

EU Parliament Approves Data Protection Update

Written by Marco Attard
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The EU Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs gives the final seal of approval to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), making it official EU law applying to all EU countries from 2018.



As a result, enterprises have little more than 2 years-- the deadline is 4 May 2018-- in order to be GDPR compliant. Companies based outside the EU also need to be compliant to the regulations if they want to do business within the Union.

An update of EU data protection laws was a long time coming. The result of 4 years of work, the GDPR replaces the pan-European regulation put in place back in 1995. It is influenced by both technological advances and the revelations brought about by Edward Snowden, and introduces new accountability obligations, stronger rights and restrictions on international data flows. Failure to adhere to regulations can bring about penalties worth either €20 million or 4% of overall annual turnover, whichever is the greater.

"The new rules will ensure that the fundamental right to personal data protection is guaranteed for all. The GDPR will help stimulate the Digital Single Market in the EU by fostering trust in online services by consumers and legal certainty for businesses based on clear and uniform rules," the European Commission says. "These rules are for the benefit of everyone in the EU. Individuals must be empowered-- they must know what their rights are, and know how to defend their rights if they feel they are not respected."

The GDPR insists on the disclosure personal data breaches within 72 hours. Enterprises also need to appoint a data protection officer if they are processing sensitive data at scale, and are liable for data breaches extending to data processors used by a data controller.

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As such, it should oblige companies to become more serious on compliance and security. Better urge your customers to get to it sooner, rather than later!

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