



Press release HateAid gGmbH

Big Brother is watching: HateAid files Criminal Complaint against Meta over Smart Glasses

A fully functional camera that looks like a pair of regular glasses: HateAid argues the sale of Meta smart glasses in Germany is a criminal offense. The human rights organization has therefore filed a complaint against Meta, Ray-Ban, Oakley, and several eyewear retailers with the Frankfurt am Main State Attorney General's Office. The organization is calling for a sales ban on the "Wayfarer – Gen 2" glasses in Germany and binding rules for "Safety by Design" to ensure that people cannot be filmed without their knowledge.

Berlin, August 8, 2026

HateAid has filed a criminal complaint with the Zentralstelle zur Bekämpfung der Internet- und Computerkriminalität (Central Office for Combating Internet Crime) against the management teams of Meta Platforms Technologies Ireland Limited, Ray-Ban, and Oakley (both part of the Luxottica Group S.p.A.), as well as the optical retail chains Fielmann, Apollo-Optik, Mister Spex, and MediaMarkt. According to HateAid, the sale of Ray-Ban Meta Smart Glasses in Germany violates the Telecommunications, Digital Services, and Data Protection Act (TDDDG) and thus constitutes a criminal offense in the organization's view.

Josephine Ballon, HateAid CEO said:

"Whether on the subway, at work, or in the sauna: Considering the way smart glasses work right now, people aren't safe anywhere. You have to expect at any moment to be filmed and then be exposed on the internet. With the sale of Ray-Ban Meta glasses, profits are once again being prioritized over safety. It is unacceptable that corporations like Meta once again try to get away with breaking the law – and profiting from it to enrich themselves. Everyone involved in the sales of smart glasses must be held accountable."

Anna-Lena von Hodenberg, HateAid CEO added:

"With its dominant market position on social media, Meta already wields considerable influence over digital communication. The company is constantly driving new technologies forward – without considering privacy and applicable law. Smart glasses are yet another strategic tool to cement its data monopoly and Meta's market power."

HateAid regards the launch of smart glasses as a manifestation of the growing power and monopoly of tech corporations. In Germany alone, 41 million people wear glasses. Smart glasses with discreetly integrated cameras and microphones are designed to be indistinguishable from ordinary glasses. For years, HateAid has been documenting an increasing number of cases of image-based digital violence, in which women in particular are filmed and portrayed in a sexualized manner. Smart glasses now disguise a particularly inconspicuous surveillance technology as an everyday object. It is not uncommon for victims to find out years later that footage is circulating online, after it has already been widely disseminated.

By filing this criminal complaint, HateAid aims to secure a landmark ruling in the area of smart glasses. After careful examination and review of recent statements by authorities such as the Federal Network Agency in Germany, HateAid has concluded that this could constitute a criminal offense. The presumption of innocence applies.



In an accompanying petition, HateAid calls for:

1. A ban on the sale of Ray-Ban Meta AI Glasses in Germany: The sale of these glasses, which record secretly, is prohibited and must be stopped. Not only by Meta, but also by opticians and electronics retailers.
2. Ensure "Safety by Design": We demand that these glasses may only be sold if they are clearly identifiable as smart glasses, for example through color-coded labeling of the cameras. These measures must be secure against attempts at tampering. Clear limits must apply to recording, similar to those that apply to dashcams or bodycams.
3. Don't leave those affected to fend for themselves: Those affected need reliable access to justice that also applies online and must not be left to fend for themselves.

The petition (available only in German) is supported by prominent initial signatories.

About HateAid gGmbH

The nonprofit organization HateAid was founded in 2018 and is headquartered in Berlin. It advocates for human rights in the digital sphere and works at both the societal and political levels to combat digital violence and its consequences. HateAid provides concrete support to victims of digital violence through counseling and legal cost financing. Its executive directors are Anna-Lena von Hodenberg and Josephine Ballon.

HateAid is the recipient of the 2023 Theodor Heuss Medal, the Rothenburg Prize for Remembrance and the Future, the Values Prize for Democracy from the Werte Foundation, and the For..Net Award from the Technical University of Munich. In 2025, Anna-Lena von Hodenberg accepted the Federal Cross of Merit on behalf of the NGO.

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