

Germans protest data mining law

by UPI

BERLIN -- Protests coincided with the filing of a lawsuit supported by thousands in Germany in opposition to a new law allowing the retention of telecommunication data. Protesters rallied in several German cities to support a lawsuit backed by more than 30,000 Germans filed to fight legislation that permits the storing of Internet data and telephone records for up to six months as part of wider counter-terrorism efforts, Deutsche Welle said Wednesday. Advocates in Hamburg marked "the death of privacy" and the Working Party on Data Retention said the law was "obviously unconstitutional" and struck "at the foundation of our constitutional state." The law is part of a widespread EU move in response to the Madrid train bombings in March 2004 that killed 191 people. Investigators tracked down the people behind the attacks using mobile telephone data. The new law permits Internet providers and phone companies to store dialed numbers, dates and length of conversations, IP addresses and e-mail addresses. Security officials may, with a court order, gain access to that information but not to the content of the communications.

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