

**Question for written answer E-008348/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Data protection and privacy conditionalities in free trade agreements

The European Union is increasingly a global trading partner. Companies involved in international trade may find themselves confronted with rules and practices regarding privacy and data protection which are in conflict with EU law. This leads to legal uncertainty for both companies and EU citizens and is a potential obstacle to free trade.

1. Does the Commission share the view that adequate privacy and data protection rules are essential for the protection of the fundamental rights of our citizens and for facilitating free trade?
2. Does the Commission share the view that free trade agreements with third countries should contain effective privacy and data protection safeguards?
3. What other instruments does the Commission use to safeguard privacy and secure data protection in international trade?
4. Does the Commission consider that intensified trade relations with emerging economic powers, against a backdrop of rapid growth in information and communication technologies, are a cause for concern about the protection of privacy and personal data of EU citizens?
5. How will the Commission verify that European companies operating in third countries are fully compliant with European privacy and data protection standards?
6. How will the Commission assist companies that find themselves caught between conflicting jurisdictions?