

**Question for written answer E-001601/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Pascal Arimont (PPE)

Subject: Smartphones as spying devices

It is often suspected that smartphone apps are turning the phone's microphone on without being asked to do so, in order to secretly listen in on conversations and phone calls. Technologies such as ultrasonic cross-device tracking allow applications to access a device's microphone and thereby access sensitive personal data without the explicit consent of the end-user. In turn, this can lead to undesired profiling and targeting.

In its reply to written question E-004263/2019¹, the Commission pointed out that the proposed regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications prohibits the collection of information by terminal equipment without the end-user's consent.

Given that negotiations between Parliament and the Council have reached a standstill, it seems unlikely that the regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications will enter into force promptly.

1. What protective measures are already available to end-users to effectively prevent terminal devices from collecting information without permission?
2. Going beyond the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation, what else is the Commission doing to effectively prevent terminal devices from collecting data without the end-user's consent?

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¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-004263-ASW_EN.html