

50 years of data protection: The world's first data protection law came into force in Hesse

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50 years ago today, on October 13, 1970, the world's first data protection law for public administration came into force - in Hesse. Other states and the federal government gradually followed suit and thus established the protection of personal data as a fundamental part of the everyday life of all citizens.

The Baden-Württemberg State Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information Dr. Stefan Brink congratulates his Hessian colleague Prof. Michael Ronellenfitsch: "The founding of the first data protection authority shows that the informational self-determination of citizens is of the utmost importance."

The law in Hesse regulated when personal data may be processed and which specifications must be observed. All residents of the country were thus able to protect themselves from inappropriate interference by the state.

"Especially in view of our dark history from 1933 to 1945, where people were identified, classified, sorted out and murdered, it is clear that a state should never have total control over the lives of its citizens. People must also be able to protect themselves and their personal data from access by the state. In our democracy, the Hessian example has become a role model for all German states," says data protection officer Brink. In Baden-Württemberg, the State Data Protection Act came into force in 1979.

In the course of the past five decades, it has been possible to convince our European neighbors of the fundamental importance of data protection. With the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018, the same high standard that was developed in Germany was set for all member states of the European Union.

The GDPR also focuses on sovereign people. LfDI Brink: "Today, data protection is a modern European fundamental right," says Brink, which clearly puts people at the center and leaves it up to them to decide how and by whom their data is used. "Our task as a state authority is to ensure that the General Data Protection Regulation is complied with by everyone and that the protective rights of citizens are protected. We stand by the citizens and support them so that they can decide freely and independently about the use of their own data today and in the future."

View this press release as a PDF document.

For questions you can contact us on the telephone number

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Further information on data protection and freedom of information can be found on the Internet at www.baden-wuerttemberg.datenschutz.de or at www.datenschutz.de.

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