(English version)

Question for written answer E-000868/25
to the Commission
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)
(26 February 2025)

Subject: Violations of the confidentiality of communications in Greece

The Hellenic Authority for the Information and Communication Security and Privacy (ADAE) has identified numerous and systematic violations of the confidentiality of — mainly telephone — communications (see Directive 2002/58/EC and Regulation (EU) 2016/679) that affect millions of users.

In 2020,for instance, hackers exploited vulnerabilities in COSMOTE's security system ([1]), intercepting data belonging to more than 12 million mobile phone users. The fines imposed on companies responsible for such violations are, by and large, minor, barely representing 0.08% of their profits and with no additional penalties foreseen ([2]).

It should be noted that targets of the illegal surveillance carried out using Predator and Pegasus spyware — linked back to the Hellenic National Intelligence Service ([3]) — included, among others, members of the Greek and European Parliaments, journalists, lawyers and government officials.

In view of the above:

1. What steps has the Commission taken or does it plan to take to safeguard the confidentiality of communications and protect personal data in Greece in an effective way?

2. Does the Commission believe that Greece has made sufficient progress in addressing the above failing?

Submitted: 26.2.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen on behalf of the European Commission
(11 April 2025)

The Commission strongly condemns any illegal access or any form of unlawful interception of users' communications. EU law on data protection and privacy offers comprehensive protection to the confidentiality of communications and users' personal data and terminal equipment.

Without prejudice to the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, the monitoring and enforcement of the EU laws lies primarily with the competent national authorities and courts.

Moreover, EU Member States are required under Directive 2013/40/EU ([1]) on attacks against information systems to ensure that cyberattacks, such as illegal system interference and illegal interception, are punishable as criminal offences. The responsibility for the investigation and prosecution of such offences falls under the responsibility of competent national authorities.

The 2024 Rule of Law Report ([2]), which was published on 24 July 2024, follows up on developments concerning the alleged illegal use of spyware in the context of the functioning of national checks and balances in response to such allegations. The Commission continues to monitor developments in this area in the context of the 2025 Rule of Law Report.

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1 [1]ADAE Decision No 225/2022
2 [2]Petition No 0449/2024 by G. F. (Greek) on the alleged violation of the confidentiality of communications in Greece
3 [3]https://www.tanea.gr/2024/07/26/greece/skandalo-ypoklopon-o-katalogos-ton-koinon-stoxon-eyp-kai-predator/.
([1]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2013/40/oj/eng
([2]) 2024 Rule of Law Report, country chapter on the rule of law situation in Greece. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/6741f4b2-6a10-44ba-b40c-97a5a38e6827_en?filename=21_1_58062_coun_chap_greece_en.pdf