



MEPs call for suspension of EU-US bank data deal in response to NSA snooping

Plenary sessions [23-10-2013 - 15:13]

The EU should suspend its Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) agreement with the US in response to the US National Security Agency's alleged tapping of EU citizens' bank data held by the Belgian company SWIFT, says a non-binding resolution voted by Parliament on Wednesday.

The resolution, tabled by the S&D, ALDE and Greens/EFA groups, was passed by 280 votes to 254, with 30 abstentions.

Although Parliament has no formal powers to initiate the suspension or termination of an international deal, "the Commission will have to act if Parliament withdraws its support for a particular agreement", says the approved text. It adds that Parliament will take account of the Commission's response to this demand when considering whether to give its consent to future international agreements.

Europol's investigation

MEPs deplore the fact that no EU member state has investigated these allegations, and urge EU countries to authorise an inquiry by Europol's Cybercrime Centre. The resolution also calls for a "full on-site technical investigation" of allegations of the US authorities having had unauthorised access to, or having created possible "back doors" into, the SWIFT servers.

The Civil Liberties Committee special inquiry into the mass surveillance of EU citizens should also continue to look into the allegations, adds the text.

High data protection standards needed

Parliament stresses that any data-sharing agreement with the US must be based on a consistent legal data protection framework, offering legally-binding standards on purpose limitation, data minimisation, information, access, correction, erasure and redress.

Background

The EU-US TFTP agreement on the processing and transfer of bank messaging data to track terrorists' financial flows entered into force in August 2010. Press reports allege that the US National Security Agency (NSA) has been tapping into EU citizens' personal financial data handled by the Belgian company SWIFT. The US authorities' access to these financial data is strictly limited by the TFTP deal. If proven, such activities would constitute a clear breach of the EU-US agreement.

Procedure: Non-binding resolution

Press release

Contact

Natalia DASILVA

BXL: (+32) 2 28 44301

STR: (+33) 3 881 73661

PORT: (+32) 498 98 39 85

EMAIL: libe-press@europarl.europa.eu

TWITTER: EP_Justice