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<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/Germany-France-and-Spain-carrying-out-mass-spying/articleshow/25155020.cms>

'Germany, France and Spain Carrying out Mass spying'

11/3/2013

Spy agencies in Germany, France, Spain and Sweden are carrying out mass surveillance of online and phone traffic in collaboration with Britain, according to documents leaked by Edward Snowden, a media report said on Saturday.

Britain's GCHQ electronic eavesdropping centre —which has a close relationship with the United States' National Security Agency (NSA) —has taken a leading role in helping the other countries work around laws intended to limit spying, the the Guardian newspaper said.

The report is likely to prove embarrassing for governments including those of Germany and Spain, which had denounced earlier reports that NSA was electronically spying on their citizens. Friday's report said the intelligence services of the European countries, in a "loose but growing" alliance, carried out surveillance through directly tapping fibre-optic cables and through secret relationships with communications companies.

The newspaper previously reported that GCHQ taps transatlantic fibre-optic cables. On Saturday, it quoted a 2008 country-by-country survey, plus a later report by the British agency on efforts to crack commercial online encryption , both of which it said were among documents leaked by Snowden.