

General Assembly/3C: Statement by Ambassador Wittig at the adoption of the resolution on „The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age"

Nov 26, 2013

(as delivered:)

"Mr. President,

As one of the two main sponsors of draft resolution L. 45/Rev.1 entitled “The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age”, Germany is pleased to see that this Committee is ready to tackle new and growing human rights challenges: In this case challenges that are side effects of the digital revolution. I thank the co-sponsors for their important support. We appreciate the frank and open spirit that prevailed throughout the informal consultations and the flexibility displayed by all sides. Since the tabling of the revised draft, the following countries have joined as additional co-sponsors: Belgium, Bulgaria, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lebanon, Malta, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.

Mr. President,

When introducing the draft resolution, we asked the following questions: Is the human right to privacy still effectively protected in our digital world? And should everything that is technically feasible also be allowed?

The resolution provides much-needed guidance in finding answers to these questions.

- For the first time in the framework of the United Nations, this resolution unequivocally states that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online.
- It also emphasizes that unlawful and arbitrary surveillance and the interception of communications are highly intrusive acts that violate the right to privacy and may also violate the freedom of expression. Furthermore, the resolution expresses deep concern at the negative impact that various forms of extraterritorial surveillance may have on the exercise and enjoyment of human rights.
- Finally, it requests the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to present a report on the right to Privacy in the context of domestic and extraterritorial surveillance to both the next General Assembly and the 27th session of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,

We strongly believe that global challenges such as enhanced surveillance capacities in our digital age call for global answers. By adopting this resolution, this Committee will underscore once more the United Nations’ ability and readiness to address the pressing challenges of our times, challenges which are of great concern to citizens around the globe.

Mr. President,

Among the issues raised during the informal consultations, the applicability of Human Rights in general, and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in particular to various forms of surveillance and data collection was at the center of our discussion. While the Covenant of 1966 could certainly not foresee the technical possibilities of our age, both, Article 2 and 17 of the Covenant, as well as subsequent jurisprudence provide us with sound ground on which to base the tenets of this resolution. As main sponsors of this initiative, Germany and Brazil are looking forward to examining these questions in greater detail with all of you. We will soon launch a thorough, open follow-up process in Geneva, inviting the active participation of all interested

delegations.

I thank you for your support on this important resolution!"