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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
(22.6.2026)

The Commission's position is very clear: any attempts to illegally access data of citizens, including journalists, representatives of civil society and political opponents, is unacceptable.

The legal interception or surveillance of communications can take place in limited circumstances, such as the prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution of criminal offences and subject to strict conditions and safeguards. Furthermore, the data protection Law Enforcement Directive¹ is also applicable when competent authorities process personal data for law enforcement purposes. National supervisory authorities have effective powers to examine any allegations of misuse, and data processed can be subject to judicial review.

The European Media Freedom Act includes specific safeguards against the use of spyware against journalists and their families. The respective provisions entered into application in August 2025.

¹ Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA, OJ L 119, 4