

Electronic communications: processing of personal data, protection of privacy

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The committee adopted the report by Marco CAPPATO (TGI, I) broadly approving the proposal under the codecision procedure (1st reading), subject to a number of amendments. While it agreed that Member States may restrict provisions of the directive to safeguard public security and conduct criminal investigations, the committee made it clear that such restrictions should be appropriate, proportionate and limited in time and that that general or exploratory electronic surveillance on a large scale could not be allowed. It also felt that Member States should not have a general right to request whatever traffic and location data they wished without the authorities stating a specific reason as to why such information was needed. Information should not be stored longer than was necessary for the transmission of data and for traffic management purposes. The committee also felt that, when accessing terminal equipment, service providers should not be allowed to ascertain or store any personal information without prior consent. As regards directories, it wanted to make sure that personal data in publicly-available printed or electronic directories was limited to what was necessary to identify a particular subscriber, unless that subscriber had given his or her unambiguous consent. The report also called for senders of junk mail to be obliged to supply an address to enable recipients to request that they be removed from the mailing list. Another amendment said that sending electronic messages for the purpose of direct marketing while disguising or concealing the identity of the sender should be prohibited.