

Data protection: Parliament's negotiators welcome Council negotiating brief

Parliament looks forward to starting talks with ministers soon on reform to give the EU high common standards of data protection fit for the digital era, said its key negotiators on Monday, welcoming the Council's announcement that it had approved its negotiating mandate. The first meeting between the institutions is scheduled for 24 June and will be followed by a joint press conference.

The European Parliament adopted its negotiating position in March 2014 and has since been waiting for Council to agree on its own mandate to open talks on the final text.

Reacting to the news of the ministers' agreement, Parliament's lead MEP on the data protection regulation, **Jan Philipp Albrecht** (Greens, DE) said:

"After over a year of stalling, it is encouraging that we can finally push ahead with the EU data protection reform and that Parliament can begin negotiations with the Council.

The challenge is now to reconcile the two sides, to ensure that the reform provides reliable and high common standards of data protection, and reach an agreement on this before the end of the year.

There are clearly differences, notably on consumer rights and the duties of businesses. However, if we can negotiate constructively and pragmatically, it should be possible to deliver a compromise acceptable to both sides within the timeframe. This outcome would benefit everyone and show that the EU takes the concerns of its citizens in the digital age seriously."

Civil Liberties Committee Chair **Claude Moraes** (S&D, UK), who will be chairing the talks with Council and Commission, added:

"It has now been over one year since the Parliament has adopted its mandate for the negotiations on the Data Protection Regulation proving its commitment to improving the standards of data protection. Since then, we have continually called for the Council to adopt its own position ("General Approach") so that negotiations can begin to improve current legislation both for EU citizens and business. As it stands, EU legislation on data protection dates back to 1995, a time where internet access, smart phones or social media were not a part of daily life as they are today.

Despite the difficult negotiations involved, the Parliament, led by the Rapporteur Jan Albrecht, will work towards finding a swift agreement on the Data Protection Regulation by the end of 2015 which will set out a robust, modern, consistent and higher level of protection for the years to come. As Chair of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee I would also urge the Council to ensure that they find agreement on the Data Protection Directive for law enforcement by October 2015 as the Parliament's position has always been clear that we treat both proposals as a package"

Read more about Parliament's priorities and negotiation mandate in this [Q&A](#).

Next steps

The first three-way talks between Parliament, Council and Commission are to be held in the European Parliament on 24 June.. After the meeting, there will be a joint press conference by the three institutions at 14.00 (*tbc*).

Background for editors

The data protection regulation is part of a package which also includes a directive. The two legislative proposals were presented by the European Commission in January 2012.

Parliament's negotiating brief was approved by its Civil Liberties Committee in October 2013, and endorsed by Parliament as a whole in March 2014.

Since then, Parliament has been waiting for member states to agree "general approach" among themselves in order to begin the final talks.

MEPs have many times called on the Council to move forward on the package, stressing the need to update EU data protection rules without further delay, so as to give citizens the standards of data protection needed in the digital era.

MEPs have also stressed the need to set a uniform standard of data protection in all EU legislation, but especially the European Police Office (EUROPOL) regulation, currently under negotiation, and an EU Passenger Name Record scheme.

Member states also need to agree a general approach on the directive.

Further information

[Press release on the Plenary vote \(12.03.2014\):](#)

[Parliament's negotiation mandate \(1st reading position\):](#)

[EP rapporteur Jan Philipp Albrecht \(Greens, DE\):](#)

[Civil Liberties Chair Claude Moraes \(S&D, UK\):](#)

[Link to Parliament's procedure file:](#)

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