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Facebook, LinkedIn and TikTok - Kugelmann on data protection at digital groups: European supervisory authorities take action against abuses

In the past few weeks, various cases of data breaches, leaks and data protection violations by large international digital groups have become known. Some of the consequences are serious and range from phishing fraud attempts to bullying to a case of suicide had been stolen, including cell phone numbers, birthdays and addresses. As a result, numerous affected people reported increased spam emails, phishing fraud attempts and, in some cases, bullying messages. Facebook recently announced that it would not inform those affected about the data leak. Data from the "LinkedIn" portal was apparently also collected on a similar scale and offered for sale illegally, as was reported. IDs, real names, e-mail addresses and mobile phone numbers are said to be affected again. In Italy it became known at the beginning of this year that a ten-year-old girl had died, presumably because she took part in a TikTok test of courage. According to the platform's terms of service, the girl shouldn't have set up a TikTok profile herself due to her age. The Italian data protection supervisory authority then took action against TikTok. (Further information)

Despite massive protests, the Facebook group has announced that it will change the terms of use of its messenger service WhatsApp by mid-May. The new WhatsApp regulations contain passages with which the service grants itself the right to share user data with other Facebook companies. The Hamburg Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (HmbBfDI) has announced that it will open proceedings against Facebook with the aim of issuing an order that can be implemented immediately. The German branch of Facebook is based in Hamburg. (Further information)

The State Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (LfDI) Rhineland-Palatinate, Professor Dieter Kugelmann, explains: "The current cases show, in some cases dramatically, the importance of data protection and data security in digital times. If not on If more is done on all sides for data protection, more and more citizens could become victims of fraud attempts, cyber attacks and bullying. On the one hand, it is important that users use their data sparingly and carefully consider which ones Portals and which programs they want to be active with. It must become a matter of course to pay attention to the privacy settings of smartphones or notebooks. On the other hand, it must be a question of the European data protection authorities also taking action against international data companies. Exactly these effective ones Law enforcement is a goal of the Basic Data Protection Ordinance order that also provides the means to do so. As LfDI, we support our Hamburg colleagues and welcome the initiatives of other European authorities. In order to

protect the personal data of European citizens, the individual European supervisory authorities play an important role. It must therefore apply: European data protection law first!"

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