

MEPs close deal with Council on first ever EU rules on cybersecurity

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Transport and energy companies will have to ensure that the digital infrastructure that they use to deliver essential services, such as traffic control or electricity grid management, is robust enough to withstand cyber-attacks, under new rules provisionally agreed by internal market MEPs and the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers on Monday. Online marketplaces like eBay or Amazon, search engines and clouds will also be required to ensure that their infrastructure is secure.

"Today, a milestone has been achieved: we have agreed on first ever EU-wide cybersecurity rules, which the Parliament has advocated for years", said Parliament's rapporteur Andreas Schwab (EPP, DE), after the deal was clinched.

"Parliament has pushed hard for a harmonised identification of critical operators in energy, transport, health or banking fields, which will have to fulfil security measures and notify significant cyber incidents. Member states will have to cooperate more on cybersecurity – which is even more important in light of the current security situation in Europe."

"Moreover this directive marks the beginning of platform regulation. Whilst the Commission's consultation on online platforms is still on-going, the new rules already foresee concrete definitions – a request that Parliament had made since the beginning in order to give its consent to the inclusion of digital services", he concluded.

Making essential services cyberattack-proof

MEPs put an end to current fragmentation of 28 cybersecurity systems by listing sectors - energy, transport, banking, financial market, health and water supply - in which critical service companies will have to ensure that they are robust enough to resist cyber-attacks. These companies must also be ready to report serious security breaches to public authorities.

Member states will have to identify concrete "operators of essential services" from these sectors using certain criteria: whether the service is critical for society and the economy, whether it depends on network and information systems and whether an incident could have significant disruptive effects on its provision or public safety.

In addition, some internet services providers, such as online marketplaces (e.g. eBay, Amazon), search engines (e.g. Google) and clouds, will also have to ensure the safety of their infrastructure and to report on major incidents. Micro and small digital companies will get an exemption, the deal says.

Fostering cooperation

To ensure a high level of security across the EU and to develop trust and confidence among member states, the draft rules sets up a strategic cooperation group to exchange information and best practices, draw up guidelines and assist member states in cybersecurity capacity building.

In addition, a network of Computer Security Incidents Response Teams (CSIRTs), set up by each member state to handle incidents, will have to be established to discuss cross

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border security incidents and identify coordinated responses.

Next steps

The provisionally-agreed text still needs to be formally approved by Parliament's Internal Market Committee and the Council Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Note to editors

Information systems, essential networks and services, such as online banking, electricity grids or airport control can be affected by security incidents caused by human mistakes, technical failures or malicious attacks. While such incidents are increasing and are estimated by ENISA (EU agency for Network and information security) to result in annual losses in the range of €260- €340 billion Euros, no common approach on security and reporting currently exists in the EU.

The new rules would increase the preparedness to handle such incidents and improve collaboration among member states as well as public and private sectors.

Further information

- Profile of the rapporteur Andreas Schwab (EPP, DE):
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/28223/ANDREAS_SCHWAB_home.html
- Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/imco/home.html>
- Procedure file :
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0027\(COD\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2013/0027(COD)&l=en)

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