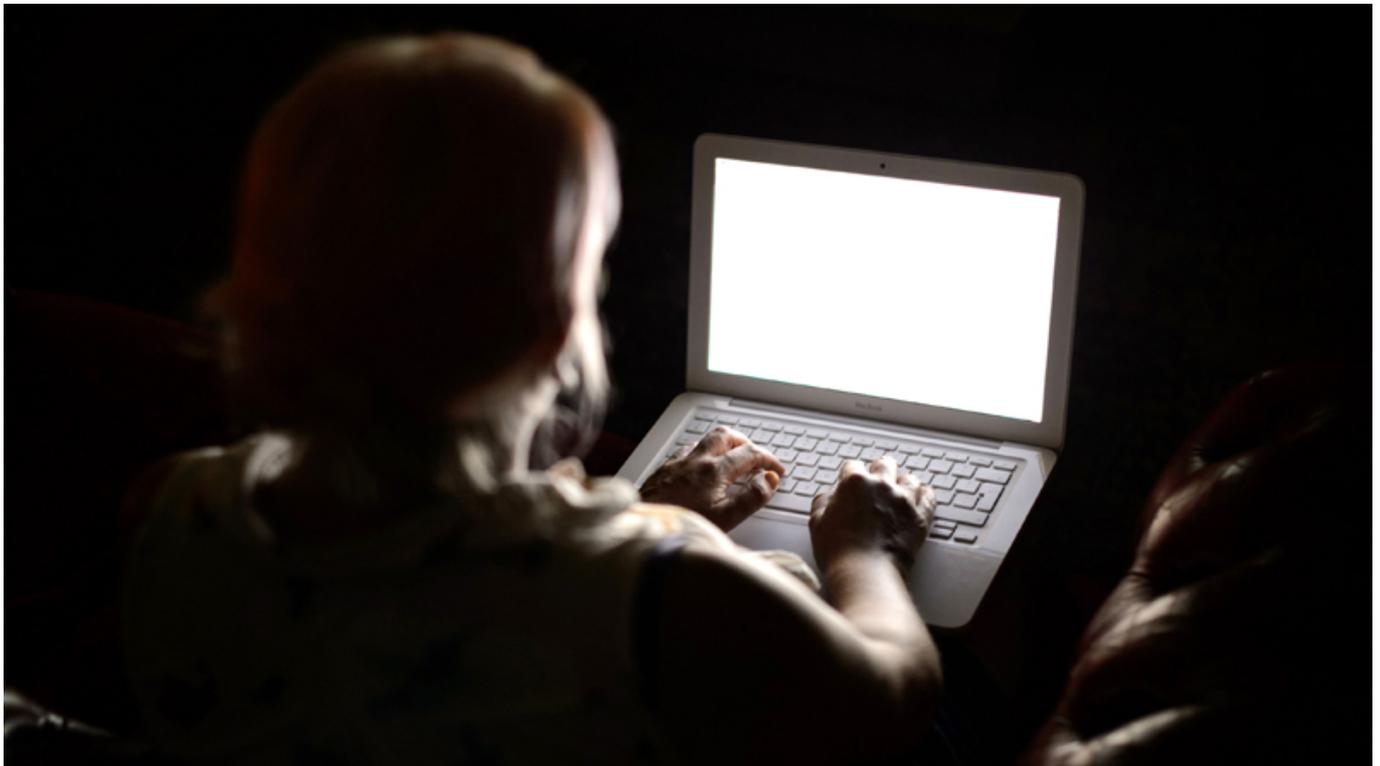


## MEPs to vote on stricter EU export controls on cyber-surveillance tools

Written by Martin Banks on 12 January 2018 in News  
News

MEPs are set to approve an extension of EU export controls on cyber-surveillance tools.



Computer | Photo credit: Press Association

---

Next week in Strasbourg, MEPs will vote on proposals to impose much stricter rules on the exports of surveillance technology.

The move is seen as vital in order to prevent authoritarian regimes from spying on their own citizens.

The relevant technology could include devices to intercept mobile phones, hack into computers, circumvent passwords or identify internet users.

The fear is that such technology could possibly be used for human rights violations.

The vote in Parliament is on the recast of the control of exports, transfer, brokering, technical assistance and transit of dual-use items.

Dual-use items are goods which can be used for military as well as for civilian purposes and include items as diverse as drones, high performance computers, cyber security testing equipment and certain chemicals, which can be used both as agriculture fertilisers or as a base for explosives.

About 10 per cent of EU exports fall under dual use.

Germany accounts for an estimated 50 to 60 per cent of current exports of dual use goods.

Goods and technologies designed for use in peaceful, civilian circumstances, but useable also for military purposes are already under an EU export control regime.

The recast of this regulation provides for the inclusion of cyber-surveillance goods into the control regime, such as devices for intercepting and locating mobile phones (IMSI-Catcher), circumventing passwords or identifying internet users.

The recast introduces the possibility to control exports of cyber-surveillance items on human rights grounds.

At a briefing ahead of the vote in plenary, Parliament's rapporteur, Klaus Buchner, told reporters that "in a world in which the space for civil society and human rights activists is under threat, this is much needed reform."

He said, "21st century warfare is mainly built on dual-use technology, and its relevance grows steadily."

The MEP said that notable examples include the finisher software of the German company Gamma Deutschland, which helps filter identities from the internet and was sold to Egypt to use against revolts there in 2011, and the lawful interception gateways (LIGs) and monitoring centres sold to Iran in 2010 to bring protesters to jail.

A debate on new EU export controls takes place on Tuesday followed by a vote on the issue on Wednesday.

Buchner spelled out to reporters what he wants in the recast. He wants to expand European value-based trade policy in line with the torture goods regulation and the conflict minerals regulation with an explicit prohibition for the export of cyber items where risks of human rights violations exist.

The German deputy also wants to strengthen human rights and the protection of the right to privacy, data and, freedom of assembly, by adding clear-cut criteria and definitions to the regulation; include a human rights catch-all clause for cyber-surveillance items so that the export of risky new technologies can be controlled before causing harm.

He also believes member states should be allowed to gradually create a list of controlled cyber-surveillance items that would go beyond the currently international Wassenaar arrangement and wants to increase transparency by making member states publish data relevant to provided and or denied export licenses in order to produce comparable data for better law-making and research.

Buchner also said that civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders should be included in the activities of relevant regulatory bodies.

He added, “We also call for encryption technologies to be deleted from the list of controlled cyber-surveillance products since these are vital for the self-protection of human rights defenders and safeguard the export of helpful diagnostic items for protection.”

Buchner told the briefing, “Dual use goods is an industry which is worth an estimated €80bn. There has been some resistance from the defence sector for the proposals we are calling for but, generally, there is widespread support.

“I am also confident we will get a majority of MEPs supporting our recommendations in next week’s vote.”

## About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter for the Parliament Magazine

## Tags

[Digital Agenda](#) [1]

[Justice and Rights](#) [2]

[Research and Innovation](#) [3]

## Categories

[Defence and Security](#) [4]

[Public order, justice and rights](#) [5]

[Science, technology and research](#) [6]



Parliament Magazine is a Dods Group plc title

## Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [EU Elections 2019](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

## Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)

[MonitoringDods](#)  
[ResearchDods](#)  
[EventsDods](#)  
[Training](#)

**Media & publishing titles**

[Politics HomeThe HouseThe Parliament](#)  
[MagazineHolyrood](#)  
[Total PoliticsPublic Affairs NewsCivil Service World](#)  
[PublicTechnology Training JournalDods Parliamentary CompanionVacher's Quarterly The European Union and Public Affairs Directory](#)

**Dods events**

[Westminster BriefingDigital Health & Care ScotlandMEP AwardsThe Skills SummitScottish Public Service AwardsPublic Sector Procurement SummitPublic Sector ICT SummitCyber Security SummitCyber Security 2017Training Journal Awards](#)

**Partnership events**

[The Health and Care Innovation ExpoCivil Service](#)

[LiveCivil Service](#)  
[AwardsChief](#)  
[Nursing Officer for](#)  
[England's](#)  
[SummitWomen into](#)  
[LeadershipThe](#)  
[Youth Justice](#)  
[ConventionSocitm](#)  
[Spring](#)  
[ConferenceNHSCC](#)  
[Annual Members'](#)  
[EventDods at Party](#)  
[Conference](#)

---

[Privacy Policy](#)[Terms & Conditions](#)[Advertising](#)[Sponsorship](#) [Subscriptions](#)

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/meps-vote-stricter-eu-export-controls-cyber-surveillance-tools>

**Links**

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/digital-agenda>
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/justice-and-rights>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/research-and-innovation>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/defence-and-security>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/public-order-justice-and-rights>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/science-technology-and-research>