

REGULATION SET TO STRIP CITIZENS OF THEIR RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Civil rights groups urgently demand that Members of the European Parliament protect the privacy of their citizens

Since revisions to the EU legal framework on data protection were proposed, there has been an unprecedented level of lobbying by corporations and foreign governments. The European Parliament is considering dangerous amendments to the Commission's proposals. These amendments would strip citizens of their privacy rights, according to a report from a coalition of civil rights groups. The report bases its findings on the analysis of nearly 4000 proposed amendments currently discussed in the European Parliament.

"Without effective privacy protection, our personal lives are laid bare, to be used and abused by business and governments." says Joe McNamee of European Digital Rights and spokesperson of the coalition. "We urge Members of the European Parliament to put citizen's rights first and vote against these harmful proposals."

The final vote in the Civil Liberties Committee of the European Parliament on the Data Protection Regulation is set for the 29th of May. Therefore, the coalition launched a campaign and website, <http://nakedcitizens.eu>, which allows concerned citizens to contact their representatives in the European Parliament to urge them to vote in a manner that ensures the protection of their fundamental rights to privacy.

The civil society coalition report highlights the five worst amendments to the Data Protection Regulation as proposed by Members of the European Parliament.

The Regulation proposed by the European Commission seeks to update and modernise the rules to suit the digital age, and provide citizens with greater control over their personal data. Excessive lobbying by large corporations and governments now means that this reform risks destroying the current legal framework.

Today's digital citizens need to be able to trust the online services they use. The exceptionally low levels of trust shown in both European and US consumer surveys are simply unsustainable for both citizens and business. Trust needs to be rebuilt by giving people back control over their own data through the right (1) to access and delete their own data, (2) to move their data easily from one service to another, (3) to know that consent to use their data for one purpose is not abused by companies which subsequently use the data for unrelated purposes, (4) to know that their data is protected from foreign governments, and (5) to know that, if there is a security breach of their data, the company responsible is obliged to inform them.