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EU Justice Commissioner must act now to protect privacy

EU-US Privacy Shield

The European Parliament has today (6 April) adopted a resolution, strongly criticising the EU-US "Privacy Shield". The Privacy Shield regulates the transfer of personal data from the EU to the US, such as when using online services such as search engines or social networks. The agreement rests on the assumption of adequate levels of data protection by businesses in the US, but the regulations are not mandatory for US companies. **Jan Philipp Albrecht**, Vice-Chair of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs committee and shadow rapporteur for the resolution, calls on the European Commission to do more to ensure the protection of personal data of people in the EU.

"The Privacy Shield does not make the US a safe haven. Personal data from people in the European Union is not being adequately protected against access by intelligence services in the US. People in the EU have no real rights when it comes to accessing their data or having it deleted. The European Justice Commissioner should not allow the US government to palm her off with non-binding declarations of intent or letters of assurance. Vera Jourová must increase the pressure on the US government to make the Privacy Shield a genuine safeguard."

"Time is running out. From May 2018, the new General Data Protection Regulation will apply throughout the European Union. If the Privacy Shield remains full of holes, the European Commission runs the risk that the European Court of Justice will overturn the scheme. Data protection authorities must prohibit the transfer of data to the US if they have the slightest suspicion of mass surveillance. The Trump administration has already shown that it is not concerned about data protection."

Background:

The majority of MEPs on the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs committee backed a resolution on 23 March, declaring the mass surveillance system in the US to be incompatible with EU law and complaining that the Privacy Shield had collected personal data from people in the European Union: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+MOTION+B8-2017-0235+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

The European Commission Privacy Shield was established following the October 2015 ruling of ECJ that the previous "safe harbor" system was invalid.

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