

State commissioner checks how well Lower Saxony's economy is implementing the new data protection rules

Questions about the GDPR for 50 companies

From the end of June, the Lower Saxony State Commissioner for Data Protection (LfD), Barbara Thiel, will examine how well companies in Lower Saxony have adapted to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has been in force since May 25th. In a cross-industry cross-sectional audit, Thiel's authority is writing to 50 companies of different sizes to answer questions about ten areas of data protection.

Educate, raise awareness, help

"First of all, I would like to get an overview of how the companies used the two-year transition period until the GDPR came into force," says Barbara Thiel. "My main concern is to identify whether the responsible departments still have some catching up to do. I would also like to use this exam to raise awareness of data protection in general and the provisions of the GDPR in particular. At this point in time, the priority is not to find as many errors as possible and impose fines. Instead, we want to enlighten, raise awareness and provide valuable information. Nevertheless, there can of course be a corresponding procedure if we identify violations of the GDPR during the check."

Final report in May 2019

Initially, 20 large and 30 medium-sized companies from various sectors that have their headquarters in Lower Saxony received the LfD questionnaire. "We will not check the small craft business or baker on the corner," says Barbara Thiel. A full review of individual sectors is not planned at the moment.

The employees will evaluate the answers by November and then attend on-site appointments with selected companies. The final report of the cross-sectional audit should then be available in May 2019.

Consequences for future work of the supervisory authority

The LfD hopes that this, the largest audit in the history of the supervisory authority, will also provide information for its future work. For example, focus tests in certain sectors could follow. The authority also expects indications of where there is still a particularly great need for advice and clarification. As a consequence, new orientation aids could be developed, for example.

Press release as PDF download

Attachment: Questionnaire for the cross-sectional examination (PDF)

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