

There is still a lot to be done in terms of data protection in cities, districts and communities

Implementation of the GDPR in municipalities

In Lower Saxony, there is still a considerable need for action to implement the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

This was the result of an examination of 150 cities, districts and municipalities by the State Commissioner for Data Protection (LfD) Lower Saxony, Barbara Thiel.

“At the time of the audit, the municipalities had started to implement the requirements. In several areas, however, there were obvious weaknesses a good six months after the GDPR came into force,” says Thiel. “Public bodies in particular must set a good example when implementing data protection regulations. I therefore expect that the affected municipalities will improve as quickly as possible. My authority will support you within the means available to us.”

The LfD Lower Saxony found that there was a need to catch up, especially when it came to carrying out data protection impact assessments and reporting so-called data breaches. On the other hand, the LfD sees it as positive that all municipalities have fulfilled their obligation to appoint a data protection officer. It is also pleasing that almost all of the cities, districts and municipalities contacted have now started to review their contracts for order processing.

Further tests are possible

The municipalities often cited a lack of time and human resources, problems in bringing together information from the individual specialist offices and the lack of binding models and specifications as reasons for their implementation difficulties.

The LfD therefore also draws the municipalities' attention to existing orientation aids and sample texts in the respective test result.

Once the results have been sent, the assessment for the municipalities is initially complete. "However, we reserve the right to carry out further data protection checks on the deficits identified," says Thiel. In addition, the LfD Lower Saxony, together with the municipal umbrella organizations, is planning further measures to support the municipalities in the implementation of the GDPR. What these measures look like in detail will be specified in the coming weeks.

To check the municipalities

In November 2018, just under half a year after the GDPR came into force, the Lower Saxony LfD sent a questionnaire to 12 districts, 3 urban districts, 3 large independent cities, 87 municipalities and 45 joint municipalities. The municipalities were asked to answer 35 questions on 4 areas of data protection: organisation, data protection-compliant processing, dealing with

data subject rights and data protection violations.

The final report of the municipal audit can be found [here](#).

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