

DIGITALEUROPE Statement

BREXIT: securing free flow of personal data should be EU priority

BRUSSELS (August 28, 2017) — Ahead of the third round of the negotiations, DIGITALEUROPE urges both parties to reach as soon as possible a withdrawal agreement in order to focus on the future EU-UK relation.

Last Thursday, the United Kingdom (UK) published a paper on ‘The exchange and protection of personal data’, underlining particularly its wish to continue to work closely with the European Union (EU) on strong data protection standards – with the support of the UK Data Protection Authority, the ICO, and its call to maintain the free flow of personal data between the UK and the EU building on the existing adequacy model.

DIGITALEUROPE asks the European Commission to consider this matter as a key priority for the European Industry as a whole. Data flows are at the forefront of the areas of risk foreseen by the Industry considering its centrality to both the digital economy and the economy as a whole given the digital transformation of all business sectors. With a high proportion of trade in services, new business models of manufacturing industries enabled by data flows, the continued free flow of data between the EU and the UK is of crucial importance for the digitisation of both EU and UK industries.

The UK is responsible for 11.5% of global cross border data flows while 75% of this traffic is with other EU Member States. A mutual adequacy agreement with the UK is in the interest of businesses across the EU. Data flows underpin the EU’s exports to the UK, which account for 16% of the EU’s total exports. The UK’s imports from the EU are valued at 338 billion EUR. For any businesses in the EU looking to continue trading and doing business with the UK post-Brexit a mutual adequacy agreement will be crucial.

The UK is working towards a Data Protection Bill to fully implement the GDPR before May 2018. Therefore, a mutual adequacy agreement between the EU and the UK is viewed by the sector as the most appropriate mechanism to secure the free flow of data. We believe that it is critical to ensure the highest standards of data protection and privacy.

The negotiations should start already now to have a mechanism in place on day 1 of BREXIT and we call upon the European Union to consider this matter as a priority.

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For more information please see ‘The Digital Tech Sector Priorities and Gap Analysis in a EU-UK cliff-edge scenario’ available here:

http://www.digitaleurope.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?Command=Core_Download&EntryId=2487&language=en-US&PortalId=0&TabId=353

You can also contact:

Diane Mievis, Policy Director at DIGITALEUROPE
+32 498 68 45 61 or diane.mievis@digitaleurope.org

ABOUT DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies. DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies.

DIGITALEUROPE’s members include in total 25,000 ICT Companies in Europe represented by 61 corporate members and 37 national trade associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: <http://www.digitaleurope.org>

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