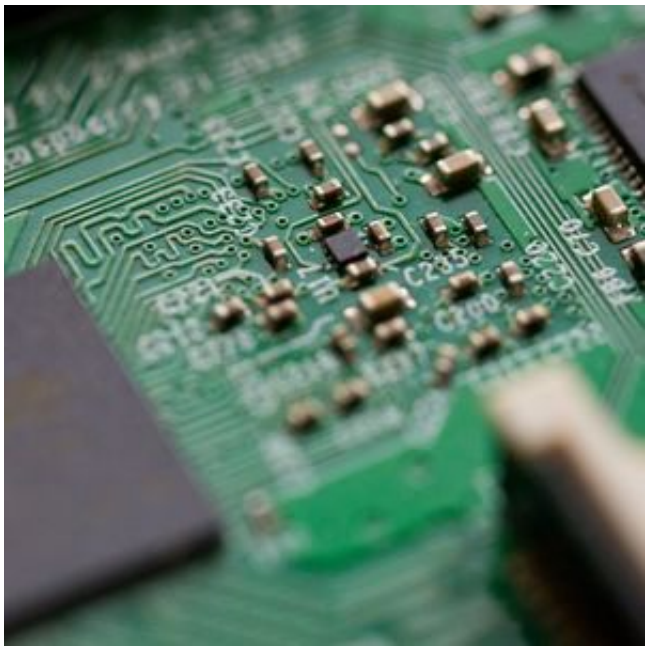


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