

**Question for written answer E-006519/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Monitoring encrypted communications

On 16 October 2016, at the EU summit in Bratislava, the French and German interior ministers will outline proposals on the use of encrypted communications to counteract the threat posed by terrorists using encrypted apps. The ministers have already asked the Commission to look into the possibility of framing legislation to harmonise the rights and obligations of all operators that offer internet access or telecoms products or services in the EU, regardless of whether or not they are based in Europe. This would mean that operators unwilling to cooperate could be required to remove illegal content or to decrypt messages where this is necessary for the purposes of investigations.

Such legislation could lead to a drift towards a denial of freedom and to Member State intelligence services bowing to political pressure to initiate a policy of blanket surveillance that undermines privacy and breaches data confidentiality. The NSA's longstanding tradition of spying on global communications, as witnessed by its partnership with Crypto AG, the Echelon programme and the Snowden affair, serves as a warning to all of us.

How will the Commission respond to any Council proposals on encrypted communications?