

# New data protection standards to ensure smooth police cooperation in the EU

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**New rules on data transfers for policing and judicial purposes, informally agreed on Tuesday and backed by Civil Liberties Committee MEPs on Thursday morning, will set high standards of data protection to protect citizens' rights and freedoms. They should also enable police forces across Europe to work together faster and more efficiently to counter serious crime and terrorism.**

The committee approved the new rules by 53 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

"This is an historic agreement, since it is the first time we have fully harmonised rules covering police and criminal justice authorities on data protection in the EU. These rules, applying to cooperation between EU member states and with third countries on transferring and processing of data, should facilitate the sharing of information, while at the same time ensuring that European citizens' fundamental rights are not violated", said Parliament's lead MEP on the directive, Marju Lauristin (S&D, EE).

"How police and criminal authorities use personal data can affect our lives to a great extent. It, thus, has to be done correctly and under appropriate legal framework", she added.

The draft directive on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data for the purposes of prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences will be the first instrument to comprehensively harmonise 28 different law enforcement systems with respect to data processing for law enforcement purposes as well as set minimum standards for data processing for policing purposes within each member state. EU countries may set higher standards than those enshrined in the directive if they so wish.

The draft directive also complements the agreements reached previously this month on Europol. Together they ensure a robust and harmonised level of data protection in the entire European law enforcement sector. ,

The rules should thus clarify police cooperation arrangements at all administrative levels and give citizens greater certainty as to the law. The safeguards will apply to everyone, whether victim, criminal or witness. the directive will set out clear rights for individuals and establish an independent supervisory authority with enforcement powers.

During the three-way-talks between Parliament, Council and Commission, Parliament's negotiators insisted on the mandatory presence of a Data Protection Officer to monitor all data transfers as well as a prior assessment being carried out in cases where data processing is likely to entail high risk for a person's rights and freedoms.

## Next steps

The deal will now be put to a vote by Parliament as whole in spring 2016 (probably in March or April), after which member states will have two years to transpose the provisions of the new directive into their national laws.

## Press conference

# Press release

On **Monday 21 December at 14.00** there will be a joint press conference on the data protection package with the attendance of Mrs Marju Lauristin (S&D, EE), Mr Jan Philipp Albrecht (Greens, DE - rapporteur on the regulation), Commissioner Vera Jourová and Minister of Justice Félix Braz for the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council.

## Further information

- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs:  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>

## Contact

### Rikke ULDALL

BXL: (+32) 2 28 42976

STR: (+33) 3 881 72033

PORT: (+32) 498 98 32 57

EMAIL: [libe-press@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:libe-press@europarl.europa.eu)

TWITTER: EP\_Justice