

LfD supports clubs to the best of their ability, but needs better equipment

Parliament resolution

The Lower Saxony State Commissioner for Data Protection (LfD), Barbara Thiel, continues to assure the state's associations of her support. The LfD has taken note of the resolution of the state parliament "Strengthening voluntary work - making the General Data Protection Regulation manageable for associations" and takes the requests expressed therein very seriously. "We will continue to do everything we can to help the volunteers," said Thiel. "But unfortunately we have time and personnel limits that cannot simply be ignored." In addition to the clubs, the LfD in Lower Saxony is also responsible for a good 290,000 companies, around 1000 municipalities and more than 3000 schools as well as for complaints from citizens. In the past year, more than 1,000 complaints were addressed to the LfD.

Due to the significantly expanded tasks and the resulting increase in workload as well as the immense need for advice on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the LfD had to largely stop providing individual advice last November. Clubs and associations were deliberately excluded from this. The authority has its own hotline for them, which volunteers can contact three times a week with their questions and problems. This offer should continue to be maintained despite the high burden on the LfD.

In addition, the LfD has created extensive guidelines on data protection in the association, which can be accessed on their website. "You can see from the efforts so far that the clubs already have a prominent position in our work. I therefore firmly reject the accusation from the ranks of the state parliament that I would not work on solutions," said Thiel. The LfD is also surprised that a member of the legislature, of all people, criticizes a supervisory authority for monitoring compliance with applicable law. "I don't think the State Audit Office would have to put up with similar criticism," said Thiel. A general impunity for first offenses, as demanded by the state parliament for clubs, cannot exist in the current legal situation. However, no fines have been imposed on clubs according to DS-GVO so far.

LfD employees have already developed concepts for further improving information and education for clubs. In order to be able to implement these, however, the authority needs better staffing. "We will register our needs in the budget negotiations for 2020. Then it's up to the state parliament to decide whether to grant us the necessary funds," said the state data protection officer.

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