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Commission publishes guidance on upcoming new data protection rules

Brussels, 24 January 2018

The Commission publishes today guidance to facilitate a direct and smooth application of the new data protection rules across the EU as of 25 May. The Commission also launches a new online tool dedicated to SMEs.

With just over 100 days left before the application of the new law, the guidance outlines what the European Commission, national data protection authorities and national administrations should still do to bring the preparation to a successful completion.

While the new regulation provides for a single set of rules directly applicable in all Member States, it will still require significant adjustments in certain aspects, like amending existing laws by EU governments or setting up the European Data Protection Board by data protection authorities. The guidance recalls the main innovations, opportunities opened up by the new rules, takes stock of the preparatory work already undertaken and outlines the work still ahead of the European Commission, national data protection authorities and national administrations.

Knowledge of the benefits and opportunities brought by the new rules is not evenly spread. There is in particular a need to step up awareness and accompany compliance efforts for SMEs.



Today, the Commission launches a new practical online tool to help citizens, businesses, in particular SMEs, and other organisations to comply and benefit from the new data protection rules.

The Commission will also engage in events organised across the Member States to help the stakeholders in their preparation efforts and inform the citizens about the impact of the Regulation.

https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-386_en.htm

Action Plan on military mobility: EU takes steps towards a Defence Union

Brussels, 28 March 2018

In line with President Juncker's commitment to a fully-fledged Defence Union by 2025, the Commission and the High Representative are presenting an Action Plan to improve military mobility within and beyond the European Union. Facilitating the movement of military troops and assets is essential for the security of European citizens, and to build a more effective, responsive and joined-up Union, as identified in the Joint Communication on improving military mobility in the EU from November 2017 and called for in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy. Today's Action Plan identifies a series of operational measures to tackle physical, procedural or regulatory barriers which hamper military mobility. Working closely with the EU Member States and all relevant actors will be key for the implementation of this Action Plan.

https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-2521_en.htm

Tackling online disinformation: Commission proposes an EU-wide Code of Practice

Brussels, 26 April 2018

Today, the Commission is proposing measures to tackle disinformation online, including an EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation, support for an independent network of fact-checkers, and a series of actions to stimulate quality journalism and promote media literacy.

The recent Facebook/Cambridge Analytica revelations demonstrated exactly how personal data can be exploited in electoral contexts, and are a timely reminder that more is needed to secure resilient democratic processes. Today the European Commission is taking steps forward in the fight against disinformation to ensure the protection of European values and security.

Based on the independent report published in March 2018 by the High-Level Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation as well as wider consultations carried out over the past six months, the Commission defines disinformation as *"verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm"*.

The Commission will shortly convene a multi-stakeholder forum to provide a framework for efficient cooperation among relevant stakeholders, including online platforms, the advertising industry and major advertisers, and to secure a commitment to coordinate and scale up efforts to tackle disinformation. The forum's first output should be an EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation to be published by July 2018, with a view to having a measurable impact by October 2018.

By December 2018, the Commission will report on the progress made. The report will also examine the need for further action to ensure the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the outlined actions.

Prior to these initiatives, the European Union was already active in the fight against disinformation: in 2015, the East StratCom Task Force, under High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini's responsibility, was set up following a decision of the European Council in March 2015, in order *"to challenge Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns"*. The Task Force has operated within the European External Action Service since September 2015, effectively communicating the EU's policies towards its eastern neighbourhood; strengthening the overall media environment in the eastern neighbourhood, including providing support for media freedom and strengthening independent media; and improving the EU's capacity to forecast, address and raise awareness of pro-Kremlin disinformation activities.

https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3370_en.htm



Company Law: Commission proposes new rules to help companies move across borders and find online solutions

Brussels, 25 April 2018

Today, the European Commission is proposing new company law rules to make it easier for companies to merge, divide or move within the Single Market.

The new rules will also ensure that employees' rights are well protected and tax abuse is prevented. The rules will stimulate the growth potential of European companies by digitalising the process of setting-up and running a business.

The proposal sets out common procedures at the EU level on how a company can move from one EU country to another, merge or divide into two or more new entities across borders.

In October 2017, the Court of Justice clarified (C-106/16 *Polbud*) that freedom of establishment includes the right for a company to convert itself into a company governed by the law of another Member State, provided the requirements of the Member State of destination for its incorporation are satisfied (cross-border conversion).

https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3508_en.htm

Vaccination: Commission calls for stronger EU cooperation against preventable diseases

Brussels, 26 April 2018

Vaccination: Commission calls for stronger EU cooperation against preventable diseases

Today, the Commission is issuing a set of recommendations for how the EU can strengthen cooperation in the fight against diseases that can be prevented by vaccines. The Commission's proposal focuses on 3 main pillars for action: tackling vaccine hesitancy and improving vaccination coverage; sustainable vaccination policies in the EU; and EU coordination and contribution to global health.

The Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation will be discussed by the Council, with the aim of seeing it adopted before the end of 2018, with an immediate entry into force. Following this, every 3 years the Commission will report on progress made in the implementation of the recommendation. In addition the Commission will also produce a report on *'The State of Confidence in Vaccines in the EU'*, to monitor attitudes towards vaccination, in the context of the State of Health in the EU process.

The Commission's recommendations on vaccine-preventable diseases build on a number of existing EU policies and projects in area of vaccination.

https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3457_en.htm

Is there a European demos?

By Gaitenidis Nikolaos

The development of the European demos is seen as a prerequisite for the establishment of a democratic Euro-state. Chrysochou (1996: p. 733) summarizes the basic prerequisites for the creation of a transnational demos: "democratic self-awareness of the collective body of citizens, emphasis on common values systems, public awareness of the political process, determination for direct democratic demands, towards and through, central institutions and the sense of community needed to support citizens' activities. Above all, at the socio-psychological level, the municipality exists only if its members recognize their collective existence as such". Based on this description, the idea of the European Demos is the expression of the democratic principle that citizens of the Union acquire political rights beyond those enshrined in the provisions of the Treaty on European Citizenship. Citizens within the demos acquire active rights to participate in political life and to influence public opinion.

Dagtoglou (1991: p. 58) summarizes the specific rights in *status activus* according to which the citizen, from a mere recipient of the benefits of government, "seeks to co-identify and co-shape, directly or indirectly, government function, the actors and its course". In theory, the absence of a European demos is due to the lack of a common political 'identity' between European citizens, which will lead to the identification of citizens with the institutions of the post-national whole.

The contribution of civil society organizations to the shaping of the European demos is primarily about the emergence of the "European public sphere" which seeks to "politicize" European citizens, disseminate their values and beliefs and the influence them. At the same time, through the involvement of civil society in the European system of governance, it seeks to familiarize citizens with the European process of political decision-making while enhancing the 'citizenship rationale'.

Apart from the "communalisation" of citizens at European level, the development of the European demos also requires the establishment of appropriate institutions and mechanisms, since the whole European structure is mainly based on legitimacy and less on its "acceptance" by European citizens. The European demos should be based on specific fundamental political rights, which in a democratic society evolve from political declarations to specific legal rules. In conclusion, 'governance by citizens', by integrating civil society into the European decision-making process, seeks to transcend the boundaries of representative democracy by enriching the European system of governance with elements of participatory or communicative democracy. These processes of promoting the European system of governance are based on the relations between civil society organizations and the European Union resulting from the two-way adherence to the principles of good governance.

Under this logic, civil society is conceived to "create political publicity, involving democratic debate that results not only in the formulation of opinions but also in proposals". Assigning civil society organizations the task of operating a 'European politicization' or 'European education' of citizens translates into establishing direct links between civil society organizations with national public spheres and the parallel development of 'European civil society' within the "European public sphere". At the same time, it is attempting to increase the 'European consciousness' of citizens, who will perceive their participation in the European system of governance as part of their political identity.

Of course, the success of such an ambitious 'project' depends on a number of variables relating to the structure and institutional constraints of civil society under multi-level governance. Undoubtedly, the sphere of civil society, though often treated as a single and homogeneous one, contains a plethora of heterogeneous actors representing different political, social and economic motives. This means that every part of civil society can offer a different approach to the democratic capital of the EU.

Europeans that made history

Jean Monnet

(1888 – 1979)

The man who revolutionized the process of European Integration

Jean Monnet was a French diplomat and political economist. Born on **November 9, 1888**, he championed the unity of European countries and usually considered as one of the founding fathers of the European. **Jean Monnet** is referred to as “The Father of Europe,” by persons who acknowledge his tremendous contribution in the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community, which would lead to the formation of the European Union. **Jean Monnet** never held a public office; nonetheless, as a well-connected pragmatic internationalist, **Jean Monnet** worked behind the scenes of European and American governments to achieve targets. To honor his achievements, **Jean Monnet** was a patron of the College of Europe’s 1980 to 1981 academic year.

In 1914, discharged from the military for health reasons, Jean Monnet sought to serve his country in other ways. Due to his effectiveness during the war, Jean Monnet was named Secretary General of the League of Nations upon its creation in 1919, at the age of thirty-one, by Clémenceau and Balfour. He resigned from this position in 1923 in order to devote himself to managing the family business, which was experiencing some difficulty.

In 1943, Monnet became a member of the National Liberation Committee, the free French government in Algiers. On 5 August, he addressed the Committee: “There will be no peace in Europe if the States rebuild themselves on the basis of national sovereignty, with its implications of prestige politics and economic protection (...). The countries of Europe are not strong enough individually to be able to guarantee prosperity and social development for their peoples. The States of Europe must therefore form a federation or a European entity that would make them into a common economic unit.”

In 1950, in the face of rising international tensions, Jean Monnet felt that the time had come to attempt an irreversible step toward uniting the European countries. In his house in Houjarray, he and his team conceived the idea of the European Community. On 9 May 1950, with the agreement of Chancellor Adenauer, Robert Schuman made a declaration in the name of the French government. Prepared by Jean Monnet, this declaration proposed placing all the Franco-German production of steel and coal under a common High Authority open to the other countries of Europe.

Soon the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands replied favourably. Thus the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was born, laying the foundation of the European Community. In 1952, Jean Monnet became the first President of the High Authority.

In 1955, in order to revive European construction following the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC), Jean Monnet founded the Action Committee for the United States of Europe. Bolstered by his tireless impetus, this committee, which joined political parties and European trade unions, became a driving force behind all initiatives in favour of the European Union, including the creation of the Common Market, the European Monetary System, the European Council, British membership in the Community, and election to the European Parliament by universal suffrage.

Until even his last days, Jean Monnet was firm in his conviction that the European nations had to unite in order to survive.



https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/jean_monnet_en.pdf

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Monnet>

<https://www.sunsigns.org/famousbirthdays/d/profile/jean-monnet/>

<http://www.historiasiglo20.org/europe/monnet.htm>

Back to basics about the EU

The EU in the world

Trade

The European Union is the largest trade block in the world. It is the world's biggest exporter of manufactured goods and services, and the biggest import market for over 100 countries.

Free trade among its members was one of the EU's founding principles. This is possible thanks to the single market. Beyond its borders, the EU is also committed to liberalising world trade.

Humanitarian aid

The EU is committed to helping victims of man-made and natural disasters worldwide and supports over 120 million people each year. Collectively, the EU and its constituent countries are the world's leading donor of humanitarian aid.

Diplomacy and security

The EU plays an important role in diplomacy and works to foster stability, security and prosperity, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law at international level.

https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en#the-eu-in-the-world

Brexit

There and back again



The General Affairs Council (in a special composition on Brexit, Article 50) discussed the state of play of negotiations on both the completion of work on the withdrawal issues and the framework for future EU-United Kingdom relations. Ministers also considered the draft annotated agenda of the forthcoming Article 50 European Council (Heads of State and Government) meeting of 18 October 2018. In the briefing that followed the meeting, Mr Barnier recalled that time is running out and the actual catalyst date many of which will be judged in October and the regular meeting of the European Council. He noted that scrutiny of the implementation of the agreement, protected designations of origin and the issue of Ireland remain the biggest thorns. He stressed that Brexit could not lose the copyright of the Greek feta and the Polish vodka, but at the same time there could be no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Necessary controls (customs and regulatory) will take place away from the physical borders, with both sides recording what products should be controlled. He also noted that he would brief on developments and Heads of State and Government in Salzburg and described the October Summit as "the moment of truth". Indeed, the meeting in Salzburg reviewed progress in talks with the United Kingdom and discussed future actions. The 27 leaders reiterated that they remain fully united and agreed that there would be no exit agreement without a strong, functioning and legally binding security mechanism for Ireland.

EU Brexit chief negotiator Michel Barnier has denied that an agreement has been reached on financial services to give UK companies access to EU markets after the divorce, labeling the reports misleading and unfounded. However, the strategy of silence, followed by a two-week British summit in the Brexit negotiations, seems to be coming to an end tomorrow as the T. Mae cabinet meets on the issue. London is reportedly closer to an agreement with Brussels than ever, so the British prime minister is expected to send an ultimatum to ministers to back the draft. The focus of the negotiations remains on customs controls at the Northern Ireland-Ireland border, with the British seeking a formula to prevent controls at the Irish border, but without creating new barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of Britain. T. May appears to have secured EU backing so that she can pass the deal to Parliament. In particular, Brussels is said to have agreed to allow the whole of Britain, and not just Northern Ireland, to remain in the customs union until a wider trade agreement between the two sides is possible.

Correspondence from the Court

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-219/17

Freedom of establishment

The Court of Justice alone has jurisdiction to determine whether the legality of the ECB's decision opposing the acquisition by Fininvest and Mr Berlusconi of a qualifying holding in Banca Mediolanum is affected by any defects vitiating the preparatory acts by the Banca d'Italia

Judgments of the General Court in Cases T-274/16

Saleh Thabet v Council

External relations

The General Court upholds the Council's decision to freeze the assets of members of the Mubarak family, on the basis of judicial proceedings relating to misappropriation of Egyptian State funds

Opinion of the Advocate General in the case C-630/17

Milivojević

Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

Advocate General Tanchev proposes that the Court should rule that a national law that allows loan contracts concluded with foreign lenders who were not authorised to provide credit services in that country to be retroactively annulled is contrary to EU law when the same law does not apply to Croatian lenders

Judgments of the Court of Justice in Cases C-98/17 P, C-99/17 P

Philips and Philips France v Commission

Competition

In the context of the cartel in the smart card chip market, the Court refers the case involving Infineon Technologies back to the General Court to assess the proportionality of the fine imposed, and dismisses the appeal lodged by Philips

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-527/16

Alpenrind and Others

Freedom of movement for persons

A posted worker is covered by the social security system of his place of work if he replaces another posted worker, even if those workers were not posted by the same employer

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-181/16

Gnandi

Justice and Home Affairs

Member States are entitled to adopt a return decision as soon as an application for international protection is rejected, provided that the return procedure is suspended pending the outcome of an appeal against that rejection

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-147/16

Karel de Grote - Hogeschool Katholieke Hogeschool Antwerpen

Approximation of laws

The EU directive on unfair terms in consumer contracts may apply to an educational establishment

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-82/16

K.A. and Others

Justice and Home Affairs

Requests for family reunification must be examined even if the national of a non-EU country, who is a family member of an EU citizen who has never exercised his right of freedom of movement, is subject to an entry ban

Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-353/16

MP

Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

A person who has in the past been tortured in his country of origin is eligible for 'subsidiary protection' if he faces a real risk of being intentionally deprived, in that country, of appropriate physical and psychological health care

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