

Speech by Kai Uwe Steffens (Working Group on Data Retention) at the demonstration Freedom, not Fear, on September 7, 2013 in Berlin
Hello .

Many of you are here today because you are rightly angry about the monstrous monitoring programs of the US and British intelligence services. The NSA and the GCHQ spy unrestrained on phone calls and Internet traffic worldwide, tap undersea cables, and infiltrate software companies and service providers. They act as if the rest of the world were their front yard, where they can do whatever they want. And our government, whose sworn duty it is to keep us from harm, lets itself be appeased with false promises and empty phrases, and has proclaimed the affair over, by ministerial decree. But that's not the way things work: this affair will be over on the day when we are no longer monitored, and not one day earlier.

You politicians who sit idly by and watch as our fundamental rights are violated, you have let us down, we don't trust you . And that's why we are not going to vote for you.

Then there are politicians who have now suddenly discovered that privacy is a great thing, and are getting all excited about PRISM and TEMPORA, now that an election campaign is on. But many of them are the same ones who, five minutes later, will be re-introducing their data retention and other surveillance measures, although these are essentially the same unfounded data storage measures as those of the intelligence services. You politicians that campaign with forked tongues, who want to turn evil surveillance into good surveillance by putting a different sticker on it, we don't believe you either. And that's why we are not going to vote for you.

And then there are politicians who have not only seen data protection as a great thing for a long time, but have also done something about it. Politicians who have brought in parliamentary questions, and who have brought scandals to light. Who have supported initiatives for transparency and honesty, and brought movement into political life. Who have fought against the surveillance mania of their larger coalition partners, and who have fought bravely in Brussels for real improvements in data protection. You politicians who have dedicated yourselves to the preservation of our fundamental rights, uncovering the machinations of the surveillance agencies and denouncing them, and who support and help put together events like this, you are the ones we want. And that's why we are going to vote for you.

We want to live in freedom. We want to maintain control over our data, to which we are constitutionally entitled. We want a strong European data protection law, which not only protects us from greedy internet companies, but also from unbridled intelligence services and police investigator. We want strong protection at the doctor's office, at work, at the registration office, at the airport, at the supermarket and everywhere else. We want legislators who don't need to have loyalty to the constitution taught to them, not only once, but time and time again, by the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe. We want strong Data Protection Commissioners at the federal and state levels, with sufficient staff and much more far-reaching powers. In short, we want to live safe of surveillance. And that is the reason that we are on the street today, and that is what we are going to be going to the ballot box for in two weeks. We will be voting for Freedom, not Fear ! Thank you .

About the Author : Kai -Uwe Steffens, born in 1965, has been with AK Vorrat since 2006, and has testified numerous times in that capacity before committees of the Bundestag.

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The spoken text is authoritative