

Extensive Covert Surveillance Programme Harms EU Perceptions of U.S. And Could Put TTIP Negotiations at Risk

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BRUSSELS, Dec. 2, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- These are the headline conclusions of comprehensive comparative studies on attitudes towards data protection conducted by FTI Consulting in the EU and U.S.

- *EU Respondents Split on Suspending TTIP Negotiations Because of Privacy Concerns*
- *U.S. Clearly Considered the Main Beneficiary of Big Data and Europeans Say Breaches of EU Data Laws by U.S. Companies Should be Prosecuted*
- *Scepticism of Claims Data Collection Results in Greater Security, but U.S. Respondents More Trusting than Europeans*
- *Governments Not Trusted to Responsibly Use Data*
- *Healthcare Providers and Law Enforcement Agencies Earn Greatest Trust*
- *Social Media, Traditional Media and Politicians Seen as Data Pariahs*

The recent revelations of extensive intelligence gathering by United States ("U.S.") agencies on the European Union ("EU"), its citizens and governments has harmed EU-U.S. relations, and has dampened Europeans' enthusiasm for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership ("TTIP"). This is one of the major findings from a survey on data security that canvassed the opinions of 1,536 respondents in the EU and 1,000 respondents in the U.S., conducted by FTI Consulting, Inc. (NYSE: FCN), the global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organisations protect and enhance their enterprise value.

FTI Consulting conducted separate polls in the U.S. and the EU. It is important to note that U.S. interviewees were polled from 29 May to 02 June 2013, days before the news of NSA covert surveillance broke, whereas polling in Europe was carried out from 25 October to 28 October 2013, following months of high-profile headlines. In that context, a number of additional questions were included in the EU poll in order to determine attitudes regarding the latest developments and focused on EU-specific angles; otherwise, the same questions were asked in each poll in order to allow for a direct comparison of results.

The bearing of the related privacy concerns on EU-U.S. relations is clearly marked, with an overwhelming majority of EU respondents – a full three-quarters (76%) – believing the data protection issue will impact the EU-U.S. relationship. As a clear example of how the data security issue seems to have shaken Europeans' support for closer ties with the U.S., EU respondents are split over continuing support for the TTIP free trade agreement negotiations, with 49% of EU respondents saying negotiations should be stalled because of the data issue, and 50% saying they should not. These findings reflect some recent calls by senior EU politicians in European media for a suspension of the negotiations.

"The research findings demonstrate that the recent revelations of U.S. intelligence gathering has had a clear impact on public sentiment in the EU, and there has been a cooling towards the U.S. in Europe where some high-profile political figures appear to be leveraging this public sentiment with their calls for a stalling of the TTIP negotiations," said [Dan Healy](#), Managing Director in FTI Consulting's Strategy Consulting & Research practice in London.

FTI Consulting will share the full survey results during a breakfast meeting at the company's Brussels office on Friday 06 December 2013. To register for the event [click here](#).

Other findings in the report showed that an overwhelming majority of EU respondents (84%) somewhat or strongly agree that the EU should be able to prosecute U.S. companies if the way they handle data breaches EU law. This echoes Europeans' perceptions on who benefits from big data. The study found that 45% of EU respondents say the U.S. primarily benefits from big data, compared to 10% of EU respondents who say the EU is the major beneficiary of big data. A further third (32%) of EU respondents believe the U.S. and the EU benefit equally.

Security scepticism is greater in Europe than in the U.S.

When asked what the survey respondents thought about the collection and use of their personal data by the government, more than half (53%) of EU respondents felt it was mostly negative versus 33% of EU respondents who felt data collection was mostly positive. These findings correlate closely with those of respondents in the U.S., where 55% of respondents thought the collection and use of their personal data by the government was mostly negative, and 38% felt data collection was mostly positive.

However, opinions are divided when it comes to the role of information gathering as a means of providing greater security and safety for the public. In the U.S., a majority (53%) of respondents think it is somewhat or very likely that the general public will enjoy greater safety and security as a result of such information gathering, whereas 44% believe information gathering is not very or at all likely to provide safety and security. In contrast, 49% of respondents in the EU think that information gathering as a means of providing greater safety and security is not very or at all likely, and 43% (ten percentage points fewer than U.S. respondents) think it is somewhat or very likely that information gathering will provide greater security and safety for the public.

Interestingly, when the same question is asked in terms of safety and security for respondents themselves and their families rather than the general public, greater scepticism is evident with both U.S. and EU respondents. In this case, a majority in both regions (54% in the EU and 50% in the U.S.) think that greater safety and security from information gathering is not very or at all likely. However, a higher proportion of U.S. respondents (47%) believe greater security and safety is somewhat or very likely to result from the collection of personal data, compared to 38% of EU respondents.

Widespread distrust

Similar levels of distrust are expressed about the ability of both the U.S. and EU governments to responsibly use personal data with 51% of respondents in the U.S. and 50% of respondents in the EU expressing distrust. Interestingly, a distinct arm of government, law enforcement agencies, are trusted much more in both regions, particularly in the U.S. where they are trusted somewhat or a great deal to responsibly use personal data by 71% of respondents, compared to 28% who do not trust them at all or very much. In the EU, 54% of respondents say they trust law enforcement agencies somewhat or a great deal to responsibly use their personal data, versus 41% who do not trust them at all or very much.

In both regions, respondents indicated that healthcare providers are the most trusted to responsibly use their personal data (81% of U.S. respondents and 66% of EU respondents). At the other end of the spectrum, the most distrusted parties to responsibly use personal data are social media sites, which inspire little or no confidence in 70% of respondents in both the U.S. and the EU. The media followed with 69% of respondents in the U.S. and 66% of respondents in the EU indicating little or no confidence. Politicians and political parties were also viewed as untrustworthy with 62% of respondents in the U.S. and 64% of respondents in the EU indicating little or no confidence regarding the responsible use of their personal data.

Research Methodology

FTI Consulting conducted separate polls in the U.S. and the EU. Telephone interviews were conducted in the U.S. from 29 May to 02 June 2013 among 1,000 adults aged 18 and over. In Europe, online polling was carried out from 25 to 28 October 2013 among 1,536 respondents aged 18 and over in six key EU member states: Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK. A number of additional questions were included in the EU poll in order to determine attitudes regarding the latest developments in data protection and focused on EU-specific angles; otherwise, the same questions were asked in each poll in order to allow for direct comparison of results.

About FTI Consulting

FTI Consulting, Inc. is a global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organisations protect and enhance enterprise value in an increasingly complex legal, regulatory and economic environment. With more than 4,100 employees located in 25 countries, FTI Consulting professionals work closely with clients to anticipate, illuminate and overcome complex business challenges in areas such as investigations, litigation, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory issues, reputation management, strategic communications and restructuring. The company generated \$1.58 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2012. More information can be found at www.fticonsulting.com.

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