

GDPR

EU agrees on General Data Protection Regulation

On Tuesday 15 December 2015, the European Institutions announced that they reached an agreement on a final text for the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The agreement marks the end of 3½ years of negotiations and lauds the beginning of a new data protection regime in Europe. The Regulation will replace the former 1995 EU Data Protection Directive and create a unified data protection law that will apply directly across all 28 EU Member States from 2018.

Next steps

While negotiators of the European Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the final text of the Regulation, both institutions still have to formally adopt it. The responsible Parliament Committee has passed the GDPR with 48 votes in favour and 4 against on 17 December 2015, which means the Regulation will be presented to the full plenary session of the Parliament in the first months of 2016. In addition, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Member States has approved the final text as well, with 27 out of 28 Member States in favour of the deal. The heads of state of the EU Member States are scheduled to meet in February 2016 and are likely to vote on the Regulation at that moment.

As soon as both the Parliament and the Council have formally adopted the text and the GDPR has been published, a two-year period will commence in which organisations and regulators will have the time to prepare for the formal entry into force of the Regulation in Q2 2018. Until then, the current data protection framework, consisting of the 1995 Directive and the different implementing national privacy laws, will remain in force.

The GDPR as published, is over 200 pages in length. As with any new law, it will take time to read and understand all recitals and articles thoroughly and see how it differs from current legislation. On our website we provide [a first look at the main changes](#) that the Regulation brings. In the coming days and weeks, we will publish further analysis of the new regulatory requirements and how you can prepare your organisation for compliance.

Further information:

- The official European Parliament [press release](#)
- The official European Commission [press release](#)
- The official European Council [press release](#)
- The joint [press conference](#) of 21 December 2015

News

Agreement reached on new Network Information Security Directive (NIS)

Aside from GDPR, another important piece of legislation in the area of information security moved one step closer to becoming law. The European Parliament and Council reached an informal agreement on 7 December 2015 on the proposed Network Information Security Directive (NIS), which aims to increase cooperation between Member States and lay down security obligations for operators of digital service providers (online marketplaces, search engines and cloud computing services) and so-called “essential services”. This scope puts public and private entities in the financial services, energy, transport, health, water and digital infrastructure sectors with more than 50 employees within the remit of the law as well.

Most importantly from a privacy perspective, the NIS Directive will introduce a security incident notification requirement that extends beyond the personal data breach notification requirements of the GDPR. While GDPR obliges organisations to report a breach only when the risk for the privacy of the data subjects is high, the NIS Directive requires operators to notify the authorities whenever a security incident (any event having an actual adverse effect on the security of networks and information systems) has a substantial impact on the provision of their services.

As with the GDPR, the NIS Directive still has to be formally adopted by both law-making institutions of the EU, the Parliament and the Council. This is expected to happen in Spring 2016, according to the European Council’s [press release](#). After the formal adoption of the Directive, the Member States will have 21 months to transpose its provisions into national law.

Provisional agreement on EU Passenger Name Record proposal (PNR)

On 10 December, the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee of the European Parliament [approved](#) the provisional deal reached with the Council on an EU Directive that would regulate the use of Passenger Name Records (PNR) data for purposes related to terrorism and serious crime.

The Directive is not without controversy. A first proposal, which was presented to the Parliament and Council in February 2011, was rejected by the EP’s LIBE Committee after intense discussions about whether the data protection principles of necessity and proportionality were met, and about the data retention period foreseen in the Directive.

The current proposal as it will be presented to the plenary session of the Parliament would oblige air carriers that operate flights between a third country and an EU Member State to hand over the PNR data to the competent Member State authorities. The Member States would then share alerts created based on PNR data and have the right to request PNR data from one another in support of specific investigations. Once formally adopted, the Member States would have two years to transpose the Directive into national law.

US passes Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act; delays Judicial Redress Act; Safe Harbor 2.0 negotiations

On the other side of the Atlantic, the US House of Representatives on 18 December 2015 passed the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 (CISA), a law that, as [previously reported](#), is being viewed by privacy advocates as a “backdoor surveillance” bill. The full text of the law was included in a [2000-page Omnibus bill](#) that was passed to avert a government shutdown and ensure continued federal government funding.

Meanwhile, the Senate’s Judiciary Committee has moved discussions on the Judicial Redress Act into the new year. The Act would extend privacy rights enjoyed by US citizens to the citizens of some of the US’ most prominent allies (including the EU). Extending EU citizens in particular a right to redress would go some way towards addressing the concerns that the EU’s highest court expressed in [its October judgement](#) on the EU-US Safe Harbor Framework.

Negotiations between the EU and the US on a successor for the Safe Harbor Framework are reportedly still underway. The responsible European Commissioner Vera Jourová has reiterated during a [press conference](#) on GDPR that reaching an agreement before the announced deadline of 31 January 2016 is still “realistic”. Mrs. Jourová however did not specifically comment on whether the approval of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act (CISA) would have a negative influence on the negotiations.

Belgian court ordered Facebook to stop tracking internet users who do not have a Facebook account

On 9 November 2015, a [Belgian court](#) ordered Facebook to stop the processing of personal data of internet users from Belgium who do not have a Facebook account. The court case was launched by the Belgian DPA, the Privacy Commission, in response to the [findings of a study](#) that it had commissioned, which found that Facebook tracked internet users without a Facebook account through so-called “datr”-cookies. The court ordered Facebook to stop this practice before 14 December 2015, placing a penalty of €250,000 per day for non-compliance after that date.

Facebook responded to the order by making its public pages unavailable to visitors who are not logged in on the social media platform. It argued in a post on [its website](#) that the datr-cookie is necessary to keep the website secure, and that security for Facebook and its Belgian members cannot be guaranteed without using the datr-cookie. Facebook also stated that it would go into appeal.

In response to this move, the Belgian, French, Spanish, Dutch and Hamburg DPAs issued a [common statement](#), urging Facebook to take measures to comply with the court ruling across the EU as soon as possible.

Dutch DPA issues guidelines on data breach notification

As reported in Privacy Flash [issue 5](#), the Dutch government has opted not to await the entry into force of the General Data Protection Regulation and has already moved ahead with introducing a data breach notification requirement by amending its existing privacy law. The requirement will enter into force on 1 January 2016 and will be subject to fines up to €820,000. To help organisations in the Netherlands prepare for the new requirements, the CBP has published [guidelines](#) detailing the scope of the notification duty and answering frequently asked questions (in Dutch).

Recent breaches and enforcement actions

- A large health insurance provider [settled for \\$3.5 million](#) with the US Department of Health and Human Services, which had initiated investigations into the company's compliance with HIPAA rules.
- In the UK, a broadsheet newspaper was [fined £30,000](#) by the ICO for infringing direct marketing rules. The newspaper had urged readers who had opted out of direct marketing messages to vote Conservative in the run-up to the May 2015 elections.
- The US regulator in charge of privacy, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), has agreed to [its largest settlement ever](#), with a company that provides identity theft protection. The FTC alleged that the company amongst others falsely advertised that it protected customers' data with the same high-level safeguards as financial institutions.

Forthcoming interesting events



Computers, Privacy & Data Protection International Conference

Brussels, Belgium, 27 January – 29 January 2016

<http://www.cpdpconferences.org/>

The annual Computers, Privacy & Data Protection (CPDP) conference brings together academics, lawyers, practitioners, policymakers, industry and civil society to discuss legal as well as technological developments in data protection and privacy.

GDPR Comprehensive 2016

Brussels, Belgium, 22 February – 23 February 2016

<https://iapp.org/conference/gdpr-comprehensive>

The International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) offers an intensive two-day training course, offering a practical, hands-on view of the fundamentals of the new General EU Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

European Privacy Academy

<http://www.europeanprivacyacademy.com/>

The European Privacy Academy is a unique training, knowledge and networking centre, focused on the actual day-to-day management of the privacy challenge. It provides both an on-campus data protection officer course and on-campus or in-house department-specific data protection trainings during which attendees learn to efficiently manage privacy and security in a risk-based and integrated manner.

The next sessions of the European Privacy Academy are listed below:

DPO Course – January 2016: 18 – 21 January 2016 & 15 April 2016

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