BAN BIOMETRIC MASS SURVEILLANCE!

Hey - have you heard? European Digital Rights (EDRi) is calling on the EU to ban biometric mass surveillance! 🔊 🔊

EDRi what?

EDRi is the umbrella made up of 44 civil society organisations across Europe. They're all about online privacy, freedom online, and all that stuff. Follow them on Twitter - they're lit! 🔥

Following! So what is biometric mass surveillance?

You know how the UK use facial recognition to watch people going shopping? Or how some French authorities have been scanning teens' faces to manage entry into their school? Or even how Poland's Coronavirus app analyses people's face to check if they are staying inside? These are all types of biometric mass surveillance...

Ah, you're talking about facial recognition? 🔴

Not just facial recognition. It could be your voice, or how you walk! It is basically all data about us and our bodies, which makes it really sensitive.

LOL. 🙄

I know, right? It's not like a password – you can't just re-set your face or body! This is why it is important we don't allow them to collect this data and use it against us.

Hmm, okay. But what makes it mass surveillance?

The EDRi folks say that whenever a system uses the biometric data of **anyone** that happens to be in a public space, that's mass surveillance. 💡

So like, surveilling me when I walk randomly in a square as well as anyone else who happens to be around?

Exactly! Imagine, if someone is spying on innocent people like you as you go to work, attend a religious ceremony, or join a peaceful protest, are you going to feel comfortable? That's weird! Of course not! Not only is it bad for society, it's actually against EU law!

What? How are they doing it then? 😲

Well, several European countries are doing it and, unless someone stops them now, they're going to keep doing it. That's why EDRi is asking EU institutions (European Commission and Parliament) to make sure that biometric mass surveillance cannot and does not happen any more.

Yeah, it's easy to say. What can we do anyway to ban biometric mass surveillance?

EDRi has prepared a list of recommendations on how this ban can happen. Dig into their paper, "Ban Biometric Mass Surveillance" - all about the what, how and why of a ban.

But now? With all this Coronavirus crisis?

Especially now! ✊ Imagine, if we don't act now, we will all be treated like suspects in a line-up. We'll live in a constant state of suspicion.

And for people that already face disproportionate police violence, for example, it is even worse. It can create permanent records of where we go, what we do and who we meet which can all be used against us, and this is really dangerous for our freedoms and democracy.

This stuff can totally continue after the state of emergency ends, huh?

Totally! We gotta act now, hold powerful states and companies to account, and make sure we don't descend into a digital dystopia...

Ok, I'm in! What can I do? 🙌

Get active now! The EU are asking you right now what you think in this public consultation on artificial intelligence. You can respond there (in Section 2) and tell them to stop our public spaces from becoming perpetual police line-ups. Furthermore, you can tweet about this using #BanThisBS and #Biometrics.

Gotcha. Let's ban biometric mass surveillance! 🤘

Power! ✊ ✊ ✊

EDRi