

Joint Declaration on Data Retention

As representatives of citizens, professionals and businesses in Europe and world-wide,

Convinced that the recognition of inalienable human rights is the foundation of freedom, security and economic prosperity,

Concerned that in the fight against terrorism and crime we are giving up the values we are trying to protect, namely freedom and democracy,

Considering that current plans to record information on every citizen's communications, movements and use of media may constitute the most serious threat yet to our right to live self-determined and private lives,

we declare the following to be our profound belief:

1. The systematic collection or retention of personal data regarding our communications, movements or use of media ("data retention") beyond what is necessary for business purposes is unacceptable. We demand that any plans to introduce data retention be halted immediately.

2. The following reasons have led us to this conclusion:
 - Data retention is too invasive to personal privacy. It obstructs professional activities (e.g. in medicine, law, religion, journalism) as well as political and commercial activities that rely on confidentiality.
 - Data retention does not prevent terrorism or other types of crime; it is unnecessary and easy for criminals to circumvent.
 - Data retention violates the human right to privacy and control of personal information.
 - Data retention is expensive and burdens the economy.
 - Data retention discriminates against users of telephones, mobile phones and the Internet.

3. Any legal rules on the handling of communications data must be subject to prior parliamentary consent. Providers must be reimbursed for additional costs they incur in complying with law enforcement-related obligations.