



Press release

Corporations in the driving seat and winning big from EU's security research agenda

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Transnational corporations are winning millions of euros of public research funds to develop ever more intrusive surveillance and snooping technologies, a new report by *Statewatch* and the *Transnational Institute* reveals today.

The report, *Market Forces*, shows how the EU's €1.7 billion 'Secure societies' research programme has been shaped by the "homeland security" industry and in the process is constructing an ever more militarised and security-focused Europe.

The research programme, in place since 2007, has sought to combat a panoply of "threats" ranging from terrorism and organised criminality to irregular migration and petty crime through the development of new "homeland security" technologies such as automated behaviour analysis tools, enhanced video and data surveillance, and biometric identification systems.

Key beneficiaries of this research funding have been companies: Thales (€33.1m), Selex (€23.2m), Airbus (€17.8m), Atos (€14.1m) and Indra (€12.3m) are the five biggest corporate recipients. Major applied research institutes have also received massive amounts of funding, the top five being: Fraunhofer Institute (€65.7 million); TNO (€33.5 million); Swedish Defence Research Institute (€33.4 million); *Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives* (€22.1 million); Austrian Institute of Technology (€16 million).

Many of these organisations and their lobbies have played a significant role in designing the research programme through their participation in high-level public-private forums, European Commission advisory groups and through lobbying undertaken by industry groups such as the European Organisation for Security (EOS).

The report also examines EU's €3.8 billion Internal Security Fund, which provides funding to Member States to acquire new tools and technologies: border control drones and surveillance systems, IMSI catchers for spying on mobile phones, tools for monitoring the web and 'pre-crime' predictive policing systems are currently on the agenda.

It is foreseen that the fund will eventually pay for technologies developed through the security research programme, creating a closed loop of supply and demand between private companies and state authorities.

Despite the ongoing economic crisis, EU funding for new security tools and technologies has grown from under €4 billion to almost €8 billion in the 2014-20 period (compared to 2007-13) and the report warns that there is a risk of further empowering illiberal tendencies in EU governments that have taken unprecedented steps in recent years towards normalising emergency powers and undermining human rights protection in the name of fighting terrorism and providing "security".

Market Forces argues that upcoming negotiations on the next round of funding programmes (2021-27) provide a significant opportunity to reform the rationale and reasoning behind the EU's development of new security technologies and its funding of tools and equipment for national authorities.

Quotes

Chris Jones, a researcher for *Statewatch* and author of the report, said:

"The EU's security research agenda has long been propelled by the intertwined interests of transnational corporations and EU institutions in developing a new

“homeland security” market and attempting to address serious issues such as terrorism, crime, natural and man-made disasters and large-scale migration.

The pursuit of those interests has led to an unhealthy relationship between the public and private sectors in which it seems that the private pursuit of profit has become conflated with the wider public interest in keeping people safe. In the name of security, democracy is paying the price.

Upcoming negotiations on the EU's next round of budgets should seek to halt this disturbing security-industrial complex and prioritise security policies that put people before profit and fundamental rights first.”

Nick Buxton, an editor on the report and researcher at *Transnational Institute* said:

“At a time of austerity cutbacks and widening political divisions across Europe, it is disturbing that security is one of the few European agendas that continues unaffected, receiving ever more funds and support. Trust and unity in Europe cannot be built around a homeland security industry vision that treats ever more people as suspects and seeks to profit from their surveillance and control. Real security will be built not through big brother technology, but through investing in jobs, livelihoods, social welfare and environmental protection both in Europe and in neighbouring countries.”

Contact

For further enquiries contact the Statewatch office (0203 691 5227) or email chris@statewatch.org.

Notes to editors

[1] *Market Forces* is available online [here](#). It is the follow-up to the 2009 report [NeoConOpticon](#) (pdf)

[2] The ‘Secure societies’ programme is a €1.7 billion research theme funded by the EU’s €77 billion Horizon 2020 research budget, which runs from 2014-20. It follows a €1.4 billion ‘security’ theme in the 2007-13 7th Framework Programme research budget.

[3] The Internal Security Fund – Police is worth €1 billion and runs from 2014-20. It follows the 2007-13 Prevention of and Fight against Crime fund (ISEC, worth €600 million) and the Terrorism and other security-related risks (CIPS, €140 million) budgets. The Internal Security Fund – Borders is worth €2.8 billion between 2014-20 and follows the 2007-13 External Borders Funds (EBF, €1.8 billion).

[4] *Statewatch* is a non-profit-making voluntary group founded in 1991. It is comprised of lawyers, academics, journalists, researchers and community activists. Its European network of contributors is drawn from 18 countries. Statewatch encourages the publication of investigative journalism and critical research in Europe the fields of the state, justice and home affairs, civil liberties, accountability and openness. Website: www.statewatch.org

[5] The *Transnational Institute* (TNI) is an international research and advocacy institute committed to building a just, democratic and sustainable planet. For more than 40 years, TNI has served as a unique nexus between social movements, engaged scholars and policy makers. Website: www.tni.org