



Civil liberties MEPs make case for data protection during Washington visit

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A delegation from the civil liberties committee visited Washington DC last week to find out the latest information on issues such as data protection and legislation on surveillance activities from their American counterparts. The MEPs also provided updates on the EU's data protection reform and on counter-terrorism initiatives, including the passenger name records (PNR) proposal.

Right to judicial redress

One of the key objectives of the visit was to press for equal enforceable rights to effective judicial redress for EU citizens when personal data is transferred for law enforcement purposes. This is one of the last remaining barriers to concluding the EU-US umbrella agreement on data sharing for law enforcement purposes.

German Greens/EFA member Jan Philipp Albrecht, who led the mission to Washington, said: "Our numerous talks with high-ranking officials of the administration, as well as with members of Congress, showed that there is willingness on all sides to get equal treatment for EU and US persons when exchanging information across the Atlantic. Implementing this into legal acts as soon as possible is of paramount importance for rebuilding the trust of citizens as well as for improving transatlantic information exchanges, especially for security purposes."

TTIP

The delegation also met with members of the US Trade Representative's Office to stress that data protection should remain outside the scope of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which is currently being negotiated between the EU and the US. The EU's data protection framework, which governs data processing in the EU, must remain in place. However, the civil liberties delegation stressed this was not about protectionism, but about respecting the EU's fundamental rights.

Find out more

- Fact sheet EU-US negotiations on data protection umbrella agreement: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/files/factsheets/umbrella_factsheet_en.pdf
- Civil liberties committee Inquiry on electronic mass surveillance of EU citizens : http://www.polcms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/7d8972f0-e532-4b12-89a5-e97b39eec3be/att_20141016ATT91322-206135629551064330.pdf
- Reports on data protection: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/subject-files.html?id=20120514CDT45071>
- MEPs debate plans to use EU passenger name record data to fight terrorism : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bIM-PRESS%2b20141110IPR78121%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>
- Changes to planned European passenger name record system discussed by MEPs : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bIM-PRESS%2b20150223IPR24702%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>