

Liberty instead of fear!

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Surveillance is spreading through society, allowing the state and corporations to register, monitor, and control our behavior in troubling new ways. Our phone conversations and travel habits, friends and interests are increasingly being monitored by the „big brother“ of the state and the „little brothers“ of the corporate world.

The increase of surveillance is on the political agenda as well, with data retention of telecommunication and on-line transactions is being implemented across Europe. The truth is, all the evidence indicates that this kind of police state would:

- not improve protection from crime
- have costs measured in millions of euro
- and violate the privacy of innocent people

When politicians blindly take action in an atmosphere of fear, and for the sake of merely being seen to do something, thoughtful long-term measures that would truly strengthen security are ignored - as are schemes that could address real everyday problems, like unemployment and poverty.

And if we feel constantly monitored, we cannot defend our rights and advocate for a fairer society without feeling self-conscious and exposed. Over time, an uncritical consumer society emerges: a citizenry who have "nothing to hide", and who have given up their freedoms for an illusion of temporary safety. We do not want live in such a society!

We demand:

- Less surveillance
- Auditing of existing surveillance laws
- No new surveillance laws

What you can do:

- Sensitise your friends
- Write your congressman
- Get involved with civil rights groups

You can find a list of civil rights organisations at www.freiheit-statt-angst.de

„I have nothing to hide“



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*Populist
themes on surveillance
properly addressed*

„I have nothing to hide“

Why should an upright citizen have anything to hide? Simply put: There are things that should be of no concern to the government. Every human has a right to privacy which is also **fixed in the German constitutional law and the European Convention of Human Rights**. If you have nothing to hide, why do you close the toilet door behind yourself? Why don't you show everyone your bank account statements, your telephone bills or tell them your entire life story? Those who really think they have nothing to hide are welcome to live in a „Big Brother“ container - but they should not accuse others of wanting to keep their secrets to themselves. Furthermore: Those who cannot accuse themselves of anything need not be under surveillance in the first place.

„But I am afraid of terrorism, the state has to protect me from it“

A strong and democratic constitutional state proceeds against criminals with determination but without **blindly declaring everyone a suspect**. Adequate and effective are those investigations against suspicious persons and groups, that are targeted and not the **random surveillance of arbitrary people** who are completely innocent and innocuous. Not the fearful and overreacting state is strong, where every citizen is seen as a threat that should be inspected and controlled as good as possible. Strong is the state that defends the rights of its citizens, who pursues focused investigations, once concrete clues exist. No state can guarantee 100% security and if tried, **it will no longer be a free and democratic constitutional state**. Those who want protection at any price would also have to demand abolition of road traffic as it costs thousands of human lives every year. In reality we live comparatively safe. The risk of becoming a victim of serious crime or even terrorism is marginal - especially in comparison to other life risks such as illness, car accidents, poverty or unemployment.

„Having nothing to hide means having nothing to fear“

Even those who do not have to accuse themselves of anything will have to expect more frequent drastic police measures. A simple (false) suspicion or entry in a list of potentially dangerous people can lead to radical measures such as observations, house searches or questioning of the social surroundings. These measures can lead to condemnation in advance of trial - or what would you think if two police officers stood in front of your neighbour's door, asking „some questions about Mr. Smith from next door“? Even cases of entry or exit denials due to confusion of names as well as inadvertent killings by security forces happen repeatedly. Nobody can rely on being spared from the consequences of surveillance getting out of hand.

This Handout is initiated by German Working Group on Data Retention (AK Vorrat)
Further Information about AK Vorrat in German only: www.vorratsdatenspeicherung.de

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