

EU, Japan to start cyber-security dialogue

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Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe leaves is welcomed at the Invalides in Paris on May 5, 2014

The European Union will discuss Internet security during talks this week in Brussels with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a senior EU official said Monday.

Speaking ahead of Abe's arrival on Tuesday, the official said a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) being negotiated with Japan would now include closer cooperation on cyber-security.

"We are encouraged by the deepening cooperation (with Japan) in the security sphere through the launch of new dialogue on cyber issues," the official said.

Japanese media reports say Abe and EU leaders are expected to agree the issue at a summit Wednesday, with a draft joint statement calling for the "protection of a safe, open and secure cyber-space."

Cyber-attacks occur when the computer information systems of individuals, organisations or infrastructure are targeted, whether by criminals, terrorists or even states with an interest in disrupting computer networks.

The EU says there has been an increase in cyber-crime and that attacks go beyond national borders, making international cooperation a vital part of cyber-security.

Abe arrives in Brussels on the last leg of a nine-day tour of six EU countries.

The SPA negotiations were launched in early 2013 and an agreement would cover more than 30 policy areas, ranging from political to scientific and cultural cooperation.

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