
BRUSSELS TEEMING WITH RUSSIAN AND CHINESE SPIES, EU OFFICIALS CLAIM

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Hundreds of Russian and Chinese spies have been planted in and around Brussels EU quarter, according to officials at the European External Action Service (EEAS).

There are currently about 250 Chinese and 200 Russian spies in the European capital, the German newspaper, Welt am Sonntag, reported over the weekend, citing diplomats at the EEAS, the EUs foreign policy office.

The officials revealed they have been warned about spending time in certain premises around the EU district, including popular restaurants and cafés in the vicinity of the European Commissions Berlaymont building.

The intelligence officers are said to be based at their home countries embassies or trade missions to the EU.

The Chinese authorities in Brussels hit back on Sunday (10 February), saying that the claims were groundless.

We are deeply shocked by the groundless and unfounded reports, a statement from the Chinese mission to the EU read. China always respects the sovereignty of all countries, and does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

China is currently experiencing a wave of allegations related to espionage activities in the EU. A report issued by the Lithuanian Intelligence Services last week warned that as Chinas economic and political ambitions in Lithuania and other Nato and EU countries increase, the activities of Chinese intelligence and security services have become increasingly aggressive.

Darius Jauniskis, the head of Lithuanias State Security Department, added that the country is currently analysing the threat of Chinese firm Huawei in the context of espionage concerns.

In Poland, the firm was hit with espionage allegations after a Huawei employee, Weijing W, otherwise known as Stanislaw Wang, was arrested in the country.

Poland may consider a ban of Huawei products as a result of the claims. The Polish Secretary of State at the Ministry of Digital Affairs, Karol Okonski, told EURACTIV that a potential ban is still open.

In Italy, the government appeared to be divided last week as to its approach on Huawei, with the Italian Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs purportedly seeking to nullify contracts already

signed with the company. The Ministry of Economic Development put out a statement refuting the claims. Huawei, meanwhile, deny any wrongdoing.

Accusations of spying around the vicinity of the EU quarter previously hit the headlines in 2003, following the discovery of bugging devices in the European Councils Justus Lipsius building.

More recently, in December, it transpired that hackers had been accessing the EUs diplomatic communications network for years, obtaining transcripts of potentially sensitive information and private meetings.

Italian government divided over Huawei, amid US pressure

The Italian Ministry of Economic Development refuted claims made by government officials on Thursday (7 January), following allegations that the country is set to ban Chinese firms Huawei and ZTE from taking part in the implementation of Italys 5G infrastructure.

Kaynak/Source: