

‘COPS WITHOUT BORDERS’: The Secret International Working Group of Undercover Police

By [Andrej Hunko](#)

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andrej-hunko.de 1 February 2012

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PRESS RELEASE

“Yet another secret international working group on undercover police investigations has come to light,” said Andrej Hunko, Member of the German Bundestag, commenting on the German government’s response to a question he tabled in Parliament.

The government stated in its response that the Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Police Office) and the Zollkriminalamt (Central Office of the German Customs Investigation Service) are involved in the International Working Group on Police Undercover Activities (IWG), which has existed since 2007. In addition to European governments, agencies from Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States are represented.

Andrej Hunko stated:

“Private-sector companies are also involved in this group. It is possible that it encourages the use of audio surveillance technology during undercover operations, such as that which came to light in connection with operations by British police spies in Germany. In Germany, however, audio surveillance of this kind violates federal and state laws.

I call on the [Germany’s] Federal Government to provide further information about the activities of the International Business Secretariat without delay. If it should turn out to be a central body responsible for obtaining false papers, that would surely be a flagrant violation of international treaties.

Last year I already exposed one secret, Europe-wide network dealing with police spies, the European Cooperation Group on Undercover Activities. Previously, even parliamentarians had been unaware of the group’s existence. The Federal Government cited ‘politically motivated’ crime as one of the group’s ‘main issues’.

There are also secret police groups dealing with surveillance technology and the use of spy software by the state. A picture is increasingly emerging of an international police network operating without oversight.

I am therefore calling for maximum transparency from the Federal Government, and not only in relation to the International Working Group on Police Undercover Activities or the European Cooperation Group on Undercover Activities. I also expect the Government to provide further information about the Cross-Border Surveillance Working Group and the

Remote Forensic Software User Group.”

The Federal Government’s response to Andrej Hunko’s oral questions can be read here:

<http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/protokolle/plenarprotokolle/17154.pdf>

His earlier interpellation concerning the European Cooperation Group on Undercover Activities is available here:

<http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/057/1705736.pdf>

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