Guidance on private sector data sharing

The Commission is looking to facilitate the sharing of data held by companies to improve public services and guide policy decisions.

Data-driven innovation is a key enabler of growth and jobs in Europe.

As data is a non-rivalrous resource, it is possible for the same data to support the creation of several new products, services or methods of production. So, companies can engage with the same data in different arrangements with other big companies, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), startups or the public sector. This way, the value resulting from the data can be fully exploited.

Private sector data sharing in business-to-government contexts

Data held by companies can help guide policy decisions and improve public services. For example, such data can lead to a more targeted response to epidemics, better urban planning, and improved environmental protection, market monitoring and consumer protection.

When compiling official statistics, analysis of data held by companies is often more cost-efficient and can produces faster outcomes on aspects such as population movements, prices, inflation, the Internet economy, energy or traffic. Using such data also lowers the burden on companies and citizens by avoiding survey questionnaires.

The Commission believes the principles contained in the Communication ‘Towards a common European data space’ and staff working document on data sharing could support the supply of private sector data to public bodies under preferential conditions for reuse. It is supported in this view by
experience gained in pilot studies and actions, and the results of the stakeholder consultation.

The Commission organised a high-level roundtable in the form of an expert group to discuss these principles further. The expert group focused on access to and reuse of private sector data by public bodies for public interest purposes. It also assisted the Commission in assessing issues related to business-to-government (B2G) data sharing.

The Commission has appointed independent experts with experience in the public and private sector within the area of B2G data sharing. The group’s conclusions and recommendations to the Commission were included in a report that will be used as input for possible future Commission initiatives on B2G data sharing.

In this exercise, the experts advised that data sharing should be facilitated in the EU and that policy, legal and investment measures should be taken in 3 main areas:

1. governance of B2G data sharing across the EU
2. transparency, citizen engagement and ethics
3. operational models, structures and technical tools

These actions were announced on 19 February 2020 along with a communication of the European Commission on the new European data strategy.

**Private sector data sharing in business-to-business contexts**

As identified in the Communication ‘Building a European data economy’, manufacturers of IoT objects are usually in a privileged position to determine access to and reuse of non-personal and automatically generated data from IoT objects.

Depending on the market, these manufacturers may or may not grant access and usage rights to the user of the object, who may find themselves prevented from using data, the generation of which they triggered.

With this issue in mind, and as a follow-up to the stakeholder dialogue on the Communication ‘Building a European data economy’, the Commission outlined a set of principles in the Communication ‘Towards a common European data space’ and its staff working document. These principles should be respected in contractual agreements to ensure fair and competitive markets for IoT objects and for products and services that rely on non-personal machine-generated data created by such objects.

With the publication of these principles, the Commission launched a further consultation process with stakeholders. It conducted an SME panel consultation that yielded 979 replies.

The Commission will continue to assess whether amended principles and possible codes of conduct are sufficient to maintain fair and open markets and will address the situation. If necessary, the Commission will take appropriate actions.

European Data Strategy
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Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, and Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President responsible for the Security Union are participating in the International Cybersecurity Forum that is taking place in Lille, France until tomorrow 9 June.

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Open data directive: Commission calls on Romania and Slovenia to comply with EU rules open data and public sector data reuse

The European Commission has sent reasoned opinions to Romania and Slovenia asking to communicate information about how EU rules on open data and the reuse of public sector data (Directive EU 2019/1024, referred to as the Open Data directive) are transposed in national law.

PRESS RELEASE | 23 April 2022
Digital Services Act: Commission welcomes political agreement on rules ensuring a safe and accountable online environment

The Commission welcomes the swift political agreement reached today between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the proposal on the Digital Services Act (DSA), proposed by the Commission in December 2020.

Browse Data
Data is everywhere and growing at an unprecedented pace. The Commission has developed a European data strategy to help us unlock its benefits.
The European Commission's policies focus on generating value for the economy and society through the reuse of public sector information.