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#### Brussels panel discussion on data protection and competition

In front of more than 300 guests, a top-class panel discussed the challenges for data protection and competitiveness in the digital age. On the initiative of the European Data Protection Officer (EDPS) and the Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (BfDI), the possibilities for cooperation between the regulatory authorities and the challenges of new technologies for effective data protection were discussed.

European Data Protection Supervisor Giovanni Buttarelli said: "Mass processing of data has serious consequences not only for individuals, but also for society, democracy and the environment. Data has become a geostrategic factor as the disparities in the digital dividend, i.e. the division of society between those who have power over their digital lives, freedoms and privacy and those who do not, continue to widen .

The effects of data concentration and data power on civil rights and freedom of competition now go far beyond the reach of individual areas of law, such as data protection. Not least because of this, data protection is no longer just an issue for data protection supervisors, but also for other regulatory authorities, for example in consumer protection or competition law. In order to counteract the actual data power of the large, globally operating technology companies, stronger cooperation between the various supervisory authorities is therefore required. The need for a strong pan-European presence on data protection issues is also evident when considering new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud services or blockchain.

The Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Ulrich Kelber, stated: New technologies create opportunities - but at the same time also risks, especially for informational self-determination. We must therefore work together to proactively participate in a "human-centred" technology design from the outset in the interests of the protection goals of data protection. In doing so, we should institutionalize the model of cross-legal cooperation between authorities not only at national level, but also at EU level.

Both Buttarelli and Kelber agreed on the importance of establishing the high level of data protection guaranteed by the GDPR as a global benchmark for the development of new technologies. Data protection in general and the GDPR in particular should not be seen as a competitive disadvantage for European companies. Data protection is an essential part of sustainable AI technology. Especially in the field of digital innovation, a high level of data protection can even be a competitive advantage.

In addition to the EDPS and the BfDI, the President of the Federal Cartel Office, Andreas Mundt, the President of the French Data Protection Authority (CNIL), Marie-Laure Denis, the Secretary General of the European Commission, Martin Selmayr, and the British Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, also took part in the panel discussion part.

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public bodies

The term public body not only includes the traditional administrative authorities, but also courts, parliaments and public foundations. This also includes social insurance, such as health insurance.

company

Private companies are mostly supervised by state authorities, but there are some exceptions. Private organizations such as clubs and associations also fall into this category.

Press, radio, church

Special responsibilities apply in these areas. Churches and public broadcasters have e.g. B. via their own data protection officers. The federal and state supervisory authorities are not responsible for other organizations either.