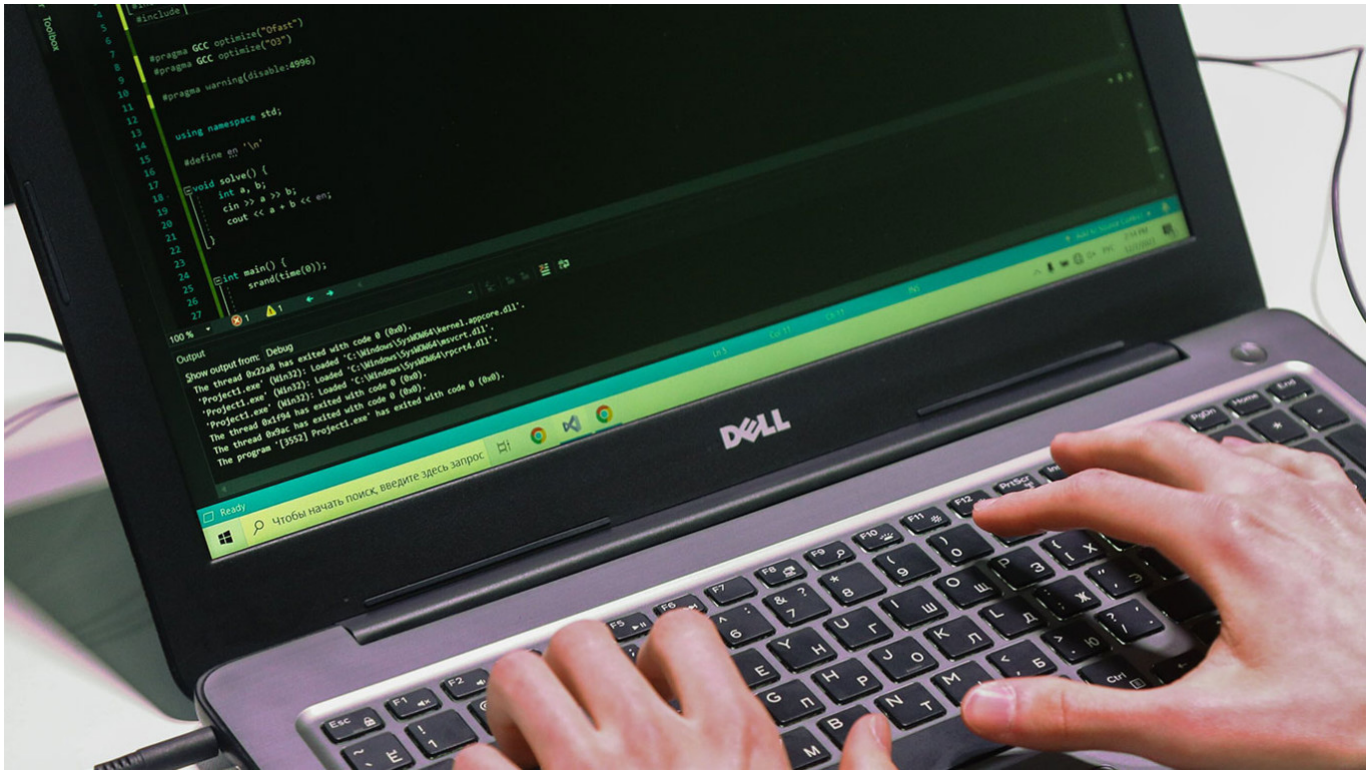
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Czech Republic Reports Targeting by Russian Cyberattacks

By AFP

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Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency

Czech government officials said Friday that the Central European country has been repeatedly targeted by cyberattacks orchestrated by a group with links to Russia's GRU military intelligence service.

Citing "the mode of operation and the focus of these attacks," the Czech Foreign Ministry blamed the Russian group APT28, also known as Fancy Bear, for the attacks.

"Some Czech institutions have... been the target of cyberattacks exploiting a previously unknown vulnerability in Microsoft Outlook from 2023," the ministry said in a statement.

In Berlin, German officials said Friday that the same group of hackers had also carried out a cyberattack on members of the Social Democratic Party in January 2023.

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Czech Interior Minister Vit Rakusan said his country's infrastructure had recently experienced "dozens" of such attacks.

"The attacks were orchestrated by the Russian Federation and its military intelligence service GRU," Rakusan told reporters at a news conference with his German counterpart Nancy Faeser.

"The Czech Republic is a target. In the long term, it has been perceived by the Russian Federation as an enemy state," he added.

Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky told AFP that "pointing a finger publicly at a specific attacker is an important tool to protect national interests."

The Czech Republic, an EU and NATO member of 10.9 million people, has provided Ukraine with substantial military and humanitarian aid since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Earlier this week, Czech police said they had shelved a case of two blasts at an eastern Czech ammunition depot from 2014, blaming the GRU for orchestrating them.

They said the Russian side had refused to cooperate on the investigation into the explosions that killed two workers.

A Czech intelligence report on the blast led to a wave of diplomatic expulsions on both sides in 2021.

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