Press release | 02.12.2010

Data protection

Justice ministers must not allow basic rights to be compromised under data exchange agreements

Justice and home affairs ministers, meeting in Council today and tomorrow, will decide on the opening of negotiations with the US and other third countries on agreements for the exchange of data for security purposes and a general data protection agreement with the US (1). Ahead of the decisions, Green home affairs expert **Jan Philipp Albrecht** said:

"Justice ministers must not allow basic rights to be compromised under agreements on the exchange of passenger or other data with third countries. This means attaching clear conditions on the need for any agreement to be consistent with EU data protection rules. The EP has made clear that it will only endorse these agreements if they guarantee a high level of data protection. The mandates proposed by the Commission would provide for this and ministers should give the green light to these proposals, and not dilute them by adding exemptions."

Commenting specifically on the data protection agreement with the US, on which he is lead negotiator for the EP, **Jan Philipp Albrecht** said:

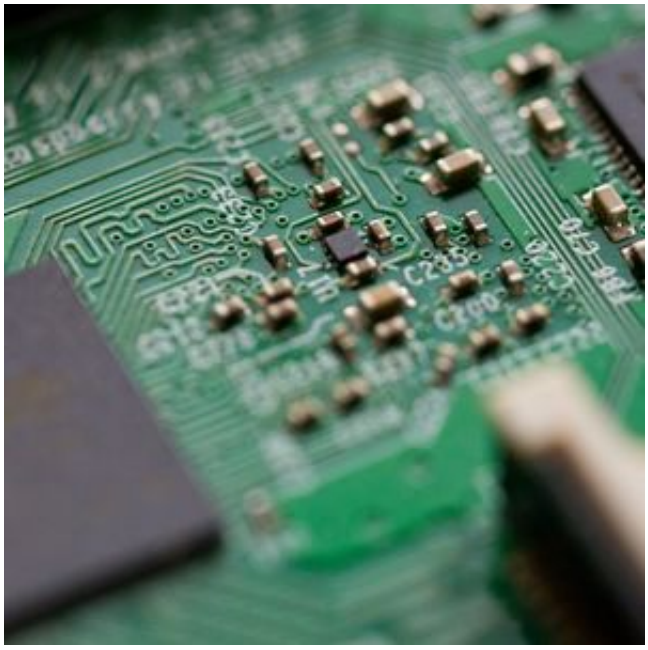
"Ensuring a meaningful data protection agreement with the US will require tough negotiations. The problems with the SWIFT agreement have highlighted the continuing substantial differences in data protection provisions on either side of the Atlantic. It is important that the mandate for the data protection agreement with the US reflects EU data protection norms and foresees a role for EP and Council in negotiations. In order to ensure the effective protection of EU citizens' basic rights we need ambitious common rules instead of a patchwork."

(1) The ministers decisions will outline a mandate for the European Commission to commence negotiations on agreements for the exchange of passenger data for security purposes, with the US, Australia and Canada, and a general data protection agreement with the US.

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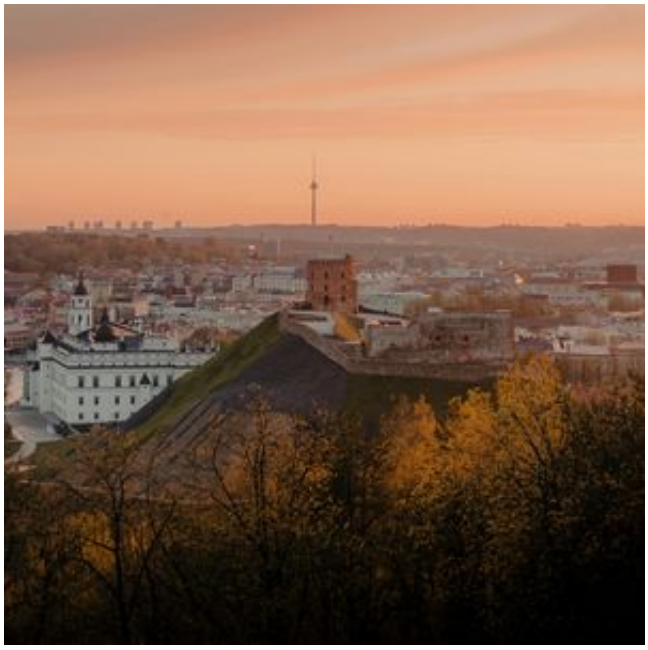
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Jan Philipp Albrecht

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