

**Question for written answer E-007095/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Louis Grech (S&D)

Subject: Reform of the EU's data protection rules

The Commission proposal for a regulation, presented in January 2012, on reforming the EU's data protection rules of 1995 was welcomed both by policymakers and by civil society. The Commission's paper advocates the creation of a freer society in the digital age, reinforcing the rights to private life (Article 7) and protection of personal data (Article 8) enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and, ultimately, entails the full implementation of Article 16 TFEU, under which the EU has the legislative competence to establish harmonised, Union-wide data protection laws.

The unifying structure put forward by the Commission has some interesting aspects:

- clear rules and incentives for data controllers ensure prudent data handling every step of the way;
- citizens' rights are strengthened, inter alia by the establishment of a clear definition of 'consent' and the introduction of a general transparency principle, the 'right to be forgotten' and the 'right to data portability'.

The underlying purpose of this proposal is to set up, through the regulation, a one-stop-shop system which will ensure that citizens will always be able to consult the national data protection authority when they have a problem with a company or other entity, irrespective of the physical location of the citizen or the company or entity. This means that consumers and citizens will be spared the unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape that would ensue should they be obliged to try to communicate on an individual basis with authorities in other Member States (i.e. across borders).

- On the basis of the experiences of similar initiatives adopted for the Services Directive and the Professional Qualifications Directive, has the Commission taken the necessary precautions to ensure that this one-stop-shop system will be more successful, and better absorbed at national level, than the previous systems? If so, what are they?