**Securing Data: Europe’s GDPR vs KSA’s PDPL**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Saudi Arabia’s Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL) both emphasize the importance of securing personal data, reflecting a shared concern over growing privacy risks in the digital age. Both laws require data controllers and processors to implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect personal data against unauthorized access, loss, or damage. The GDPR, under Article 5(1)(f), states that personal data must be processed in a manner that ensures its security, including protection “against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage” (European Union, 2016). Similarly, Article 20 of the PDPL outlines that data controllers must take “necessary organizational and technical measures” to protect personal data throughout its lifecycle (Saudi Data and AI Authority, 2021). These shared commitments underline a global convergence on core privacy principles (Tikkinen-Piri, Rohunen and Markkula, 2018).

However, the two frameworks differ significantly in specificity and enforcement. The GDPR provides detailed obligations such as encryption and breach notification within 72 hours (Article 33), creating clear expectations for compliance (Tikkinen-Piri et al., 2018). The PDPL, while echoing the same goals, uses broader language and does not specify timeframes for breach reporting. Alshammari and Simpson (2023) highlight that the PDPL is “less prescriptive,” giving regulators wide discretion but offering less certainty for organizations. Moreover, while the GDPR has been tested and enforced across the EU, the PDPL is still in its early stages of implementation, with limited case law or regulatory action (Altwaijri and Alhussain, 2022). This leaves organizations in Saudi Arabia with more flexibility, but also more ambiguity, regarding what constitutes adequate security under the law.

**References :**

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