



23 April 2025

**EUROPEAN  
DATA  
PROTECTION  
SUPERVISOR**

The EU's independent data  
protection authority

*“Annual Report 2024: acting for the  
future of data protection”*

Speech

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European Data Protection Supervisor

Thank you Chair for that generous introduction.

Honourable Members it is my privilege again to present to you the EDPS Annual Report for the year 2024.

This is our 20th annual report and it marks 20th anniversary of the institution.

The EDPS Annual Report 2024 focusing on acting for the future of data protection, but being at the same time a special edition as it concludes my mandate and the 20th anniversary of protecting individuals' privacy and personal data in EU institutions, bodies and agencies.

Over the last four years, when I had a privilege to lead a team of the of the EDPS diverse experts, this institution has strived to shape a safer digital future, guided by the principles of:

- Foresight,
- Action and
- Solidarity.

What has this meant in practice for us? We have anticipated technologies' opportunities and challenges. Provided the necessary tools to EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies to foster and practice a strong data protection culture in the EU and beyond, because the digital landscape has no borders.

Taken efficient actions on data protection matters. All to ensure that people's privacy is protected according to European values which we are proud of. Over the last four years, much has changed. After all, the digital landscape is in constant movement.

Further, the digital sphere and technologies have a wide impact - shaping and being shaped - by EU and global current affairs. The EDPS, as a data protection authority, has navigated these challenges with one constant: putting individuals' fundamental rights to privacy and personal data at the forefront of our mission.

The EDPS fulfilled them with our core values of EDPS:

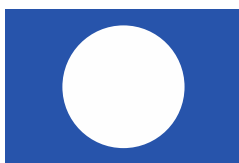
- Impartiality,
- Integrity,
- Transparency, and
- Pragmatism.

And the year 2024, has been no exception. Allow me to enumerate some of the key impact - in numbers - that we have had on the present and future of data protection and privacy.

### **Policy & Consultation**

We delivered 97 legislative consultations to the EU - co legislators. This includes Opinions, both Formal and Informal Comments, on a variety of topics: the Digital Rulebook, Health, Justice and Home Affairs, Digital Wallets and Identities, proving - again and again - our relevance on EU citizens' lives, their safety and the safety of their information.

The numbers remain constantly high - in 2023 there have been 116 legislative consultations and in 2022 - 110; 2021 - 122. Even this year of European elections and change of the Commission, we have responded to more than 60 formal requests for legislative advice.



What do we try to achieve with our advice? To make new regulations aimed to improve EU citizens' lives workable whilst upholding the highest standards of privacy and data protection according to the EUDPR and the GDPR.

For MEPs less familiar with our work, it may be of interest that our advisory role extends beyond the legislative process. Over the past 20 years, the EDPS has also intervened in various cases before the Court of Justice of the EU, offering expert views on issues like data retention and access, data transfers to third countries, the independence of supervisory authorities, and Passenger Name Records (PNR), among others.

## Supervision & Enforcement

Moving on to our “on-the-ground work”. This year we doubled-down on our supervision and enforcement actions by (to name a few examples):

- issuing Supervisory Opinions to help EU institutions be beyond reproach when they process personal information,
- addressing complaints made by individuals against EUIs,
- carrying out audits to verify compliance of EUIs with EU data protection law,
- and monitoring the EU agencies in the area of freedom, security and justice, especially the interoperability framework of the databases used to keep the EU safe.

## Technology & Privacy

When preparing for the future of data protection, deploying a Foresight strategy is born out of logic for the EDPS.

As you may recall from previous Annual Report presentations, we continued to monitor and anticipate the technologies that lie ahead with 10 initiatives in this area, including TechSonar and TechDispatch publications and reports. Naturally, this year we focused our research and work on understanding and explaining the benefits and limits on data protection of AI-led technologies.

And, whilst Foresight is an important element of our work, addressing the pitfalls that some EUIs have and can face with technologies, such as data breaches, has remained important throughout the year. Indeed, we have continuously stepped up our trainings in this area, collaborating with ENISA, the EU's cybersecurity agency and improved our procedures to efficiently handle personal data breach notifications.

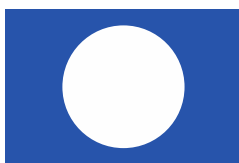
The proof is in the numbers. In 2024, we received and assessed more than one hundred new admissible personal data breach notifications under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 - most due to human error. I am also happy to report that all cases up to 2022 are now closed and most of the cases received in 2023 and 2024 are either closed or for which we have made significant progress.

## Artificial Intelligence

As you know, the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act entered into force in August 2024, which mandates the EDPS to be the competent market surveillance authority for the supervision of AI systems, and notified body for assessing the conformity of certain high-risks AI system.

Ahead of this milestone for the European Union, and embracing our role, we unveiled our strategy for AI in May 2024 based on three key pillars: governance, risk management and supervision.

We put this strategy in motion by creating our very own AI Unit, composed of various in-house experts. By the end of 2024, we also had set up a functioning AI correspondents network including diverse specialists



from across the EUIs to foster a collaborative and consistent approach to the use of AI. Our common goal is to foster AI literacy, public procurement and pilot programmes for sustainable and fair EU-centric AI tools, and to publish guidelines for EUIs on this topic.

Our second AI Correspondents Network meeting will be held on 20 May 2025. The EDPS AI Unit plans tackle EUIs' doubts and concerns on certain AI Act provisions, including the mapping of prohibited practices and high-risk AI systems, working closely with the European Commission's AI Office, and discuss specific issues, such as the status of deployer/provider; use of biometrics, for example.

Likewise, the EDPS is preparing internal mechanisms and procedures to perform, for instance, its market surveillance activities. In addition, we are exploring the possibility - also in terms of financial and expertise necessities - to allow EUIs to have access to a regulatory sandbox under Article 57 of the AI Act.

Over the year, we have also actively monitored the development and use of AI tools used by the agencies with competences in the area of freedom, security and justice, prioritising their use in a trustworthy, fair and bias-free way to protect individuals from adverse and potentially dramatic consequences.

## Transfers

Our work on ensuring that personal data transferred to countries or organisations outside the EU/EEA when necessary for specific purposes is done in the way that it upholds EU standards of personal data protection which the EDPS is a profound advocate of since day 1 of my mandate.

Exemplifying this, we have pursued our investigation into the European Commission's use of Microsoft 365, and took the following two important steps.

First, we ordered the European Commission, effective on 9 December 2024, to suspend all data flows resulting from its use of Microsoft 365 to Microsoft and its affiliates and sub-processors, located in countries outside the EU/EEA not covered by an adequacy decision.

Second, we also ordered the European Commission to bring processing operations resulting from its use of Microsoft 365 into compliance by taking specified actions, by way of contractual provision and other organisational and technical measures, for example.

Many of the identified infringements concerned all processing operations carried out by the European Commission, or on its behalf, when using Microsoft 365, and impacted a large number of individuals. Affected individuals include not only all European Commission's staff, but also staff of other EUIs and other individuals whose personal data is processed when the institution carries out its tasks using Microsoft 365.

Aside from this major investigation, we continued to assess EUIs' authorisation requests to transfer personal data outside the EU/EEA when necessary. Further improving our efficiency, we have shared a Model Administrative Arrangement on 31 June 2024 to facilitate EUIs work, helping them comply with the applicable EU data protection law, when transferring personal data to international organisations for specific purposes. I want to take a moment to stress that this Model Administrative Arrangement can be used, but will continue to require the EDPS' approval.

As EDPS, I strongly believe in our influence, and the opportunity - and duty - to use said influence on the global stage by elevating EU data protection standards worldwide. Might I add, let's not forget that the GDPR and its mirrored regulation for EUIs, the EUDPR, is seen as an example for many countries across the world.

This is why the EDPS is very active in numerous international fora to steer data protection, the European way.

- Global Privacy Assembly



- Spring conference of European DPA
- G7 Roundtable of data protection and privacy authorities.
- Cooperation with Council of Europe, OECD and
- International organisations workshop in 2024 organised by World bank in Washington DC.

I had the honour to welcome in 2024 data protection colleagues - or family as I like to say - from the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Region to discuss the practical application of data protection to uphold individuals' privacy.

Coming back to European Union projects, my team and I have continued our intensive work as both a member and provider of the European Data Protection Board Secretariat.

In particular, this year, we coordinated a taskforce on the cooperation with competition and consumer protection authorities, which is amongst others developing a joint guidance (together with the European Commission) on the interplay between the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the GDPR. In recognition of the importance of the work carried out, the EDPB recently decided to transform this taskforce into a new expert subgroup on cross-regulatory interplay and cooperation, which the EDPS will continue to coordinate in 2025.

Concluding this report I would like to remind again that the EDPS celebrated its 20th Anniversary.

We wanted to look back together on two decades of safeguarding citizens' privacy and data protection rights. We have retraced the essential contributions provided by the EDPS as the European Union's independent data protection authority to shape the privacy landscape. This was also a momentous opportunity to reflect on the current areas for improvements and future challenges.

I am very proud that the EDPS designed, at this very special occasion, four captivating activities:

- The EDPS' 20 Year Anniversary Book titled "Two decades of personal data protection. What's next?";
- a series of 20 videos with insightful talks on privacy and data protection;
- 20 initiatives illustrating the EDPS' continuous aspiration to lead as a modern data protection authority; and, last but not least,
- our very successful European Data Protection Summit on Rethinking Data in a Democratic Society that gathered hundreds of participants on 20 June 2024 in Brussels.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

