

**Question for written answer E-000102/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Free flow of data between EU Member States

Besides provisions on personal data, EU regulations do not cover the flow of data between EU Member States. Currently, each country lays down legal and administrative restrictions on an individual basis. Those restrictions very often oblige companies to process and store data in the countries in which they do business.

Localisation requirements within the single market are hindering the development of innovative sectors of the European economy. They also represent unnecessary and costly obstacles for businesses. The requirements mean that companies that do business across borders need to open data centres in various countries or pay for the provision of the relevant services. Examples of the types of data covered by localisation requirements include accounting documentation, tax returns and telecommunications data.

The lack of EU standards on network and information security often means that the rules differ from country to country. Unfortunately, data localisation requirements that apply in a given country can also stem from a desire to support domestic businesses. Such practices are not in line with the fundamental principles of the single market. It seems that the best way forward would be to introduce a general principle according to which the important thing is not where data is stored, but whether data are gathered, stored and processed in a manner that meets the relevant security standards.

Bearing the foregoing in mind, is the Commission considering drawing up rules to facilitate the flow of data within the EU? Is the Commission considering banning the application of localisation requirements?