

Synopsis report of the public consultation on building a European data economy

This synopsis report presents the results of the consultation process on 'Building a European Data Economy'. It discusses the importance and timelines of the measures envisaged by the Commission to foster a thriving EU data economy.

The stakeholder consultation confirmed that businesses incur high costs because of current data localisation restrictions, predominantly when carrying out cross-border business in the EU, launching new services, entering new markets or starting up a new business. More than half of the respondents (61.9%) think that data localisation restrictions should be removed. There was also wide support for addressing this issue via a legislative instrument: a majority of respondents believe that legislative action is the most appropriate instrument to tackle unjustified localisation restrictions. IT service providers of all sizes show the highest support for regulatory action.

Respondents also indicated that there are problems with porting non-personal data between cloud service providers or back in-house. 56.8% of SMEs testified having experienced difficulties when attempting to do so.

B2B data access and reuse, as well as liability are emerging issues that deserve further analysis. Virtually all stakeholders think that more data should be made available for reuse in B2B contexts. Almost half of all responding companies using data have experienced some problems in accessing data held by others. However, most stakeholders think that the European Commission should be careful with its actions to make more data available for reuse. Many stakeholders stressed that the main question is how to maximise and organise access to and re-use of data, and not who owns. Most respondents therefore strongly supported non-regulatory measures such as fostering the use of Application Programming Interfaces or guidance by the European Commission to promote data sharing.

While the majority of respondents believe the current product liability regime is adequate to deal with the challenges resulting from emerging technologies like IoT and autonomous systems, some specific stakeholder groups, mainly consumers and legal practitioners, believe an overhaul would be beneficial and necessary.

Read the synopsis report in English, also available in all the EU official languages:

Български, čeština, dansk, Deutsch, eesti, ελληνικά, español, français, hrvatski, italiano, latviešu, lietuvių, magyar, Malti, Nederlands, polski, português, română, slovenčina, slovenščina, suomi, svenska.

Read the annex to the synopsis report (available in English only).

Background

The consultation process on the European data economy, a wide-ranging stakeholder dialogue, was launched with the adoption of the Communication on Building a European Data Economy (COM(2017)9) and accompanying Staff Working Document (SWD(2017)2). The Commission aims to foster the best possible use of digital data to benefit the economy and society. The consultation addressed, inter alia, the barriers that hamper the development of a European single market for data storage and processing services, notably those arising from unjustified data localisation restrictions, but also legal issues relating to access to and transfer of primarily non-personal, machine-generated data.

The main element of the consultation process was the Public Online Consultation which ran from 10 January to 26 April 2017 and covered all issues raised in the Communication on "Building a European Data Economy" (COM(2017)9). Several horizontal and sector-specific workshops have also been held, either targeting a specific group of stakeholders or addressing a specific issue.

The synopsis report is accompanied by a more detailed annex to show the qualitative analysis of the results and position papers received. A summary report of this consultation has already been published, providing preliminary trends.

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