

## [Transcript] Thema des Tages / Wird Tiktok bald verboten?

Hey everyone, this is Rep AOC, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and this is my first TikTok. Now this week, the CEO of TikTok came and testified before Congress as there is growing rumblings and discussion over a nationwide ban. Should the social media app TikTok be banned? This is just heavily discussed, not only in the US policy. The list of proposals to the mother-concern bydance is long, from Chinese espionage over problems with data security to missing youth protection. And this consideration could the TikTok CEO look at shoes also in a survey in the US Congress not to clean up. TikTok will remain a place for free expression and will not be manipulated by any government. Today we are talking about who is really stuck in TikTok and what role the government plays in China. We will ask if you can even ban a social media app and with dance videos and cooking recipes on TikTok which could soon be closed in Austria. Peter Zellinger, you are reporting for the standard web-resort, among other things, about social media. And what is going on, you can no longer get past TikTok for a couple of years. I have a feeling that everyone else is spreading social media right now. What would you as an expert say? How big is the meaning of TikTok? TikTok is definitely the most successful app at all times when you go to download it. That's just billions of downloads. TikTok has in Europe and in the USA, each 150 million users and users, what an enormous number is and what also shows how important this app has really become. In the USA, the app is much more popular than with us. But also in Austria, you should not underestimate it, especially the range. 68% of all young people between 11 and 17 years in Austria use the app. That's more than two thirds. And that's also the reason why the Austrian government is so much on TikTok. Because that's really often the only way you can reach young voters at all. And what you have to say is that TikTok is just politically relevant. A lot of information from the Ukraine War reach us over TikTok. The Black Lives Matter demos were mostly organized over TikTok. And the protests in Iran were not possible without TikTok. So if you went to funny dance videos at the beginning, then there is really a much larger social relevance now. And yet I hear and not only me, always thrown forward against TikTok. Can you give us a brief overview of what the biggest and most important points are? What should be wrong with TikTok? Yes, there are two big complexes. The one is the lack of youth protection. Worldwide in the headlines, TikTok is always with challenges that are often dangerous or with deadly ends.

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For example, there was the Blackout Challenge, where young people stop the air until they lose consciousness. That's how 82 children died of this challenge worldwide. This is also known as the Tideport Challenge, where young people ate laundry. And there are a lot of other absurd actions that I can't count on now. At the same time, you don't really know where the data of this video is actually saved and then who will be given the data. That's the second big point. And there are always prejudices that they deal with data protection very slowly. And that's the very, very big advantage that you hear every now and then that these data could possibly flow to China, to the Chinese government. Can you describe a little more what's going on with TikTok's data protection? Is there really this connection to China? Yes, that's the big question now. You actually don't know that very well. TikTok has several problems concerning data protection. On the one hand, private messages are not deleted on the platform. That means theoretically, the app can read everything I write. Well, they are not on Facebook Messenger or on Instagram either. TikTok of course also deals with the standard data and the contacts of the user or the user. These are all things that can be activated in the app settings. That's not nice at all, but that's unfortunately in the industry. Living practices almost all apps do that. The problem with TikTok is once again the integrated browser. If I look at a video now, for example, that's a advertising for a nice pair of shoes, and I click on it, then a web shop opens up in the internal integrated browser of TikTok. And there the app can theoretically enter all the buttons and thus attack password users. Even this has not been found on TikTok, on Facebook and Instagram exactly like that. But the problem is with TikTok, you don't know whether the data is learning about the environment in Beijing. And there was a very spectacular case, TikTok, or rather the Concern Motor Bite Dance, which proved in the past that you simply can't trust it. Although it was released in autumn of last year, the US journalist and journalist Hunter App was monitored. At that time, you tried to find the standard data of the journalists and journalists and even their friends. The whole thing even has the internal code name called Project Raven. At the dance, the case of the dance had to start, but then there was a delay. But of course, it spoke of individual cases. On the other hand, there are researches by US journalists who are more aware that there were really great surveillance actions. There are audio recordings of 80 internal agreements within Bite Dance, in which it is again and again the talk is that you can use the data from US users and users. Can you tell us a little more about this mother's concern about Bite Dance?

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What is that for a company?

Yes, Bite Dance is a very exciting construction.

This is the mother's concern of TikTok and it was founded by an former Microsoft employee.

In China, Bite Dance is a very large number and has a large number of apps from video editing to mobile games.

The western business is led by Bite Dance, but from Singapore, from where TikTok is also being operated.

And the two companies do a little bit like that in the west, as if they didn't belong together at all and as if TikTok was a western app at all.

Is that reasonable, because only because the daughter company TikTok is now in Singapore and not in China,

does that mean that there is no connection to the mother's concern, right?

Yes, that's just this show behind it a little bit.

Bite Dance has been trying for a long time to introduce TikTok as a western product and to call itself a home app.

As we have already mentioned, the main office has the seat in Singapore,

but there you reside in the same skyscraper as the mother's concern about Bite Dance.

So alone from the local area, there is a certain suspicion that it will be worked together.

So it's just hard to say that you're talking about the mother's concern.

TikTok itself, the app doesn't really exist in China, because it's called Duiyin.

But it looks the same as TikTok, so there is no difference functionally.

Duiyin in China will be much stronger than the censored authorities.

There you won't find any content for the massacre at the Tiananmen Square.

They will be completely blinded there.

And content can't be communicated freely there, logically.

So Duiyin is more of an online sales platform and is strongly aimed at advertising, while it's more like fun videos, dance videos and such things for us.

In China, users of the app can only access child-safe content and also limit the use time to 40 minutes a day.

Of course, that doesn't exist in the West at all.

But TikTok is originally a Chinese app.

No matter how much it tries to hide and hide it.

And even if it's formally tried to limit the Western version of TikTok from the Chinese somehow,

is there a sign that these data protection concerns

where journalists could be spied on inside?

That these data actually land with the Chinese government?

So is there this connection?

Yes, dance is very close to the Chinese government.

That's not unusual for a Chinese company.

They have to do it all.

But dance has an internal committee of the Communist Party of China.

And what's special is that it provides a strategic partnership with the Ministry for Public Security.

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And this Ministry is responsible for the censorship of the Internet in China. Dance even takes over public work for the censorship authorities. So the closeness is definitely there. In a daughter company by Dance, there is one of the three prime ministers, the, among others, the former leader of the Internet censorship authority, the Cyber Space Administration of China. And he also talks in questions of the company strategy and with investments, for example. So a cadre of the censorship authority is actively mixed into the business. That's just the way it is. According to Dance, but of course, no influence on the global activities of the company. Well, you can believe it or not. There was an accident in 2018. At that time, the company was thrown forward a bit. It doesn't set the censorship authorities strong enough or not in the sense of the government in Beijing. After that, the founder of the company was so under pressure that he had to read a statement in which he promised to serve the agenda of the Communist Party of China. So let's hold tight. Tiktok, the western version of this app, is separated from the mother company by Dance. They sit next to the same Wolkenkratzer and at the mother company there is a own committee of the Communist Party of China. So there are some close relationships. And how does Tiktok react to this espionage of relations with China and what does the Chinese government say to these relations, because it always treats them again and again? Yes, that's what you really, really like. So when you talked to this Project Raven, the journalists and journalists, you then announced the current manager and talked about individual cases. And you then lied to some people and so on and so forth. You then lied to them better. That was one of them. Meanwhile, you deal with it so that you say, yes, Tiktok is a European company, because you have a low salary in Germany, from where you run the business, European data is only stored in Europe, similar to in the USA.

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So that's the official version.

The Chinese government,

it's always a bit back in the whole debate.

They say these espionage accusations

only affect the prejudices of the West against China.

Then individual ambassadors can be excluded.

But China, the government itself, of course, is in a twig.

On the one hand, of course, you have to look at it,

that the own technology companies

are not excluded from American or European markets.

On the other hand, they can't be too strong on the put-down

in the case of Bite Dance or Tiktok,

because you constantly communicate that it's actually

a Western app.

And that's why I have the feeling that the ball is a bit flat.

In any case, I would say with all this info that you have now

at least the critics inside and critics in the West

will not be very satisfied with it.

That's why we have to talk a little bit about it,

how the Western governments react to Tiktok now

and if there could possibly be any prohibitions.

But before we take a short break, we'll be back in a moment.

What I can't understand is

why I should always be guilty of every injustice.

One corruption scandal is the other.

In the last 30 years, Austria has talked a lot about climate protection,

but not so much about it.

The politics is harming the climate crisis.

The authorities have done everything right.

Mistakes are made to be missed instead of learned.

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Peter, there are a lot of data protection issues at TikTok.

And there are a lot of very close connections to the Chinese government,

as we have discussed today.

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And that's why we've been discussing for a long time whether the app should be banned.

Are there any such prohibitions now?

And how can it go on?

Well, the point is that in most US countries there is a lot of data protection issues.

And in most US states the use of TikTok is banned on Tuesdays.

So US officials and officials can no longer use the app.

That's also within the European Union, or even within the British Parliament.

Then there is the aspect of youth protection.

So Utah is, for example, suppressed and has more or less banned TikTok for youth.

Young people have to bring an old background to Utah so that they can use the app at all.

The parents have to agree on the use.

And these are already big issues.

But what's still in the room?

And that would be for TikTok.

Really painful would of course be a total ban on the app.

That means US Americans and Americans simply wouldn't have access to TikTok anymore.

The Congress just wants the President Joe Biden to give the possibility that he can pronounce this ban.

That can't be arranged for a long time.

If this law is passed, then Biden would have the opportunity to say, in theory, TikTok will be banned in the entire state area of the USA tomorrow.

And then that's it.

And exactly this plan should have been a topic as the CEO of the TikTok in a short time was invited to the US Congress and had to say how his company is responsible for all these concerns.

How did he defend himself against these concerns and the possible prohibitions that are in the room?

Yes, there are different opinions.

If you ask the Congress, then there is only one word that he has defended and that is on good Austrian terms.

First, he tried to make companies American, which he of course also didn't buy.

And he said, the data of the US citizens and citizens are only stored on American soil in data centers that are monitored and waited by American employees.

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We will firewall protected US data from unwanted foreign access.  
And he has also said several times,  
Biden's is not an agent of China.  
Biden's is not owned or controlled by the Chinese government.  
And the surveillance of US journalists and journalists  
was of course not a espionage.  
So he wouldn't call it that.  
Has Biden spied on American citizens?  
I don't think the spying is the right way to describe it.  
That really led to laughter in the plan  
and of course it didn't work out well.  
In fact, he has gotten so bad  
that Kevin McCarthy, the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
later said, thanks to the statements of the TikTok boss,  
we are now taking a step further,  
so that we can pass the law.  
So he probably doesn't have a good service in his company.  
But you also have to say, I've seen some videos  
that some questions were also formulated by this subordinate.  
For example, if TikTok attacks the WLAN on the phone,  
you can really see how heated this debate will be in the USA.  
Peter, can you take a quick look at us?  
You said this big ban is in the room  
and the Congress is even taking a step closer to it.  
How likely do you think TikTok could be completely banned in the USA?  
For TikTok in the USA, it's actually getting very, very, very tight.  
On the one hand, Republicans and Democrats with the law are a bit of a nuisance,  
which is a very strong sign.  
On the other hand, it is also being checked,  
namely the exception for foreign investors,  
which security risks of TikTok are going off.  
And there is the suggestion to split TikTok up.  
There must be TikTok, the name of Musical.ly,  
which is a music app that has been taking over TikTok for a few years,  
and you have to do it back again, which of course doesn't work.  
I think it's six years ago now.  
You can't just split up two apps that are related to each other again.  
On the other hand, TikTok will of course be based on power,  
because technically it probably isn't even possible  
and a split-up of the app would come in handy.  
So if you ask me personally,  
yes, I would say that a TikTok ban in the USA is likely to happen.  
So you could really get excited in the next few weeks and months.  
In the USA, as you said,

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but what is also exciting for us is the situation in Europe and Austria, which you have already briefly mentioned, that there are already such service mobile TikTok ban in the European Union, how does it look specifically in Austria now?

Could TikTok also be related to service mobile or to all mobile phones at once?

The fact that TikTok is completely banned in Austria,

I think it's unlikely.

I would say it's likely that there will also be a ban on service mobile.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is checking it right now,

and what you hear is pretty likely that in Austria,

instead of the European Union and other countries like Denmark and Italy, this is no longer surprising.

But TikTok has a problem on the European level.

TikTok could also disappear from Europe.

This is related to so-called digital services acts,

I'll make it short,

which sees that companies have to take a specific book,

and have to be familiar with how they save their data,

where these data go, and according to the current EU commissioner,

TikTok still supports, I think it was against 19 points in this paper.

But that's not all in force yet.

So we have to see if TikTok still takes up the necessary arrangements.

I would say that they will get the basis of conversation in Europe

with the head office and the management of TikTok

is simply a completely different thing than in the USA.

The debate is not that hot.

What would you like to say about TikTok now?

How could they try to get rid of this ban?

What could they do specifically in the near future?

In Europe, you would have to include the app

with this already mentioned digital services act,

which in my opinion is not quite easy, but possible.

TikTok could actually say,

okay, we are now a European company,

we are founded by a purely European company,

that is exactly what these agreements are about.

That will probably also happen, I assume.

But in the USA it will be quite difficult,

or do you have all the demands?

Yes, in the USA it would actually be a split of the app,

which I cannot imagine.

What I cannot imagine at all

is the general ban of TikTok that we have talked about.

I think an app that is somehow used by millions and billions of people all over the world,

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can you also, if there are justified security concerns,  
simply ban it?  
Can this work?  
Do you think this is the right solution for the whole discussion?  
Technically, you can try it,  
but we are still on the Internet,  
and we all know from the past how good it has always worked.  
There will always be a way to install this app on your phone,  
on your smartphone,  
and also to use it.  
There are different methods,  
and the simplest is simply using a VPN tunnel or something like that.  
I personally believe that it is an illusion  
that you can simply ban social media, in the case of TikTok.  
It would be a bit like that if our parents tried to ban the TV at the time,  
because trash TV makes us so much dumber.  
Social media is simply so deeply rooted in the life of today's youth,  
that you cannot simply ban it or ban it from them.  
That does not work.  
I believe that this is a bit of a trap that we have there,  
because we may not fully understand the app.  
We can be very concerned about the background of the awareness,  
the company structure, the proximity to the Chinese government,  
and also a little bit about the TikTok CEO,  
who does not comment very well,  
but I believe that the meaning is already too far away from the young people,  
now also old-fashioned,  
in order not to say that there are a few boomers there, who are talking about it now,  
how one takes away the children's social media.  
And TikTok also has this enormous social relevance.  
There is a lot more than funny dances or a distribution of trash,  
but there is really important information for many people about survival.  
I have already mentioned the entrance, the protests in Iran,  
the Black Lives Matter demo,  
or right now the information about the Ukraine war.  
We would not have done all this without this video app.  
And that is also because it is so easy to create a video in it,  
to make your own content.  
And that is, yes, it sounds so pathetic now,  
but it is also a bit of a democratization of the TV,  
because everyone can simply use it.  
And TikTok itself is not the most innovative app,  
but rather rather a shared combination of other apps.  
So even if you offer TikTok,

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it would be a short time, this power vacuum that remains, immediately filled.

So in my opinion, it would be much more meaningful if there was a meaningful law on data protection, instead of being totally forbidden there.

And we can see that in Europe, fortunately, much further than the USA.

So we will look forward to what is happening in Europe and also in the USA.

As it goes on with TikTok,

in any case you can see which role the whole thing plays for information freedom, for freedom of opinion,

and how deep social media roots,

as you said, are in our society.

Thank you, Peter Zellinger,

for bringing us closer today.

Thank you very much.

We will now talk about our report,

and also about why many browns in Vienna

were colored in mid-week green today,

and about the visit of the English king Charles in Germany.

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Please stay tuned, we'll be right back.

And here's what you'll have to know today.

First of all, today is no day without new climate protests.

Today in mid-week, for example, six browns were colored in green in the city of Vienna.

According to the group Extinction Rebellion,

the means for which uranium should have been used

were that it was impassable and biological.

Specifically, the group speaks against green gas.

With it, biogas can be common, but possibly also e-fuels.

We have already made a podcast episode about this.

We link them in the show notes.

There in Vienna, the cleaning of the browns should cost several thousand euros.

The city wants to show off to the activists in the cities.

Also at the Vienna Rathaus and at the Salzburger Staatsbrückjahr

there were protests.

Therefore, from the Vorarlberger Hauptstadt Bregenz comes a support announcement.

The local mayor speaks for the demands of the organization

last generation and demands more measures for climate protection.

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Second, we come back to Vienna, because there the largest vaccination street in Austria is closed, namely the one in the Austria-Central Vienna. In total, more than two million vaccinations were canceled there and during the highest excursion, up to 15,000 people were vaccinated on the day. Due to many delays, the vaccination process in the ACV ends with March 31. Then you can get the corona vaccination, for example, at the House of Doctors. And third, the British king Charles and his wife Camilla are now visiting lunch in Germany today. They plan their time at lunch first, the greeting at the Brandenburger Tor, where also sound guests can watch in Berlin. After that, a invitation to the German president, Frank Walter Steinmeier, in his office, Schloss Bellevue, and a reception on the topic of energy transition and sustainability. Tomorrow on Thursday Charles will then hold a short speech in front of the German Bundestag and on Friday he will continue with a regular ICE train to Hamburg. So we hope that the British king will not get to know the legendary delaying of German ICE, you always find the current updates on the [standard.at](https://www.standard.at) and there you can also read everything else about the current world. If you still want to say something, then please write an email at the [standard.at](mailto:standard.at). And if you liked this episode of the topic of the day, then subscribe to our best, the same favorite podcast platform, then you won't miss any more episodes. Please leave a nice comment there or a good rating so that we can find more people. I'm Tobias Holup. Thank you for listening and see you next time. In terms of the topic of the day. Every second Saturday a new episode. Everywhere there is a podcast.