

European Council Agrees on Data Protection

Written by Marco Attard
19 June 2015

The European reform of data protection legislation hits a milestone-- the European Council agrees on a "general approach" with aims to improve personal data protection and enhance business opportunities within the Digital Single Market.



Such changes can bring about a pan-European data protection framework replacing the current approach, where regulatory watchdogs operating in the counter of operation within Europe.

"[W]e have moved a great step closer to modernised and harmonised data protection framework for the European Union," Latvian minister for justice Dzintars Rasnačs says. "The new data protection regulation, adapted to the needs of the digital age, will strengthen individual rights of our citizens and ensure a high standard of protection."

The agreement establishes a single set of data protection rules within the EU. Such rules should remove "unnecessary administrative requirements, such as notification requirements for companies," and apply equally to non-EU based companies offering services inside the EU.

Other points include the strengthening of existing rights (such as the "right to be forgotten" and data portability between service providers), increased powers for national data protection regulators and the notion of a one-stop-stop data protection "single supervisory authority."

However not everyone is impressed by the agreement-- digital rights organisation Access insists the regulation text "has carved out so many loopholes it's not even consistent with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights." Such loopholes would allow companies to collect and repeatedly use citizens' data, as well as transfer European data to countries lacking in data protection regulation.

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