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EU-US data protection agreement

Common approach instead of national solo efforts

Ministers of justice from the European Union and the United States met yesterday in Washington to discuss data protection and mass surveillance. **Jan Philipp Albrecht**, Greens/EFA spokesperson on justice and home affairs, comments:

"EU justice commissioner Viviane Reding has achieved important progress in the negotiations with US attorney general Eric Holder: a commitment to judicial redress for EU citizens when their personal data is transferred to the United States. Since 1974, the US Privacy Act only offered this protection for US citizens. After three years of negotiating a transatlantic data protection agreement for the law enforcement sector, this move towards a change of the US legal framework could be a breakthrough. The European Parliament will only accept any agreement when this is confirmed.

"However, EU member states' national solo efforts have delayed this development in the past. There are hundreds of bilateral agreements between EU member states and third countries which undermine a common legal framework at European level. The secretive nature of many of these agreements threatens the fundamental rights of EU citizens. Instead of entering into bilateral agreements with the United States and other countries, Germany, France and the others should finally push for joint rules at European level now."

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