

**Question for written answer E-012255/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)**

Subject: Possible UN action following revelations about the NSA and preserving the open global internet

It has been reported¹ that Brazil and Germany are heading an initiative to seek a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution that would call for the expansion of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to the online world, including the right to privacy. The initiative follows recent revelations about mass surveillance activities in third countries by the US National Security Agency (NSA), extending to the personal communications of several world leaders, including the President of Brazil and the German Chancellor.

Whilst there is a need to condemn and tackle the unlawful NSA practices, past experience has shown worrying trends for digital freedoms when the United Nations tries internet governance. Parliament and the Commission have been outspoken²³ about this, particularly in the run-up to last year's UN Internet Governance Forum in Baku.

Parliament adopted a resolution⁴ in support of an open internet without formal public control and supporting the so-called multi-stakeholder model. The Commission and the Council have actively campaigned among Member States and internationally to counter efforts by countries seeking a formal UN governing role for the internet. Given the EP's 'Digital Freedom Strategy in EU Foreign Policy'⁵, the European Cyber Security Strategy⁶ and a previous UN General Assembly Resolution on internet freedom⁷, the following questions arise:

Is the Commission in any way involved in the above-mentioned UNGA ICCPR initiative?

What is the Commission's assessment of the initiative in the context of its vocal support for an open global internet, and especially in the context of reports about 'a German internet'⁸?

Will the Commission pro-actively seek to remind EU Member States of their commitment to an open global internet and respect for the current multi-stakeholder governance model?

How will the Commission defend the principles contained in the EU's cyber security strategy in the UNGA and especially resistance to increased governmental (or UN) control over the internet?

How does the Commission assess the export of mass surveillance technologies (or digital arms) from the EU, which are used for the very practices that EU governments have lately condemned, and the lack of export controls? What will the Commission do to tackle this issue as soon as possible?

How does the Commission seek to defend/uphold the rule of law and human rights online in the EU?

¹

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/10/24/exclusive_germany_brazil_turn_to_un_to_restrain_american_spies

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20445637>

³ <http://www.zdnet.com/no-need-for-un-to-take-over-internet-says-eu-digital-chief-kroes-7000003145/>

⁴ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2012-0451&language=EN&ring=P7-RC-2012-0498>

⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2012-0470&language=EN&ring=A7-2012-0374>

⁶ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/137602.pdf

⁷ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session20/A.HRC.20.L.13_en.doc

⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/25/us-usa-spying-germany-idUSBRE99O09S20131025>