

WORLD NEWS

EU Pushes to Curb U.S. Internet Influence

Revelations of NSA Surveillance Activities Prompt European Proposal for More International Governance of Web Functions

By FRANCES ROBINSON
AND SAM SCHECHNER

BRUSSELS—The European Union's executive body is raising pressure to reduce U.S. influence over the Internet's architecture amid what it called weakened confidence in the network's governance after revelations of U.S. surveillance.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will propose on Wednesday the adoption of "concrete and actionable steps" to globalize essential Web functions—including the assignment of so-called top-level domain names, such as ".com" or ".org"—that remain contractually linked to the U.S. government, according to a draft policy paper seen by The Wall Street Journal.

The European executive arm will also propose establishing a timeline for fully internationalizing the U.S.-based Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, which oversees key aspects of the Internet's infrastructure to ensure digital traffic is routed properly, the document says.

"Large-scale surveillance and intelligence activities have...led to a loss of confidence in the Internet and its present governance arrangements," the document states.

The EU proposal builds on steady European pressure in recent years to speed up the internationalization of the Internet's governance. It also attempts to position the bloc as a key broker



An attendee at a global hackers' convention in Hamburg in December.

in coming negotiations over technical rules governing the Internet—bridging a gap between the U.S. and countries such as Russia and China, which have pushed for more government control of the Web.

The U.S. Commerce Department has said it is in favor of—and is participating in—discussions over the future of Internet governance. But it hasn't weighed in specifically on whether it would cede indirect control of certain elements of Internet architecture that it grants to ICANN under contract.

"The U.S. government appreciates the thoughtful leadership of the Internet technical community on this important issue," Assistant Secretary of Commerce Lawrence E. Strickling said in a speech last month. "We want to work collectively to make multi-stakeholder governance more inclusive while maintaining the stability of the open and innovative Internet."

By pushing for less U.S. control of the Internet, the European Commission is aligning itself partly with Brazil, which has struck a particularly strident tone over Internet governance in the wake of news reports that

5 TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EU GAMBIT

Disclosures about U.S. spying of digital communications are giving new momentum abroad to calls to limit U.S. influence over the Internet:

1 The U.S. still rules much of the Web's architecture

Currently, the U.S. government contracts the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), technically a nonprofit organization based in California, to oversee vital aspects of the Internet's infrastructure to enable the flow of its traffic.

2 What the EU wants from the U.S.

The European Commission proposal is expected to call for a firm timetable to transition to fully globalize governance of Web functions, including the assignment of top-level domain names, such as ".com". It also wants to fully internationalize ICANN.

3 The two sides aren't so far apart

The EU proposal lends support to Brazil, another vocal proponent for more global control of the Internet, but still backs a number of U.S. positions on how more international governance should function.

4 The U.S. hasn't said how much control it would give up

The U.S. has said it advocates moving to a more international system of Internet governance. But it hasn't disclosed whether it would be willing to cede indirect control of the functions it contracts to ICANN.

5 More governments involved isn't necessarily a good thing.

Some lobbyists warn against a too heavy-handed approach to change, arguing that governments risk stifling the Internet if they take too much control through technical means or via the Internet's governance. "When you see intergovernmental, it means governments only," said Frédéric Donck of the Internet Society, which lobbies on matters related to governance. "That is not what we see as a solution."

allege the U.S. government spied on Brazilians, including President Dilma Rousseff. The country has called for more international control and is hosting a conference on the future of Internet governance in April.

Still, Europe appears to be in agreement with the U.S. on some questions of how a more international Internet would work. The U.S. has opposed, for instance, efforts to give the United Nations telecommunications arm or other government bodies control of the Web—arguing that doing so could create a Balkanized Internet and enable censor-

ship. The EU document also explicitly rules out calling for a new international legal instrument to address issues of Internet governance.

"The Internet should remain a single, open, free, unfragmented network of networks, subject to the same laws and norms that apply in other areas of our day-to-day lives," according to the EU document.

The coming year will be a decisive one for Internet governance, which covers everything from whether domain names can be written in Cyrillic text, to the systems for routing Web traffic.

April's Brazil conference is the first major volley, which the U.S. plans to attend. The U.N.'s telecoms arm meets in South Korea in October.

There have already been some moves to globalize ICANN, technically a California-based nonprofit organization, which talks frequently about its aim to be truly global. Last year, it opened operational hubs in Singapore and Istanbul. But a key function of managing root Web names is still granted under a U.S. government contract to ICANN that the U.S. has an option to renew next year.

Greek, Turkish Cypriot Leaders Pledge to Unite Island

NICOSIA, Cyprus—The leaders of the Greek and Turkish communities on Cyprus launched a fresh bid to end the island's 40-year divide.

By Alkman Granitsas,
Michalis Persianis
and Emre Peker

The two leaders on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to a federal and united Cyprus after meeting at the capital's old airport in the United Nations-administered buffer zone that snakes across the island.

Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Dervis Eroglu stood side-by-side as a U.N. representative read out a joint declaration, under which they agreed a deal would benefit both communities and signal peace to the wider region.

"The status quo is unacceptable and its prolongation will have negative consequences for the Greek Cypriots and the Turk-

ish Cypriots," read the declaration, which was negotiated during months of talks.

The next step, said officials familiar with the talks, is for the two sides to take confidence-building steps that could be discussed as early as this week when negotiators meet.

Cyprus, which lies 300 miles north of the Suez Canal and within sight of Turkey and the Middle East, gained independence from the U.K. in 1960. The early years of independence devolved into clashes between the Greek Cypriot majority and Turkish Cypriot minority because of disagreements over a power-sharing deal.

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 after a coup inspired by Greece's military government, which was aimed at unifying the island with Greece. The coup failed but the invasion left Turkey with control of the north of the island, where it established a Turkish Cypriot republic recognized only by Ankara.

Getting Together? | After 40 years of division, another peace bid

◆ 1960 Cyprus gains independence from U.K.

◆ 1963 Violent erupts between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

◆ 1964 Greek Cypriots attack Turkish enclave on Cyprus; Turkey responds with airstrikes.

◆ 1974 Turkey invades Cyprus after Greek military backs coup to unite island with Greece.

◆ 1975 Turkish Cypriots declare a separate state in the north of the island.



Nicos Anastasiades, left, and Dervis Eroglu on Tuesday.

◆ 1983 Turkish Cypriots proclaim independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

◆ 1992 U.N.-sponsored peace

talks begin. After three years, they produce no results.

◆ 2004 Greek Cypriots vote down U.N. plan to reunify island. Greek Cypriots join EU. Crossing points at U.N. buffer zone open.

◆ 2008 Greek Cypriot president and Turkish Cypriot leader initiate new round of peace talks.

◆ 2012 The peace talks that began in 2008 fail.

◆ February 2014 Greek, Turkish Cypriot leaders resume talks.

Since then, international efforts to reunite the island have failed, including a U.N.-sponsored plan that was rejected by the Greek side in 2004. The last round of talks, begun in 2008, all but collapsed two years ago.

Tuesday's meeting follows a new resolve—by the U.S., the European Union and the U.N.—to find a solution to the Cyprus problem in the face of continuing turmoil in the Middle East.

After the meeting, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the resumption of talks and pledged to help them succeed.

EU leaders Herman Van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso said the bloc would, for the first

time, also help guide the talks. The two men signaled that common EU rules—now applied in the Greek part of the island, which joined the EU in 2004—could help smooth differences between the communities and prepare the north for future accession as well.

Turkey's foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, said on Monday that the latest push marked a break with the past, thanks to the "very serious effort" made by the traditional participants—the U.N., Greece, Turkey and the U.K.—as well as the U.S. and the EU.

The U.N.-led talks come as Turkey's government is seeking a diplomatic victory that will silence its critics before a tough 17-month election cycle.

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan faced unprecedented public protests in June, and was forced to shuffle his cabinet after prosecutors implicated several ministers in a corruption probe in December.

Germany to Press Search for Looted Art

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restitution system.

The various institutions that share responsibility for art restitution had been "a bit shy in their public relations activities," she said, speaking from her office in Angela Merkel's chancellery, overlooking Berlin's government district.

"These are delicate matters to articulate," she said. Many German museums had underestimated "the emotional components" of the debate, she said. "It's a matter of earning back trust."

Authorities in the German state of Bavaria kept the existence of the Munich collection secret for nearly two years as their investigation progressed, without examining their provenance. That prompted renewed scrutiny of Germany's record in researching and returning looted art.

Bavarian officials have defended their decision to keep the trove secret, despite international guidelines on art restitution that Germany signed in 1998, by saying that the works were part of a confidential tax investigation and their provenance was immaterial to the case.

Lawyers and international art



Mr. Gurlitt's house in Salzburg, where 60 more artworks were found.

experts as well as U.S. and Israeli diplomats have called the country's procedures to establish ownership of disputed artworks slow and the legal framework governing restitution weak. They also have criticized German museums as being reluctant to open their collections to scrutiny.

The vehemence of the criticism took government officials aback in a country that has won praise for its efforts to compensate Holocaust victims and generally take responsibility for years of Nazi terrors.

The revelations about 60 other works that Mr. Gurlitt had in Salzburg—even though outside Germany—could rekindle the debate.

The legal guardian, lawyer and spokesman for the octogenarian collector went to the house with an insurance agent Sunday and loaded up the artwork, the person familiar with the situation said.

The three representatives are having experts catalog and store the works in an undisclosed facility, light- and temperature-controlled, outside Germany to avoid confiscation by authorities, this person said.

Mr. Gurlitt hasn't lived in the Salzburg house since 2011 and his team hadn't visited it before,

this person said. Some of the works they found there were in bad condition while others were "unharmful," this person added.

His representatives declined to comment publicly beyond a statement announcing the discovery.

It is unclear how many lost works from Impressionist and modern masters are still in existence. Many works registered in the artists' records, like the Matisse Ms. Sinclair claims or a Max Liebermann also claimed by Jewish heirs from the Munich trove, were missing and presumed destroyed in the war until the Gurlitt discovery upended that assumption.

Ms. Grütters's proposed provenance research center, the exact blueprint for which is being completed in talks with Germany's 16 state governments, would operate at arm's length from German museums and from the government, she said Monday, in her first interview with an international newspaper since taking office in December.

Her proposal would address what art experts and historians have long seen as a weakness in Germany's restitution policies: The absence of an independent organization with the money and authority to conduct research

into museum holdings.

So far, most historians culling state and local museum collections for possibly looted art are employed by the individual museums.

Ms. Grütters said the center's legal and financial structure could be determined as early as March and it could start operating this autumn.

She declined to name the institution's expected budget but said the government's annual spending on provenance research should be doubled from its current €2 million (\$2.7 million) a year and some of these activities bundled into the new structure. Including overhead, this could leave the center with an annual budget just shy of €10 million.

Ms. Grütters warned the initiative shouldn't be understood as an attempt to relieve museums of their duty to scour their vaults for loot.

Culture in Germany is largely a regional affair. Currently, 12% of spending on cultural projects, including museums, is paid out of the federal budget.

This structure is often invoked as a reason why Germany has lagged behind in its restitution system. But museum directors—who typically refrain from criticizing other countries—were shocked at the extent to which the Gurlitt case highlighted the weaknesses.

"If you had asked me a year ago if a situation like Gurlitt could have happened, I would have said 'absolutely not,'" said Martin Roth, the head of London's Victoria & Albert Museum, who in January digitized all 479 pages of the list of art labeled "degenerate" by the Nazis on the V&A's website.

Ms. Grütters said her ministry would also throw its weight behind a recent proposal being heard by the upper house of parliament to change Germany's 30-year statute of limitations as it applies to art looted by individuals from World War II victims.

New Afghan Legislation Seen as Hurting Women

By MARGHERITA STANCATI

KABUL—Afghanistan's Western partners are protesting against new legislation they say would effectively make it impossible to prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence, calling it a step backward for women's rights in the country.

The Afghan Parliament last month voted in favor of a change to the criminal code that would ban relatives of the accused from testifying in court, a change that went largely unnoticed until human-rights activists commented on it recently.

The legislation requires President Hamid Karzai's signature to take effect. If enacted, critics say it would weaken the already tenuous rights of women and girls.

Robert Hilton, a U.S. Embassy spokesman in Kabul, said Washington is "extremely concerned" about the law. "We...have raised

our concerns with the Parliament and the government. We hope to see the language amended," he said.

On Monday, Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign-policy chief, said the legislation "would be a serious backward step in the justified and legitimate struggle for the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan."

At stake are billions of dollars in aid Afghanistan depends on to pay its government employees and security forces. Afghanistan's international partners in 2012 said Kabul must show tangible progress on women's rights in order for the aid to continue.

Mohammad Sarwar Osman, a lawmaker who backed the proposed changes, said allowing relatives to testify against each other "would hurt family relations, and its consequences could be very dangerous. The law benefits the Afghan people."

Spain Bill to Restrain Judges Advances Amid Beijing Rift

By MATT MOFFETT

MADRID—Spain's governing conservative party, moving to ease tensions with Beijing over a human-rights case against former top Chinese officials, won lower-house approval of a law that would constrain Spanish judges' reach in pursuing crimes such as genocide and torture.

The law, which passed Tuesday by a vote of 179 to 163 without any opposition support, was drafted after Spain's national court issued arrest warrants in November for former Chinese President Jiang Zemin and four other former authorities as part of a probe into alleged genocide in Tibet. Chinese officials have expressed "strong dissatisfaction" with the case, brought by

Tibet activists in Spain.

The proposed law, which was criticized by human-rights groups, Spain's opposition parties and part of its judiciary, could also torpedo other human-rights cases. The bill is expected to become law because the governing Popular Party also has a majority in the Senate, where it will go next.

The bill would constrain the judiciary's exercise of "universal jurisdiction," the principle Spanish judges have used to prosecute international human-rights cases.

While Spain imposed some restrictions on judges in rights cases in 2009, this bill would go further in limiting who can be subject to human-rights prosecutions and who can initiate them.

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