



Brussels, June 18, 2024

STATEMENT ON SO-CALLED EU CHAT CONTROL LAW

We are deeply concerned that the [Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2024](#) promotes the so-called Chat Control law (officially known as “Regulation... to prevent and combat child sexual abuse”), which targets EU citizens' and residents' private, encrypted communications in an unprecedented manner.

This proposal is going to be discussed by the EU governments on Wednesday 19 June. **And, in our view as human rights and rule of law defenders, it must be opposed.**

Given our years-long and direct experience, we are well-aware of the threats posed by authoritarian and other illiberal regimes abusing Western laws to attack their opponents, relatives, associates and human rights activists, including those residing abroad. This phenomenon is called transnational repression.

One of the favourite tools of the dictators' playbook is the weaponisation of banking data to facilitate politically motivated persecution. Under the guise of law enforcement/judicial cooperation, strongmen continually seek to abuse European AML/CFT regulations to gain access to sensitive information on inconvenient individuals. Surveillance, malicious prosecution, fabrication of evidence, blackmail, threats to family members - everything becomes much easier. Finally, the situation is even worse when a rogue EU government is drifting away from the rule of law and democracy to nationalist, populist, and increasingly oppressive policies at home (as, e.g., in the cases of Hungary and, up until recently - Poland).

That's why banking data and privacy must be protected. Yet, the current Chat Control proposal goes much further than AML/CFT laws and legal cooperation frameworks. For declaratively noble purposes, it would establish mass scanning of private communications, allowing access to relatively safe, encrypted messages of millions of people.

We believe that violating the privacy of communications by "Chat Control" will compromise the credibility of the EU, security of European institutions, and fundamental values. We urge members of the Council to reject the Proposal for a "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse" (8579/24).

- [Proposal for a regulation](#)
- [ODF's submission covering the weaponisation of the banking data](#)