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Date: 23/11/2017

European Parliament urges the Commission to put data protection before trade interests

Additional safeguards are needed to make sure EU rules on data protection and privacy are not undermined by trade agreements. This is what the European Parliament's international trade committee asked for in a vote today.

The EU has a world-class legal framework¹ to protect its citizens' privacy and personal data.

Trade negotiations increasingly impact day-to-day consumer issues, including data protection. Consumer groups worry that this will lead to EU data protection laws becoming 'negotiable' if considered an irritant to trade interests. It is also possible that a third country could use a trade deal to bring legal challenges against the EU's data protection rules.

MEPs today recognise these concerns are well-founded and want reassurances. In the report adopted today, MEPs emphasise, for the third time^{2 3}, that:

- Rules on cross-border transfers of data must comply with the EU's existing and future data privacy legislation.
- The EU must enact a safeguard that shields EU citizens' fundamental rights to privacy and data protection from trade interests.
- And this safeguard is to be included in any new and recently launched trade negotiation.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"Data flows are an inextricable part of the digital world. But with consumers' personal data often swimming in these flows, they must be handled with great care.

"MEPs today send yet another clear signal that they want the EU not to trade away the privacy and data protection of its citizens. To do this effectively, it must shield itself against trade partners using trade agreements to legally challenge the EU's data protection laws. We now expect the Commission to develop this indispensable safeguard according to the principles requested by MEPs."

END

¹ As of 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation will boost the EU's already high standards of protection. It also sets out a clear set of principles that every company – European or from further afield – must respect.

² [European Parliament's recommendations to the Commission on the negotiations for the Trade in Services Agreement \(TiSA\).](#)

³ [European Parliament's recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership \(TTIP\).](#)