

21 September 2023

**Journalists' open letter to Members of the European Parliament calling for the absolute prohibition of spyware surveillance**

Dear honorable members of the European Parliament,

Ahead of the upcoming vote of the draft report on the proposed European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), journalists in Europe are urging you to introduce an absolute ban on the surveillance of journalists through spyware in this text.

Some of us, and many of our colleagues across Europe and the world, have been unlawfully targeted in the past years, including by EU Member States. Some of whom have used intrusive surveillance weapons against us, threatening and potentially breaching confidential communications with our sources, invading our private lives and putting our safety at risk.

Spyware is today a major threat to press freedom. It gives access to a disproportionate and unrestricted amount of data: all the individual's communications, photos, contacts and online behaviour data are collected - without the knowledge of the victim. The EU must urgently put an end to it.

For us journalists, digital security and data integrity are essential to guarantee our safety, and confidentiality and protection to our sources. We must be able to trust our devices and channels of communications in order to provide public interest and quality journalism.

Several EU governments have infected journalists' phones with spyware while using national security as a pretext. Including the same grounds in future legislation would threaten our ability to hold governments to account, which is a cornerstone of EU democratic values. We need full and immediate protection.

Although a number of safeguards have been considerably added in the course of parliamentary work, too many loopholes remain. The European Parliament can still close them and offer us the shield we need from illegal surveillance.

We call on you today to prohibit the use of spyware against journalists in the EMFA.

Best regards,

Signatures:

1. Christoph Seibel, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
2. Martina Rinner, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria

3. Clemens Toman, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
4. Sonja Sagmeister, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
5. Andrea Wolfinger, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
6. Elke Weiss, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
7. Katharina Schenk, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
8. Bibiane Zeller-Presenhuber, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
9. Daniela Koller, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
10. Sabine Schuster, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
11. Helene Voglreiter, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
12. Martina Shad-kalmar, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
13. Sandra Oelz, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
14. Arwid Holtenau, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
15. Konstantin Obermayr, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
16. Sascha Schrems, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
17. Daniela Soykan-Tober, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
18. Astrid Spielberger, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
19. Markus Preslmayr, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
20. Ajda Sticker, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
21. Robert Gordon, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
22. Josef Peter Glanz, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
23. Guenther Loeffelmann, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
24. Marie-Theres Engelmayer, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
25. Alexandra Siebenhofer, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
26. Andrea Brosch-Wichtl, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
27. Matthias Schrom-Kux, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
28. Katharina Gruber, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria

29. Wera Gruber, Österreichischer Rundfunk - ORF, Austria
30. Karl van den Broeck, Apache.be, Belgium
31. Steven Vanden Bussche, Apache.be, Belgium
32. Joel Matriche, Le Soir, Belgium
33. Priyanka Shankar, Independent, Belgium, India
34. Irina Nedeva, Bulgarian National Radio, Bulgaria
35. Dora Kršul, Telegram.hr, Croatia
36. Bojan Arežina, Hrvatska radiotelevizija – HRT, Croatia
37. Denis Romac, Večernji list, Croatia
38. Silvana Mendusic, Telegram.hr, Croatia
39. Giovanni Vale, Freelance, Croatia
40. Barbara Majstorovic Ivezic, Nova Tv, Croatia
41. Zdenko Duka, Freelance, Croatia
42. Iva Ivanac, Hanza media, Croatia
43. Sanja Jurisic, NovaTV, Croatia
44. Domagoj Novokmet, N1, Croatia
45. Goran Borkovic, Forum.tm, Croatia
46. Andrej Dimitrijević, Telegram.hr, Croatia
47. Ivan Pandžić, 24sata, Croatia
48. Igor Alborghetti, Freelance, Croatia
49. Davor Pongračić, Cropix photoagency, Hanza Media, Croatia
50. Igor Lasić, Novosti, Croatia
51. Tomislav Kukec, Jutarnji list, Croatia
52. Berislav Jelinic, Nacional News Corporation, Croatia
53. Tea Radović, Radnička prva, Croatia
54. Vida Grujin, Radio Dalmacija, Croatia

55. Miroslav Ambruš-Kiš, Freelance, Croatia
56. Radoslav Dejanović, Freelance, Croatia
57. Valentina Wiesner, Večernji list, Croatia
58. Drago Pilsel, Freelance, Croatia
59. Vladimir Šetka, Hrvatska radiotelevizija – HRT, Croatia
60. Paparella Saša, Vida Tv, Croatia
61. Serđo Obratov, Croatian News Agency, Croatia
62. Joško Grgin, Portal grada Kaštela, Croatia
63. Ružica Cigler, Freelance, Croatia
64. Damir Dević, Hrvatska radiotelevizija – HRT, Croatia
65. Goran Gazdek, Freelance, Croatia
66. Josip Gavranovic, HTV, Croatia
67. Mato Jerkić, Bel-press d.o.o., Croatia
68. Vlado Vurusic, Jutarnji list, Croatia
69. Monika Đogaš, Bel-press d.o.o., Croatia
70. Hrvoje Zovko, Hrvatska radiotelevizija – HRT, Croatia
71. Mašenjka Bačić, Oštro, Croatia
72. Maja Sever, Hrvatska radiotelevizija – HRT, Croatia
73. Gordana Grbic, Novi list, Croatia
74. Jelena Prtoric, Freelance, Croatia
75. Ante Ljubičić, Yammam FM, Croatia
76. Ana Malbaša Major, Nova TV, Croatia
77. Helena Puljiz, Freelance, Croatia
78. Sasa Lekovic, Freelance, Croatia
79. Jelena Jindra, Hrvatska radiotelevizija – HRT, Croatia
80. Ivica Buljan, Freelance, Croatia

81. Ivor Kruljac, Zagreb.info, Croatia
82. Ana Čelar, Oštro, Center for investigative journalism in the Adriatic region, Croatia
83. Vesna Šaško, Večernji list, Croatia
84. Draženko Požarić, Parentium.com, Croatia
85. Lucie Sykorova, Hlidacipes.org, Czech Republic
86. Staffan Dahllöf, Freelance, Investigative Reporting Denmark, Denmark
87. Allan Boye Thulstrup, Freelance, Denmark
88. Soraya Morvan Smith, France 24, France
89. Olivier Tesquet, Télérama, France
90. Jacques Monin, Radio France, France
91. Delphine Banas, Le Républicain Lorrain, France
92. Laurent Richard, Forbidden Stories, France
93. Edouard Perrin, Independent, France
94. Emmanuel Poupard, Courrier de l'Ouest, France
95. Elise Descamps, Freelance, France
96. Clément Pouré, Freelance, France
97. Maria João Carvalho, Formerly Euronews, France
98. Caroline Harrap, Freelance, France
99. Corinne Renou-Nativel, Independent, France
100. Paweł Zbierski, Freelance, France
101. Anton Karliner, Freelance, France
102. Taha Siddiqui, Freelance, France
103. Pascal Hansens, Investigate Europe, France, Belgium
104. Peter Freitag, Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Germany
105. Annette Rose, Freelance, Germany
106. Ute Korinth, Independent, Germany

107. Frederik Obermaier, Paper trail media, Germany
108. Anna Loll, Freelance, Germany
109. Lukas Knöfler, Freelance, Germany
110. Bernd Seydel, Freelance, Germany
111. Klaus Enderle, Deutsche Welle, Germany
112. Annkathrin Weis, Freelance, Germany
113. Mika Beuster, mittelhesse.de, Germany
114. Jan R. Bertram, WEIN+MARKT Fachverlag Dr. Fraund, Germany
115. Stefan Frerichs, ARD Online, Germany
116. Barbara Deller-Leppert, Freelance, Germany
117. Ditmar Pauke, Independent, Germany
118. Judith Schäfer, DIE RHEINPFALZ Verlag und Druckerei GmbH & Co. KG, Germany
119. Dennis M Stamm, DIATRA-Verlag gGmbH, Germany
120. Jan R. Bertram, WEIN+MARKT Fachverlag Dr. Fraund, Germany
121. Daniel Moßbrucker, Freelance, Germany
122. Nicola Timpe, SoVD Zeitung Hamburg, Germany
123. Michael Rauhe, Hamburger Abendblatt, Germany
124. Naïs Baier, Freelance, Germany
125. Eberhard Kügler, NDR, Germany
126. Ramona Richter, Freelance, Germany
127. Sabine Anton-Katzenbach, Freelance, Germany
128. Andrea Seliger, Freelance, Germany
129. Johannes Wendland, Freelance, Germany
130. Cay Rademacher, Freelance, Germany
131. Anne-Dorette Ziems, Freelance, Germany
132. Gerald Sinschek, Freelance, Germany

133. Britta Radkowsky, Freelance, Germany
134. Olivia Samnick, Independent, Germany
135. Titus Gast, SWR, Germany
136. Frank Trautvetter, Freelance, Germany
137. Charis Stank, Freelance, Germany
138. Niels Boeing, Freelance, Germany
139. Jenny Witt, Freelance, Germany
140. Corinna Chateaubourg, Independent, Germany
141. Niklas Schomburg, Kieler Nachrichten, Germany
142. Florian von Westerholt, Independent, Germany
143. Ralf Dörwang, Freelance, Germany
144. Christiane Rose, Aufklaren, Germany
145. Herbert Boehm, Freelance, Germany
146. Harald Schumann, Investigate Europe, Tagesspiegel (D), Germany
147. Bernd Otter, Freelance, Germany
148. Werner Hinzpeter, test Magazine, test.de, Germany
149. Daniel Schwingenheuer, Freelance, Germany
150. Johannes Tran, Free lance, Germany
151. Wolfgang Bernert, Deutsche Welle, Germany
152. Vas Panagiotopoulos, Freelance, Greece
153. Kostas Vaxevanis, Documento newspaper, Greece
154. Tony Rigopoulos, Documento newspaper, Greece
155. Thanasis Koukakis, CNN Greece, Greece
156. Mirsini Grigori, Freelance, Greece
157. Dimitris Kyvelos, Free lance, Greece
158. Vaggelis Spirakis, Koutipandoras, Greece

159. Antonis Funtis, Documento, Greece
160. George Trapeziotis, Sto Kokkino 105.5, Greece
161. Eliza Triantafillou, insidestory.gr, Greece
162. Andri Disha, Freelance, Greece
163. Asteris Masouras, Global Voices, Greece
164. Danai Maragoudaki, Solomon, Greece
165. Stavros Malichudis, Solomon, Greece
166. Iliana Papangeli, Solomon, Greece
167. Kyriakos Papadopoulos, Freelance, Greece
168. Angeliki Boubouka, Athens-Macedonian News Agency, Greece
169. Margarita Michelakou, inside story, Greece
170. Dániel Szalay, Media1.hu, Hungary
171. Szabolcs Panyi, VSquare.org, Hungary
172. Geoff Hunter, OCCRP, International
173. Lorenzo Frigerio, Fondazione Libera Informazione, Italy
174. Monica Soldano, Freelance, Italy
175. Elisa Pierandrei, Freelance, Italy
176. Roberto Secci, Rainews24, Italy
177. Elisa Marincola di San Floro, Articolo21.org, Italy
178. Francesca De Benedetti, Domani newspaper, Italy
179. Nello Scavo, Avvenire, Italy
180. Antonella Cignarale, Report, Italy
181. Giulia Innocenzi, Rai, Italy
182. Alessia Marzi, Rai, Italy
183. Nicole Corritore, Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa, Italy
184. Arturo Di Corinto, Independent, Italy



185. Barbara Scaramucci, Articolo21.org, Italy
186. Stefano Corradino, Articolo21.org, Italy
187. Vincenzo Vita, Il manifesto, Italy
188. Raffaella Notariale, Rai 3, Italy
189. Antonio Moscatello, askanews, Italy
190. Elisabetta Cosci, Freelance, Italy
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192. Anna Maria Caresta, Freelance, Italy
193. Rossana Livolsi, Freelance, Italy
194. Vincenzo Campo, Stampa Romana - FNSI, Italy
195. Rossella Lamina, Freelance, Italy
196. Filippo Barone, Rai, Italy
197. Debora Ergas, Rai, Italy
198. Giulia Sabella, Rai, Italy
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200. Anna Celenta, Freelance, Italy
201. Vittorio Ferrara, Freelance, Italy
202. Domenico Giovinazzo, Withub, Eunews, Gea Agency, Italy
203. Anna Del Freo, Il Sole 24 Ore, Italy
204. Sirio Tesori, Citynews, Italy
205. Ennio Maffei, Freelance, Italy
206. Rossella Lamina, Freelance, Italy
207. Letizia Palmisano, Freelance, Italy
208. Anna Maria Caresta, radio, Italy
209. Chiara Adelaide Porta, www.presskit.it, Italy
210. Nicola Natale, Freelance, Italy

211. Carmelo Iannello, Gazzetta di Parma Srl, Italy
212. Giorgio Maria Leone, Rai, TGR Emilia-Romagna, Italy
213. Serafino Paternoster, EcocNews.com, Italy
214. Evgenia Levin, Bernardinai.lt, Lithuania
215. Tatiana Ilina, PAN-VilNews, Lithuania
216. Anthea Cachia, Content House, Malta
217. Sabrina Zammit, The Malta Independent, Malta
218. Regine Nguini, Freelance, Malta
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220. Marek Kulinski, Freelance, Poland
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222. Jerzy Modlinger, Freelance, Poland
223. Dorota Bilewicz-Bandurska, Freelance, Poland
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226. Jacek Lepiarz, Deutsche Welle, Poland
227. Seweryn Blumsztajn, Freelance, Poland
228. Krzysztof Dowgird, Freelance, Poland
229. Cezary Łazarewicz, Freelance, Poland
230. Wiesław Romanowski, Freelance, Poland
231. Krzysztof Bobinski, Freelance, Poland
232. Bartosz Ławski, Freelance, Poland
233. Andrzej Krajewski, Freelance, Poland
234. Ewa Iwanowa, Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland
235. Marta Rebzda, Polish Radio - PR, Poland
236. Grażyna Olewniczak, Freelance, Poland

237. Bernardo Brito e Cunha, Jornal de Sintra, Portugal
238. Isabel Nery, Freelance, Portugal
239. Carlos Pinota, Rádio e Televisão de Portugal – RTP, Portugal
240. António Melo, Freelance, Portugal
241. Paulo Duarte, Freelance, Portugal
242. Margarida Davim, Revista SÁBADO, Portugal
243. Rita Pereira, TSF Radio, Portugal
244. Pedro Miguel Santos, Freelance, Portugal
245. Elsa Andrade, Mais Bancário, Portugal
246. Laura Ramos, Cannareporter.eu, Portugal
247. Silvia Alves, Rádio e Televisão de Portugal – RTP, Portugal
248. Gonçalo Lobo Pinheiro, Lusa News Agency, Portugal
249. Luis Branco, Rádio e Televisão de Portugal – RTP, Portugal
250. Ana Oliveira, Caras magazine, Portugal
251. Susana Torrão, Freelance, Portugal
252. Rui Sá, Rádio e Televisão de Portugal – RTP, Portugal
253. Fred Rocha, Fumaca, Portugal
254. Joana Teresa Batista, Fumaca, Portugal
255. Bernardo Afonso, Fumaca, Portugal
256. Ricardo Esteves Ribeiro, Fumaca, Portugal
257. Margarida David Cardoso, Fumaca, Portugal
258. Nuno Viegas, Fumaca, Portugal
259. Fred Rocha, Fumaça, Portugal
260. Joana Teresa Batista, Fumaça, Portugal
261. Bernardo Afonso, Fumaça, Portugal
262. Ricardo Esteves Ribeiro, Fumaça, Portugal

263. Margarida David Cardoso, Fumaça, Portugal
264. Nuno Viegas, Fumaça, Portugal
265. Sofia Branco, Lusa news agency, Portugal
266. Jorge Manuel Lopes, Jornal de Notícias, Portugal
267. Frederico Pinheiro, RTP, Portugal
268. José Nicolau Melo, Aposentado, Portugal
269. Szilárd Horváth-Kovács, Freelance, Romania
270. Miroslava Kernová, Omediach.com, Slovakia
271. Gregor Preac, Freelance, Slovenia
272. Matej Simič, The European Correspondent, Slovenia
273. Uros Skerl Kramberger, Dnevnik, Slovenia
274. Simona Fajfar, Delo, Slovenia
275. Nevenka Dobljekar, Freelance, Slovenia
276. Polona Pivec, Freelance, Slovenia
277. Sašo Bizjak, Večer, Slovenia
278. Tanja Lesničar Pučko, Dnevnik, Slovenia
279. Ranka Ivelja, Dnevnik, d.d., Slovenia
280. Tone Stojko, Freelance, Slovenia
281. Gasper Lesnik, Mladina, Slovenia
282. Janja Klasinc, Freelance, Slovenia
283. Anuška Delić, Oštro, Center for investigative journalism in the Adriatic region, Slovenia
284. Javier Díaz Muriana, Freelance, Spain
285. Paco Martínez, Onda Regional de Murcia, Spain
286. Ana Reviejo Gómez, Onda Regional de Murcia, Spain
287. Stéphane M. Grueso, Freelance, Spain
288. Lucas García Alcalde, Maldita.es, Spain

289. Iñigo Palacio, Freelance, Spain

290. Félix Iglesias, Periódico ABC, Spain

291. Enric Borràs, Diari ARA, Spain (Catalonia)

292. Ingeborg Beugel, De Groene Amsterdammer, Dutch Public Radio & TV ", The Netherlands, Greece

*(The list of signatories will be regularly updated, please be patient)*