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Press release | 30.09.2010

UK Government taken to court over data protection

An EFA press release by MEP Ian Hudghton (SNP)

Scottish Nationalist MEP **Ian Hudghton** has urged the ConDem government in London to 'get it's act together' on data protection.

The call came as it emerged that the European Commission is to refer the UK to the European Court of Justice over its apparent failure to comply with EU data protection rules. The European Commission is concerned at the UK's failure to comply with EU rules on the confidentiality of electronic communications such as email or internet browsing.

The UK Government has apparently failed to ensure that people's electronic communications can only be intercepted when prior consent has been given by the consumer. The situation came to light following complaints to the Commission by internet users worried about behavioural advertising by internet service providers.

Mr Hudghton is a member of the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee and a long standing supporter of better data protection laws.

Commenting, Mr Hudghton said:

"This is tremendously embarrassing for the ConDem government in London, and worrying for internet users. These issues are reserved matters, dealt with by the UK Government, and they need to get their act together urgently.

"These failings only came to light following complaints about targeted advertising which had been based on previous internet activity.

"Worryingly, the UK Government has also failed to set up an authority to supervise the interception of electronic communications, in clear breach of EU requirements.

"And it seems that despite previous warnings from Brussels, the London government has failed to outlaw the interception of internet based communications where the consumer has not given prior specific consent.

"The civil liberties implications and data protection risks of such a failure are very significant indeed. The UK Government should move swiftly to protect individual privacy, whilst establishing proportionate safeguards."

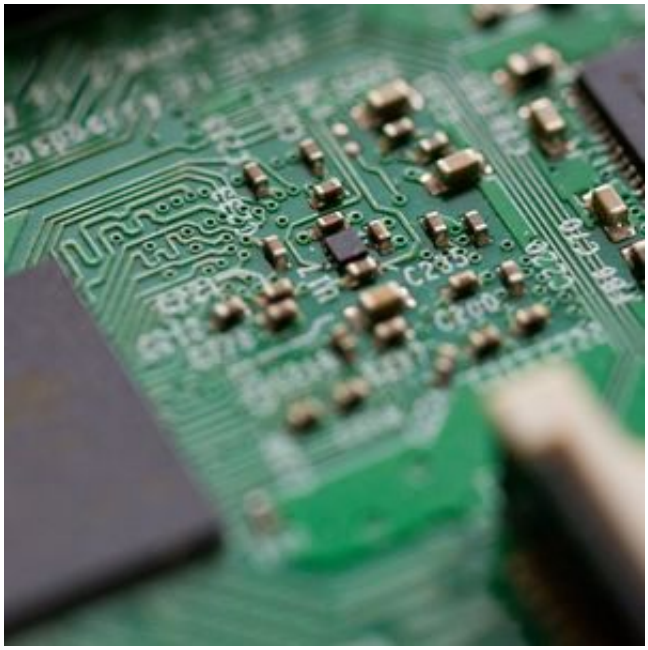
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Ian Hudghton

Member

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