

After two years: the General Data Protection Regulation has proven its worth even in the crisis!

Two years after the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, the Brandenburg data protection officer, Dagmar Hartge, draws a positive interim balance:

The data protection reform should improve the protection of fundamental rights and advance the single digital single market.

The day-to-day experience of my supervisory work shows that we are well on the way to achieving these goals. Legislators, administrations and companies should use the accelerated digitization caused by the current pandemic to take data protection and data security into account right from the start.

According to the Brandenburg data protection supervisory authority, the General Data Protection Regulation has strengthened the rights of citizens. Their Europe-wide validity means greater legal certainty and predictability, especially for companies. It also offers good design options for everyday life in administrations and companies. Appropriate powers for data protection supervisors help to ensure compliance. In the past two years, data protection has also gained in visibility and has established itself in the minds of those responsible.

Pushing back on data protection, as is now being demanded by many, would not only mean weakening this fundamental right, which is particularly important in times of crisis. It would also be very short term. On the contrary, digital projects that are currently being initiated or expanded offer the opportunity to take privacy protection into account from the outset. The increased use of digital communication shows where there are still deficiencies. All those involved should see it as an opportunity to remedy these for the future.

The conference of data protection officers of the federal and state governments as well as the European Data Protection Committee provide ongoing support for the application and interpretation of the General Data Protection Regulation. Last year, the data protection conference made suggestions for improvements in detail – in particular for making everyday life easier and improved practicality. Two years may still be too early for a final assessment of the success of the data protection reform and for a revision of the text of the regulation. A lot will depend on what regulations the European legislator will make for confidentiality in electronic communication.

ID number 06/2020

Date 25.05.2020

category

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