Data protection

EU/US: US to carefully evaluate Privacy Shield opinion but is cautious about reopening of the agreement

- Stefan Selig, US Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade, stated that the United States will carefully evaluate the Article 29 Working Party’s opinion on the Privacy Shield, but would wary of reopening the agreement as it could harm the delicate balance found during the negotiations.
- The non-binding opinion of the Article 29 Working Party which was released last week called for more reassurance over US surveillance practices and the independence of Ombudsman.

EU: Liberal Group of the European Parliament seeks to challenge the Commission on the Privacy Shield

- The European Parliament’s liberal group ALDE, backed by the Socialists & Democrats, is said to be planning to challenge the European Commission on the Privacy Shield.
- MEP Sophie In’t Veld (ALDE, the Netherlands), point person on Privacy Shield for the ALDE group, said that the Commission should appear before the European Parliament. A resolution criticising the Commission for insufficient safeguards for citizens’ data is being pushed by ALDE. It is expected the resolution be added to the agenda of the Parliament’s plenary session on 9-12 May.

EU: GDPR implementation will require 24,000 data protection officers in the private sector, IAPP estimates

- A report by the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) estimated that at least 24,000 data protection officers will be needed in the private sector as a result of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Adopted by the European Parliament, the GDPR will be implemented across the European Union over the next two years.

Turkey: Data protection legislation comes into force following massive personal information leak

- A specific law governing the use of personal data has recently come into force in Turkey after more than a decade of work. The legislation sets definition for personal and sensitive data, lays out firms’ responsibilities in managing information, regulates international transfer of data, and establishes a dedicated data protection authority. The rules were designed to be aligned with EU rules.
- The legislation comes shortly after it emerged that personal information of about some 50 million Turkish citizens were made available on the Internet in what is the biggest data breach in the country’s history.

Online platforms

EU: Commission will not take a horizontal approach to online platforms but will target specific issues

- Andrus Ansip, Vice-President of the European Commission, stated that the Commission will not take a horizontal approach to online platforms, but will target specific issues, such as a perceived lack of
transparency from search engines. The preliminary results of a public consultation on the matter showed that consumers and companies want platforms to be more open about their search and review results.

- The Commission is expected to publish a communication on the role of online platforms in H1 2016.

**UK: House of Lords report says there is no need for a specific online platform regulation**

- On 20 April, the UK House of Lords Internal Market Sub-Committee published its report on *Online platforms and the Digital Single Market* which underlined that there is no need for a specific regulatory regime aimed at platforms.
- Highlighting that platforms drive innovation, jobs and growth, the report called on the EU to implement steps that would support further development of the EU platform scene.
- The report expressed concerns with regards to the lack of consumer knowledge about how their personal data is being used, and suggested for the European Commission to develop a privacy seal for platforms to follow.

**Digital Single Market**

**EU: European Commission presents the First Digital Single Market package**

- On 19 April, the European Commission presented what is being referred to as the First Digital Single Market package. The package maps out the Commission’s vision of how EU companies and research facilities could reap benefits from digital technologies and how to position the EU as a global leader in the development and uptake of these technologies.
- The Communication on Digitising European Industry contains an investment package amounting to €50 billion via public-private partnerships and leveraging EU funds. The Communication on ICT Standardisation identifies five priority areas - 5G, cloud computing, internet of Things, data technologies and cybersecurity - which will receive support to spur their development and implementation.
- In a speech to the European Parliament’s Industry Committee, Udo Helmbrecht, Executive Director of the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA), highlighted the utmost importance of cybersecurity in the EU’s strategy on digitisation of industry, and argued in favour of encryption.

*Note:* The initiatives contained in the First Digital Single Market package are not of a legislative nature, and many of them are dependent on the involvement of public and private actors.

**Cloud computing**

**EU: Commission presents the European Cloud Initiative**

- The European Cloud Initiative aims to ensure that scientific community, businesses and public services reap benefits of big data revolution. This Commission’s blueprint for cloud-based services and data infrastructure is designed to address loopholes which prevent Europe, the largest producer of scientific data in the world, to fully exploit the potential of big data.
- The creation of a European Open Science Cloud which will offer 1.7 million researchers in Europe and science and technology professionals a virtual environment to store, share and re-use their data is part of the initiative. Over time, the user base of this Open Science Cloud will be expanded to include public sector and industry.
General

Germany: Associations oppose a proposed vectoring monopoly

- A group of 25 business associations raised concerns about a new regulation on broadband Internet which is being discussed in Germany. The issue at stake concerns the decision of the country’s telecoms regulator Bundesnetzagentur which notified the European Commission about its proposal to allow Deutsche Telekom to exclusively use the so-called vectoring technology on copper networks.
- According to the signatories of a letter which was sent to several Commissioners, including Vice-President Ansip, granting one company an exclusive right to deploy this technology would harm competition in the telecom sector as other companies would be cut off of their access to wiring that connects directly to the most lucrative parts of broadband networks.
- The Commission’s decision on the matter is expected in two weeks.