

Dutch seek law to help block foreign telecoms takeovers

The Dutch government on Thursday, 16 February, proposed a draft law enabling it to block or annul takeover bids of communications firms by foreign companies "in the name of national security".



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A month ahead of general elections, already marred by concerns of foreign hacking into Dutch government websites, the economic affairs ministry said such a law was needed to protect "confidentiality and the public interest".

"The Netherlands benefits from the fact that we have an open economy where the market does its job. So we take more business from abroad than the other way around," said Minister of Economic Affairs Henk Kamp in a statement.

"But there is no gain to our country from takeovers by businesses with links to criminal activities, or which are financially weak or do not have a transparent ownership structure."

He stressed the law would be aimed at companies active in telecommunications, data collection and the internet.

The government would also examine rules for different sectors such as the post, to ensure continuity of service.

The Dutch postal service PostNL last year several times rejected a takeover bid from its neighbour in Belgium, Bpost.

In October 2013, Mexican telecoms giant America Movil, owned by billionaire Carlos Slim, had to abandon a hostile takeover bid for KPN after an independent Dutch foundation linked to the Dutch telecoms operator moved to block the deal.

Source: AFP

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