



PRESS STATEMENT

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Europe wide retention of telecommunications data unlikely to help law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism

EuroCOP President Heinz KIEFER concerned over unsolved technical questions

In a first reaction towards the draft of a new EU framework directive on the retention of telecommunications data to boost the EU wide fight against crime and terrorism, Heinz KIEFER, President of the European Confederation of Police, EuroCOP, says he is sceptical as to whether this will actually help criminal investigations.

Experts have raised serious doubts in relation to the technological ability to deal with the vast amount of data that will have to be stored if the directive is applied. Using current technology a simple search request is likely to take several years. This significantly reduces the possible benefits to investigators who simply cannot afford to wait this length of time for the results of a phone number search.

Even if huge investments were made to speed up the researching process it remains easy for criminals to avoid detection through fairly simple means, for example mobile phone cards can be purchased from foreign providers and frequently switched. 'The result would be that a vast effort is made with little more effect on criminals and terrorists than to slightly irritate them', says Mr. KIEFER. 'Activities like these are unlikely to boost citizens' confidence in the EU's ability to deliver solutions to their demand for protection against serious crime and terrorism.'

While the new possibilities offered by IT technology require law enforcement services to rethink the way they investigate, it is necessary to clearly assess whether these technologies have reached a stage of development where they are able to offer actual benefits. Mr KIEFER: 'The EU has committed itself to a programme of 'better governance' when the new Commission took office. I am afraid that the draft framework directive on the retention of telecommunications data is not an example of this new approach.'

The European Confederation of Police, EuroCOP, is the umbrella organisation of 27 national Police Unions and Staff Organisations from 19 European States. It represents the interests of over 600.000 police officers in Europe. www.eurocop-police.org