

## QUOTE DU JOUR

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— Brussels-based think tank [ECIPE](#) [has a new paper out](#) on "shaping an infrastructure security area in the North Atlantic." The author [Hosuk Lee-Makiyama](#) didn't mince his words when he told [Cyber Insights](#) about the core issue of EU-NATO cooperation.

# POLITICO PRO Cyber Insights

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with ELLEN O'REGAN and LAURENS CERULUS



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**TODAY'S TOP LINE — CYBERCRIME TREATY ON THE LINE:** European countries won't be able to ratify the (controversial) United Nations Cybercrime Convention if a European Parliament "shadow committee" doesn't budge on its objections.

Welcome to [Cyber Insights](#), POLITICO's cybersecurity and data protection newsletter, giving you the daily lowdown on hacks, leaks and cybersecurity policy chatter in Europe.

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## CYBER DIPLOMACY

**NOT WITHOUT PARLIAMENT'S CONSENT:** The European Union is in a bind as it will not be able to ratify the United Nations' Cybercrime Convention if it doesn't get the thumbs up from a key European Parliament group.

The cybercrime treaty was adopted at the U.N. General Assembly last December, after months of negotiations. Members of the European Parliament's civil liberties committee (LIBE) are now holding the treaty back from being ratified.

**Shadow boxing:** They've decided to hold a "shadow meeting" on the treaty following its adoption where they challenged the Commission on the need to ratify it.

**Why block it?** [Civil society has pleaded](#) with EU countries not to sign the treaty — which was initiated by Russia — because it could be used to justify what the EU considers irresponsible state behavior in cyberspace, like enabling governments to request and obtain the personal information of citizens in secret and in perpetuity.

**Stuck in process:** The LIBE Committee has so far held two shadow meetings on the topic, led by German liberal lawmaker Moritz Körner. Parliament approval would need to go through plenary and if it doesn't, the Council of the EU [will not be able to adopt the act](#). There's no timeline on the process yet though.

**Postpone, please:** Nick Ashton-Hart, a senior APCO lobbyist who represents industry at United Nations fora and also briefed EU lawmakers at the last shadow meeting, told [Cyber Insights](#) that he would not recommend any state to ratify or sign the treaty as it stands. Instead, he recommends the Commission hold off signing until next year, when a negotiation of the protocol will happen.

"The EU has said it won't say yes to totalitarian demands for data. But that doesn't really help because the Convention allows for permanent secrecy between any two member states and forces service providers to keep their involvement secret," Ashton-Hart said.

**Next steps:** In a statement to [Cyber Insights](#), the Commission's press office said the EU executive would put forward a proposal to the Council for the signature and the ratification of the Convention. The Council however asked for Parliament's consent — and that's what's standing in the way right now.

The official signing will take place in [Hanoi, Vietnam](#) in June.

## PRIVACY

**DEEP SEEK IN EDPB CROSS HAIRS:** Data protection authorities across the EU are ramping up their response to AI models like DeepSeek. In a meeting today, authorities agreed to widen the scope of an AI-focused taskforce to include DeepSeek.

The task force was initially set up to scrutinize ChatGPT when it rose to fame in 2023. It's now being broadened to tackle "AI enforcement" at large. Ellen [has more](#).

**No love from the privacy folks:** South Korea's intelligence service on Monday [told government agencies](#) DeepSeek's app "excessively" collects personal data, and cybersecurity firm NowSecure last Thursday [published research that found "multiple security and privacy issues"](#) in the AI firm's iOS application for Apple devices.

Several authorities in past weeks announced they were opening investigations into how DeepSeek is processing the data of European users. Ireland, [Greece](#) and France have launched probes and Italy has even imposed a [ban on the platform](#).

**DUTCH MINISTER: PRIVACY STANDS IN WAY OF DEFENSE.** European Union data protection and privacy rules are getting in the way of the bloc's security and preparedness, Dutch Defense Minister Ruben Brekelmans told POLITICO's Jacopo Barigazzi in an interview.

"Sometimes regulations are standing in our way," Brekelmans said, singling out environmental laws and privacy regulations specifically. The Netherlands is planning to gather support among EU peers to put defense interests before some regulatory hurdles across the bloc.

**Eyes in the sky:** "We need to exercise with drones, but then we are not allowed to do that because those drones" can easily film someone and "in the Netherlands there are people everywhere," he said. That means often drones can fly only with their cameras switched off, he complained.

**War and peace:** "We are making a very long list of those regulations that make sense in peacetime, but do not make sense ... in the gray zone that we are now in between war and peace," Brekelmans said.

## INSTITUTIONS

**EDPS SPENDING:** Lawmakers in Parliament's civil liberties committee have raised concerns about how much the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) is spending on staff missions.

**"Significant increase":** In a meeting last Thursday the committee [voted](#) through an [opinion](#) on the EDPS budget for 2023 expressing "concern about the significant increase in EDPS staff mission costs," from €26,789 in 2021 (which was likely low due to the coronavirus pandemic's travel restrictions) to €176,903 in 2022 and to €284,580 in 2023. The non-binding opinion will now go to the budgetary control committee which is preparing its own text.

**Appropriate use of resources?** The opinion calls on the EDPS to "assess whether the resources spent on missions are being used appropriately and effectively", and also calls on the EU institution data protection watchdog to reinstate the practice of making details of who funded and participated in missions public.

**Covid and inflation:** A spokesperson for the EDPS told Cyber Insights in a written statement that it will provide a response to the official discharge by the budgetary committee.

However, they highlighted that 2021 had "periods of local lockdown, and missions (including audits and inspections) were kept to the strict minimum", while the budget increased in 2022 as on-site audits returned, as well as "other missions to attend important data protection fora."

"In 2023 we came back to business-as-usual and we encountered a galloping inflation, which is also reflected in the numbers," they said.

## CYBERCRIME

**SKY ECC ARRESTS:** Four distributors of the encrypted communications service Sky ECC, used extensively by criminals, were arrested in Spain and the Netherlands on Monday.

The encrypted chat, used to facilitate the planning of crimes such as international drug trafficking, arms trafficking and money laundering, assured clients total privacy until Belgian and Dutch police managed to break the encryption.

**A whole lotta money:** According [to a statement](#) by the Spanish police, the two suspects arrested in the country were the leading global distributors of the service, generating over €13.5 million in profits.

**Agents seized** multiple telephone terminals, €10,000 in cash and €1.4 million in cryptocurrencies, \$26,000, five luxury watches valued at more than €50,000, two high-end vehicles and bank accounts containing €8 million.

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## HEADLINES

Here's a recap of yesterday's news, along with Pro articles and alerts from overnight.

[EU regulators add DeepSeek to AI privacy scrutiny](#)

By Ellen O'Regan · Feb 11, 2025, 12:02 PM

[Document: Commission to present new budget proposal in July](#)

"The status quo is not an option," the Commission said in a document detailing its priorities for the next EU cash pot.

By Gregorio Sorgi · Feb 11, 2025, 11:49 AM

["No thank you": OpenAI founder rejects Elon Musk's reported bid to buy nonprofit](#)

The offer is the latest skirmish between the two tech titans.

By Seb Starcevic · Feb 11, 2025, 5:15 AM