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EU border control plans

Big brother technologies not a smart plan for Europe's borders

The European Commission will today present proposals on the use of new technologies to control Europe's borders. The so-called 'Smart Borders' package includes controversial proposals to register the fingerprints of essentially all non-EU citizens [1] every time they enter and exit the EU, as well as a registration programme to allow frequent travellers to bypass queues at security controls. Commenting on the proposals, Green migration and civil liberties spokesperson **Ska Keller** (MEP, Germany) said:

“The far-reaching proposals presented by the Commission today are anything but ‘smart’ and would create a Big Brother 2.0 at Europe’s borders.

“All non-EU travellers would be effectively treated as suspected criminals, with their fingerprints to be collected not just every time they enter and exit the EU, but also when they cross identity controls by police within the EU. This would go far beyond the procedures currently in place in EU member states. On top of this, the system will be set up so that it can be accessed by police authorities at a later date, which would open the door to the further creeping compromise of basic rights.

“The intrusive proposals, which would compromise the data protection rights of travellers, go far beyond what the Commission requires to ensure its ostensible aim of verifying who has overstayed their permit to stay in the EU. We don’t need to further expand the data retention octopus: unwanted third state citizens can already be identified based on the existing tools we have.”

Green justice and home affairs spokesperson **Jan Philipp Albrecht** (MEP, Germany) added:

“Spending hundreds of millions of Euros on new border control and passenger data analysis technologies makes no sense at a time of budgetary cutbacks across Europe. With public funds already lacking for justice and police authorities and cooperation with Europol and Eurojust, along with all public spending areas, these proposals simply do not make sense and the EP must block them.

“The proposed supposedly voluntary registration of frequent travellers would also undermine the basic rights of those participating. They will be monitored and discriminated against independent of suspicion if they insist on their rights. This is in spite of the fact that there is no evidence to show that this trend towards mass data storage has yielded any improvements for security and criminal investigations.”

[1] Individuals with long permits of stay and their families, as well as the family members of EU citizens would be excluded.

Background information

"Borderline" study on the EU's new EUROSUR border surveillance initiatives and 'Smart borders':
<http://www.ska-keller.de/images/pdfs/borderline%20the%20eus%20new%20border%20surveillance%20initiatives%20web-optimized.pdf>

"Smash borders" campaign by Ska Keller and Jan Philipp Albrecht: <http://www.smashborders.eu/en/>

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