Press release | 18.06.2014

Data protection

Safe Harbour regime challenged in the light of US surveillance

The Irish High Court today, in its judgment in the case of student Max Schrems v Facebook, challenged the validity of the 2000 Safe Harbour decision, which allows transfers of personal data of EU citizens to the US, in the absence of adequate data protection standards. The Irish High Court has referred questions to the European Court of Justice on whether the rights to privacy and data protection under the EU Charter require a further investigation into the adequacy of US privacy standards, irrespective of the Safe Harbour decision, particularly in view of the mass surveillance programmes operated by the US and brought to light by whistleblower Edward Snowden. Commenting on the judgment, Green MEP and rapporteur on the EU data protection regulation **Jan Philipp Albrecht** stated:

"This judgment is a major step forward for data protection rights. We cannot continue transferring data to the US when it has become so painfully clear to us that this data is up for grabs to the US secret services. Clearly, the European Commission should come to the same conclusion in its analysis of US compliance with the Safe Harbour decision."

"The only solution is a stop to the mass surveillance programmes and proper data protection standards in the US, rather than the levelling down of EU data protection standards which certain large Silicon Valley companies such as Facebook have attempted, including via the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement negotiations."

Please click here for today's judgement of the Irish High Court.

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Responsible MEPs

Jan Philipp Albrecht

Member

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