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European Data Protection Day: Consumers online but off-guard?

68% of Europeans are concerned about the protection of their personal data¹ and 82% of young internet users are unaware of how their personal information is used². Coupled with the current revision of the EU Directive, today's 5th European Data Protection Day takes on special significance.

The European Commission is currently reviewing the Data Protection Directive, adapting it for the 'Digital Age' we now live in. BEUC calls for the strengthening of consumers' fundamental rights to data protection and privacy in light of technological developments

The emergence of online services such as social networking and search engine use are based on tracking technologies and have led to an unprecedented proliferation of personal data. Consumers often have little awareness of how their data is used and even less control.

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC) said:

"This Data Protection Day coincides with the EU legal revision – a truly pivotal point. It provides an opportunity to reassure and empower consumers in the long run by handing them back control over their online personal data.

"Most consumers don't realise they leave 'digital traces', don't know their data is collected and are not told for which purposes. Strengthening the principles of transparency and data minimisation, establishing joint liability rules between businesses and third parties and introducing mandatory 'privacy by default' are just some of the many shields consumers need. We urge the Commission to listen and bring about these changes."

ENDS

Click on logo below for BEUC's official response to the European Commission



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Want to know more about BEUC? Visit www.beuc.eu

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_225_en.pdf EU Eurobarometer, Feb., 2008 (Flash Eurobarometer 225)

² Scientific report 'Young People and Emerging Digital Services', 2009:
HU<http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=2119UH>