



European Commission – Press Release

Take control of your personal data with new EU rules on data protection

Brussels, 25 May 2018

Thanks to the EU's new rules on data protection, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Europeans have more control over how their personal data is collected and used, as well as better protection if data is leaked.

When you go online to shop, file your tax return or use social media, you can feel more confident than ever about what happens to the personal information you provide. This is because the GDPR gives you key rights to help you control how organisations use your [personal data](#) and makes sure that they also have new procedures to protect it.

Fed up of getting adverts for things you don't want? You can ask to be removed for marketing distribution lists. Embarrassed by content online? You can, in some circumstances, get it deleted. Want to change supplier? You have the right to receive all your data from your old supplier to move more easily to the new service provider. Tighter rules on data breaches also mean that you have to be informed if the breach poses a risk to your rights and freedoms.

The new rules apply across the EU, regardless of where the data is processed and where the organisation is based. They even apply to non-EU companies targeting people in the EU. So, whether you're going local or buying from abroad, you benefit from the same rights and protection.

“As of today, the General Data Protection Regulation gives people in the EU more control over their personal data,” says European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality **Věra Jourová**. *“The new rules make sure that people's personal information is better protected – no matter where it is sent, processed or stored – even outside the EU.”*

Although the GDPR establishes specific rights for individuals, it's up to you to use them. If you think your data protection rights have been breached, you can contact the organisation holding your data.

They should respond to your request without undue delay and free of charge. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with your national [Data Protection Authority](#) (DPA) or go to court.

New rules for the digital age

The GDPR replaces Europe's 1995 Data Protection Directive, which was enacted well before the internet and cloud computing introduced new ways of processing personal data. As how we share and use data has changed substantially since then, the EU's data protection rules needed to be modernised.

Every day, over 250 million Europeans use the internet to connect to their family or to shop. In Malta, 178,000 households and businesses have fixed internet connections while 85% of the population have internet on their mobile devices. This shows that internet usage is almost universal in the EU and also in Malta. Also, over 87% of internet users post and comment on social media while over 70% begin their search on the internet for product information when making purchases. This means that users are sharing a lot of personal data, including their names, home address, ID card numbers and information about their preferences and their health on the internet. This opens the door to numerous potential risks, such as unauthorised disclosure, identity theft or online abuse.

74% of Maltese people and 80% of Europeans feel they do not have complete control of their personal data, and 49% of Maltese say they distrust online businesses. Furthermore, six out of 10 Maltese express concern about mobile apps collecting data without their consent, and seven out of 10 worry about the potential use that companies may make of the information they disclosed.

The protection of personal data is not only a key concern for many Europeans, it's also a fundamental right and is therefore something that needs to be safeguarded. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation answers this need.

For more information

[EU Data Protection Reform – better data protection for European citizens](#)

[It's your data, take control](#)

[Common questions and answers](#)

[Find your Data Protection Authority](#)

[Seven steps to get ready for the GDPR](#) (a factsheet for businesses)

[Better rules for European businesses](#)

Press contacts

- Christian Wigand, Spokesperson, European Commission: +32 2 296 22 53, christian.wigand@ec.europa.eu
- Melanie Voin, Spokesperson, European Commission: +32 2 295 86 59, melanie.voin@ec.europa.eu
- Therese Zahra, Press and Political Officer, Commission Representation in Malta: +356 23425101, therese.zahra@ec.europa.eu

