

**Question for written answer E-8812/2010  
to the Council**

Rule 117

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Subject: EU policy on regulation of surveillance technology

In 2008, Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) sold to Iran a 'lawful interception gateway'(LIG) as part of its mobile network. LIGs enable interception of the communications of individual persons who have been identified by law enforcement authorities. The monitoring extends to incoming and outgoing calls, text messages and data calls (including fax transmissions). Later the same year, NSN also sold a monitoring centre. Such centres can monitor very large numbers of persons. NSN later exited from the monitoring centre business.

LIGs are a standard tool in mobile networks in the EU and the USA and there are concerns about excessive surveillance even in these cases. However, grave abuse has been found to have occurred in Iran, where the LIG and monitoring centre devices provided by NSN were used after the unrest of 2009 to detect, imprison, torture and even kill opposition supporters.

In its resolution of 16 February 2010 (P7\_TA(2010)0016), Parliament strongly criticised international companies, in particular NSN, for providing the Iranian authorities with the necessary censorship and surveillance technology, and thus being instrumental in the persecution and arrest of Iranian dissidents.

1. Does the Council have a detailed plan on how to enhance human rights vis-à-vis new communication technology? If not, will it formulate a comprehensive policy for preventing the use of surveillance technology against human rights defenders and dissidents?
2. Does the Council see international regulation of the surveillance technology business, especially lawful interception and monitoring centres, as the best tool for tackling the problem?
3. Has the Council taken immediate steps, in response to Parliament's resolution of 10 February 2010, to ban the export of surveillance technology (especially monitoring centres) by EU companies to countries, such as Iran, whose governments could use it to violate freedom of expression?
4. As the mandatory lawful interception capacities in mobile networks are being used to silence dissidents and human rights defenders, is the Council prepared to consider working towards a change in network standards that would limit the scope of networks' mandatory lawful interception capacity in the EU and outside Europe?