



Press Release

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Bundesnetzagentur removes children's doll "Cayla" from the market

Jochen Homann: "It is particularly important to protect children's privacy"

The Bundesnetzagentur has taken action against unauthorised wireless transmitting equipment in a children's toy and has already removed products from the market.

"Items that conceal cameras or microphones and that are capable of transmitting a signal, and therefore can transmit data without detection, compromise people's privacy. This applies in particular to children's toys. The Cayla doll has been banned in Germany," says Jochen Homann, Bundesnetzagentur President. "This is also to protect the most vulnerable in our society."

Concealed surveillance device

Any toy that is capable of transmitting signals and that can be used to record images or sound without detection is banned in Germany. The first toys of this type have already been taken off the German market at the instigation of the Bundesnetzagentur and in cooperation with distributors.

There is a particular danger in toys being used as surveillance devices: Anything the child says or other people's conversations can be recorded and transmitted without the parents' knowledge. A company could also use the toy to advertise directly to the child or the parents. Moreover, if the manufacturer has not adequately protected the wireless connection (such as Bluetooth), the toy can be used by anyone in the vicinity to listen in on conversations undetected.



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Further products to be inspected

The Bundesnetzagentur is to inspect other interactive toys and, if necessary, will take further action. In this respect the requirements of section 90 of the German Telecommunications Act must be met: Objects must, by their form, purport to be another object or are disguised as an object of daily use and, due to such circumstances or due to their operation, are particularly suitable for intercepting the non-publicly spoken words of another person without his detection or for taking pictures of another person without his detection. This also applies to customised devices.

No action planned against the parents

The Bundesnetzagentur has advised on the dangers that could arise from the "Cayla" doll. The agency has not requested the distributors to provide any data on purchasers. Nor does it plan to request any data in the future. The Bundesnetzagentur is assuming that parents will take it upon themselves to make sure the doll does not pose a risk. There are no plans at present to instigate any regulatory proceedings against the parents.

The Bundesnetzagentur is acting purely as an administrative authority. Whether anyone has made themselves liable to prosecution under section 90 of the Telecommunications Act with respect to banned surveillance devices will be decided in each case by the criminal prosecution authority.

The Bundesnetzagentur is the authority responsible for enforcing the ban on surveillance devices. Further information can be found at:

www.bundesnetzagentur.de/spionagekamas