

President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker

European Commission
CHARL 9/234
Rue de la loi, 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Tuesday, 30 September 2014

Dear President-elect Juncker,

On behalf of civil society organisations in Europe and North America, we write to send you our best regards in support of your new term as President of the European Commission. The Commission plays a critical role on a wide range of issues of concern to consumers and citizens on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly in the area of Internet policy.

We write also to express our strong support for your goal of a “comprehensive EU-U.S. data protection agreement which provides justiciable rights for all EU citizens, regardless of where they reside, as well as reviewing the Safe Harbour arrangement.”¹

Over the last several years, consumer groups in Europe and North America have joined together to support the efforts of both the EU and the United States to strengthen privacy protection.² Regarding the United States, we favour legislative enactment of President Obama’s Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights and limitations of the NSA’s data collection activities.³ For the European Union, we support the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation, and at a minimum, the recommendations contained in the reports of MEP Albrecht and MEP Moreas.⁴

¹ Letter from Jean-Claude Juncker, President-elect of the European Commission, to Věra Jourová, Commissioner-designate for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality (Sep. 10, 2014), available at http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/docs/jourova_en.pdf.

² See, e.g., Letter from Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) to Chairwoman Ramirez and Commissioners Brill, McSweeney, Olhausen, and Wright, as well as Irish Data Protection Commissioner Hawkes (Jul. 29, 2014), available at <http://tacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/TACDletter-to-FTC-and-Irish-Data-Protection-Commissioner-re-Facebook-data-collection.pdf>; TACD, Resolution on Consumer Privacy Rights (May 2012), available at <http://test.tacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TACD-INFOSOC-49-12-Consumer-Privacy-Rights.pdf>.

³ The White House, “We Can’t Wait: Obama Administration Unveils Blueprint for a ‘Privacy Bill of Rights’ to Protect Consumers Online,” (Feb. 23, 2012), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/02/23/we-can-t-wait-obama-administration-unveils-blueprint-privacy-bill-rights>.

⁴ The texts adopted by the EU Parliament based on the reports by MEP Albrecht and MEP Moreas (March 12, 2014) are available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/summary.do?id=1342337&t=e&l=en> and <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/summary.do?id=1342393&t=e&l=en>.

We believe that the EU and U.S. regulatory authorities should work collaboratively to independently verify that consumers' privacy rights are properly protected under the U.S.-EU Safe Harbour Privacy Principles and that relevant sanctions have to be applied in case of breaches of the Safe Harbour agreement.⁵

We support your proposals for a comprehensive data protection agreement that recognises the need to safeguard personal information in the global economy.

At a time when the European Union celebrates the beginning of a new Parliament, a new Commission, and a new Council, we want to assure you that civil society organisations in Europe and North America recognise democratic institutions and respect the rule of law.

We look forward to working with you.

Cordially,

Kostas Rossoglou

Senior Legal Officer, BEUC (The European Consumer Organisation)
EU Co-Chair of the TACD Information Society Policy Committee

Jeffrey Chester

Executive Director, Center for Digital Democracy
U.S. Co-Chair of the TACD Information Society Policy Committee

On behalf of the TACD Information Society Policy Committee.

Cc: Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament
Andrus Ansip, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market - designate
Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality - designate
Günther H. Oettinger, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society - designate

⁵ TACD Resolution on Consumer Privacy Rights (*see footnote 2*).