

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs  
The Chairman

203036 11.09.2013

General Keith B. ALEXANDER  
Director of the US National Security Agency  
c/o United States mission  
to the European Union

**Subject:** *Hearing on LIBE Committee Inquiry on Electronic mass surveillance of EU citizens*

Dear Mr Alexander,

It was with very great interest that I read in a German weekly about your readiness to engage in the debate about freedom and surveillance in the 21st century, a debate you qualified according to the article as "healthy" (Die Zeit "Der mit dem Röntgenblick" published 4 July this year). I cannot agree more with you.

The very same day this article was published the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the US National Security Agency surveillance programme, surveillance bodies in various Member States and their impact on EU citizens' privacy<sup>1</sup>. In this resolution the Parliament instructed the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, which I have the honour to chair, to conduct an inquiry.

In addition to "gathering all relevant information" and "investigating the alleged surveillance activities of US authorities" the mandate of the inquiry calls for an assessment of the impact of surveillance programmes on fundamental rights and for recommendations on future law-making.

It is my intention to make this inquiry one of the main public fora in Europe for debating the impact of surveillance programmes on citizens, be there from the USA or from EU national Member States.

Striking the right balance between a high level of security and a genuine level of liberty has been a constant debate over the two past decades. It seems our societies at large are experiencing a U-turn in terms of trust: can they really keep credible expectations that the legitimate search for global security has not led to a general surveillance of all citizens? More specifically can they trust public and governing bodies, law enforcement and intelligence

<sup>1</sup> P7\_TA-PROV(2013)0322; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0322+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

communities, private companies, legal and technology experts and still enjoy their right to privacy- or is this gone? What impact will these developments have both in terms of citizens' fundamental rights and of trade and economic cooperation between the EU and the US?

Transatlantic negotiations on PNR and SWIFT have shown that US and EU authorities do share the same goals in terms of fight against terrorism but have very different historical backgrounds, legal standards and data protection culture.

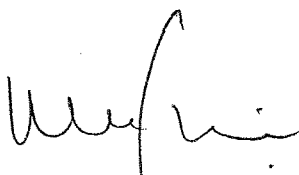
Given your high responsibilities, outstanding competence and full commitment at the head of the US National Security Agency and your availability to engage in dialogue I would hereby like to invite you to attend one of our meetings in the framework of the LIBE Committee Inquiry- preferably either on 24 or 30 September in Brussels (possibly also via videoconference).

The debate ahead of us is a key debate for the 21st century. Reactions in Europe about the revelations published over the summer period must be seriously taken into account. If trust is to be regained, first dialogue has to be engaged.

Your contribution to this debate before the Parliament of 506 million EU citizens may give a powerful and appreciated sign that dialogue at the relevant level can be a reality when it comes to issues key to citizens, and is not just a word.

The secretariat of the LIBE Committee remains at your disposal to arrange for your participation in this inquiry in the best possible circumstances<sup>2</sup>.

Yours sincerely,



**Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR**

CC: Mr Martin SCHULZ, President of the European Parliament

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