

Wednesday 24 September, 09:00-11:00, European Parliament, Room JAN 6Q1

Data Protection, Democracy and the Digital Omnibus

Where do we go from here?

Concept

The EU has been talking a big game about data protection – but the reality is different. EU citizens and workers continue to be subject to massive surveillance. This does not only undermine their right to privacy, but also threatens European democracy and security, exactly at a time of escalating geopolitical tensions. Moreover, it sets back European SMEs that respect the law, when many big firms simply don't.

Data-driven algorithms determine what people see and share online, how people work, and the content children are exposed to, including self-harm and suicide. This replaces institutions like quality media, collective bargaining, and the family, institutions that buttress representative democracy, solidarity, and community.

Much of this could have been prevented if crucial authorities had enforced the GDPR. But they didn't. Instead, the EU created many new laws (DGA, DA, AIA, DMA, DSA), which authorities (will) also struggle to enforce. And now people are tired of hearing about data protection and digital laws more generally. Justified or not, they feel these laws mainly produce bureaucracy and compliance theater, without fundamentally altering the practices of crucial firms.

As a result, the GDPR has lost its untouchable status. The European Commission has suggested simplifying data protection obligations for SMEs, and a fundamental overhaul of the EU's digital *acquis* may follow by year's end. Lobbyists will try – and may succeed, in significantly watering down many legal obligations. And, most recently, Mario Draghi has called on the EU to 'radically simplify' the GDPR.

In that political context of simplification and deregulation, how can we ensure data protection not only survives, but is actually respected in Europe? What concrete solutions can we think of?

Draft Programme

09:00 – 09:10

Introduction

Alex Agius Saliba, Member, European Parliament (S&D)

Knut Dethlefsen, Director, FES Future of Work

09:10 – 09:55

Impulse speech, reaction and discussion

• **Johnny Ryan**, Director, Enforce (ICCL)

Reaction:

Maarit Palovirta, Deputy Director General, Connect Europe

Mario Mariniello, Non-resident Fellow, Bruegel

Raphaël Daniel, EU Public Affairs Manager, OVHcloud

09:55– 10:55

Panel discussion

- **Birgit Sippel**, Member, European Parliament (S&D)
- **Ella Jakubowska**, Head of Policy, EDRI
- **Robin Berjon**, Supramundane Agency
- **Sergey Lagodinsky**, Member of European Parliament (Greens/EFA)

Moderation: *Justin Nogarede, Senior Policy Officer, FES Future of Work*

Q&A

10:55 – 11:00

Closing