

One year of new data protection law - a success despite the initial difficulties!

A new, Europe-wide uniform data protection law has been in force in Brandenburg for exactly one year - the General Data Protection Regulation. Its launch on May 25, 2018 was accompanied by excessive expectations, excited fears and numerous prophecies of doom. What has become of it?

After the initial excitement, word got around that names on doorbells are still allowed, that children are allowed to write their names on pictures they have drawn in kindergarten and that it is not forbidden to take pictures of people. Now that many fears have subsided, the opportunities presented by the new data protection law are now more clearly recognizable. Within just a few months, for example, what seemed hopeless for a long time has been achieved: international companies are paying more attention to European data protection - clearly a win, also for the people of Brandenburg.

But it is also clear that the General Data Protection Regulation will not win a beauty prize. A lot of their rules could be clearer, maybe a few less of them would. The European Commission will evaluate the set of rules based on the first experiences.

There is no question that the implementation of the new law is sometimes associated with a great deal of effort. As the data protection supervisory authority, we have also clearly felt the additional work involved in implementing the new law. Although the state representative carried out intensive consultations in the past year, a wide range of new tasks and scarce human resources showed the limits of our capacities.

In practice, many companies and administrations still have some catching up to do when it comes to the implementation of technical and organizational measures as well as the verification and documentation requirements. The fact that small and medium-sized companies and voluntary associations in Brandenburg are subject to the same rules as multinational corporations can sometimes be cumbersome in everyday life. However, it ensures that the same level of attention is paid to protecting privacy everywhere. Demanding the fulfillment of these obligations is not an end in itself: it strengthens the rights of citizens and makes it easier to enforce them. Dagmar Hartge:

The General Data Protection Regulation does not solve all problems, but it has already brought significant improvements in the first year: strong and enforceable rights for citizens, a significantly increased awareness at all levels, an international signal effect. Even if data protection is tedious - the first track record is impressive. More than ever, it is true that there are people behind the data, and it is about their protection.

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