

EU-US deal on law enforcement data transfers backed by Civil Liberties Committee

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The EU-US data protection framework, known as the “Umbrella Agreement” was backed by a large majority in the Civil Liberties Committee on Thursday morning. The deal will ensure high, binding data protection standards for data exchanged by police and law enforcement authorities across the Atlantic.

The Umbrella Agreement covers the transfer of all personal data, such as names, addresses or criminal records, exchanged between the EU and US for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of criminal offences, including terrorism.

“This is a big step forward for transatlantic data protection”, said lead MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht (Greens, DE) after the committee approved his recommendation of the agreement by 41 votes to 4, with 6 abstentions. “In future there will be high, binding standards and strong individual rights will apply when it comes to the exchange of data between police and law enforcement authorities”.

“The agreement represents the start of a new way to negotiate high transatlantic standards on fundamental rights instead of the incomplete, fragmented and very low ones seen so far. It was crucial for Parliament’s approval to have a binding clarification that the Umbrella Agreement is not a legal basis for new data transfers, and that data protection authorities can always check compliance”, he added.

The agreement ensures that citizens on both sides of the Atlantic will have the right to:

- be informed in the event of data security breaches,
- have inaccurate information corrected and
- seek judicial redress at court.

It also sets limits on onward transfers of data and retention periods.

Next steps

The recommendation to give a green light to the Umbrella Agreement is scheduled for a plenary vote on 1 December in Brussels.

The agreement, negotiated by the European Commission on behalf of the EU, was signed by the EU and US in June, but it will need the European Parliament’s consent before it can enter into force.

Further information

- Profile of rapporteur Jan Philipp Albrecht (Greens/EFA, DE):
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/96736/JAN+PHILIPP_ALBRECHT_home.html
- Signing of the Umbrella Agreement on 2 June 2016 - press release from the European Commission:
: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/data-protection/news/160602_en.htm
- European Commission fact sheet on the Umbrella Agreement
: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-5612_en.htm
- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>

Press release

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