

Voice of the People

Manuscript
EU and the internet
BRT, Germany

Crew:

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Translation

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0'02

Presenter:

The internet offers infinite possibilities and links Europe to the whole world. Almost everybody is online and profits from quick communication and information. However, things do not always work as smoothly as you would like them to. Various viruses have caused a lot of damage. This also creates challenges for the European Parliament. In Nuremberg we have gathered some questions about problems that have clouded the days of internet users:

0'31

Well, what does the European Parliament do against spams and the flood of so-called bulk mails? Would it not be very reasonable to find a Europe-wide or even worldwide solution for these bulk mails that always appear in your email account?

0'44

Answer, Günther Beckstein, Germany:

As a matter of fact, this so-called imposed advertisement does not have to be accepted and is illegal. However, the problem is that it is very difficult to enforce these regulations on the worldwide net. The best thing to do is to use a good antivirus program and the appropriate software. Most of the time people cannot be punished for flooding mailboxes with spams, because they somehow start them in the national net and therefore do not fall under international law. The end of the story is that everybody has to protect himself individually.

1'29

What does the European Parliament actually do to stem internet criminality?

1'35

Answer, Günther Beckstein, Germany:

At the moment this is done only on a federal basis and in Germany there is only the Federal Criminal Investigation Agency and the state of Bavaria that tackle internet criminality. We have about 50 to 60 people who serve and patrol the internet in order to track down criminality. That is less than a drop in the ocean. It is much more like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, it is better than nothing and a start. If all countries in Europe did that and cooperated, our chances of stemming internet criminality would be much higher. That would entail more regulations for the internet, which, in my opinion would be really desirable.

2'24

What do the politicians against virus attacks?

2'28

Answer, Günther Beckstein, Germany:

The topic preoccupies us. However, it is extremely difficult since the internet is not a national or state issue; no it is an international matter since everybody has access. Therefore the only solution, that we can think of so far, is to protect you with antivirus software. On top of that, only people who send people deliberately viruses, that means being fully aware of it, can be punished. So far, most of the time the viruses were sent by young people or people somewhere in this world that you can hardly track down. Politicians are aware of the problem but can offer only partial solutions that are not satisfying at all. But the problem is that everybody has access to the internet.

3'25

When do you think that personal signatures for emails etc. become a possibility to prove ones identity?

3'36

Answer, Günther Beckstein, Germany:

The EU is working on a regulation to enforce the documentation of internet usage. I think that is the right thing to do and very important, because this way you can see who left traces on the internet. That would be helpful when it comes to spams and viruses as well as internet criminality. As soon as someone tries to erase his traces and disappear, he wants to remain anonym and the chances are high that he wants to do something illegal or improper. That is why I think that documentation is a very good idea. I support this kind of efforts on a European stage because I think it would mean that you would be able to enforce reasonable internet usage on a European stage and maybe even on an international stage and that harassment and serious criminal offences could be tracked down.