

Video surveillance at Marienplatz – protection of citizens' data not guaranteed

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"The Ministry of the Interior has still not proven that the security of the data of the citizens is guaranteed in the video surveillance of the Marienplatz," said the State Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Heinz Müller. The Ministry of the Interior began operating video surveillance on December 21, 2018, despite a formal warning from Müller. The state data protection officer has therefore instructed the Ministry of the Interior to ensure end-to-end or comparable encryption of the image data by January 31, 2019, so that the data collected with the video cameras is adequately protected against misuse during radio transmission from Marienplatz to the Schwerin police center.

Contrary to earlier announcements, the Ministry of the Interior no longer considers it necessary to encrypt data when it is transmitted by radio. In doing so, it not only violates the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation, but also disregards its own data protection and security requirements, which are binding for the state administration. With the "Guideline for ensuring information security in the state administration of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania", the minimum security level defined by the Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) is declared binding for the State Chancellery and the departments of the state government and thus also for the police. To ensure this minimum security level, the BSI requires, among other things, a complete cryptographic protection of radio links. The statements by the Minister of the Interior that there is no end-to-end encryption and that the demands of the state data protection officer are not technically feasible are completely unfounded. Rather, the measures required by the state data protection officer to protect the data of citizens represent the state of the art.

The requirements of the BSI are aimed equally at private companies and administration. "If a private company were to act like the Ministry of the Interior, I would impose a fine immediately," explains Heinz Müller. However, the State Data Protection Act does not permit fines against authorities. "This unequal treatment of companies and authorities cannot be conveyed," complains the state data protection officer.

"Nevertheless, I expect the Ministry of the Interior to implement my order to encrypt the radio link by January 31, 2019," said the state data protection officer. "If my order is not implemented before an extension of the provisional active operation or another order to continue video surveillance, I will impose a ban on video surveillance without further hearing or warning," Müller continued.

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