

**G7 DATA PROTECTION AUTHORITIES
CONFERENCE**

Rome 9-11 October 2024

Tech7 Statement

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FOREWORD

The Tech7 welcomes the G7 Data Protection Authorities Conference. We believe that the role of Data Protection in today's world deserves such a spotlight in the context of the G7's work, especially given the rapidly evolving pace of data-intensive disruptive technologies. With this brief statement, we want to affirm that the G7 tech industry's position on this matter is clearly in favor of data protection and privacy rights, as we believe these issues are crucial for a safe tech market in which consumers trust the products they own and purchase. For that, companies need a clear regulatory environment where norms and their interpretations are shared and stabilized across the world, and most importantly, easy for businesses to understand and comply with – both at technical and commercial level.

PRIVACY AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE

In our vision, data protection is not antithetical to innovation: in fact, new digital technologies are at the forefront of enhancing privacy and data security. Privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) are rapidly evolving, offering innovative solutions that allow for data utilisation while maintaining robust privacy safeguards. For instance, synthetic data generation is revolutionising how we approach data analysis and machine learning. Encryption techniques like homomorphic encryption allow computation on encrypted data without decrypting it, and federated learning enables machine learning models to be trained across multiple decentralised devices without exchanging raw data, pushing the boundaries of what's possible in privacy-preserving data analysis.

These technologies demonstrate that innovation and privacy can go hand in hand. In fact, the drive for stronger privacy protections is itself a catalyst for technological advancement. All our member companies hold data protection as a priority, as outlined by relevant regulations such as the European Union's GDPR or the OECD Privacy Guidelines.

At the same time, we are aware that companies - especially startups and SMEs - need to operate within a stable and predictable regulatory framework. The complexity and sometimes conflicting interpretations of privacy regulations across different jurisdictions can pose significant challenges for growth in the industry. Further complexity is created by the interaction between privacy regulations and emerging frameworks for the governance of data and technology, including on AI or non-personal data. Providing sufficient guidance and ensuring coordinated application of these regulations will be crucial to support innovation.

Healthcare serves as a prime example of the potential benefits and challenges. In this sector, new technologies can have incredible impacts on people's health and well-being. These advancements rely on the sharing and analysis of vast amounts of data, including personal data. While it's crucial to protect this data, it's equally important that relevant regulations do not discourage innovation and digital transformation (97% of all global data in healthcare goes unused because it is unstructured).

Cross-border transfers are also critical to economic growth and innovation. Clear rules and alignment at the global level are necessary to facilitate data transfers while maintaining high privacy standards. It is crucial to promote flexible and interoperable frameworks, ensuring companies can access various avenues and mechanisms to securely transfer data between jurisdictions, providing value to consumers and certainty to businesses.

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In this context, accelerating and expanding the OECD's Data Free Flows with Trust (DFFT) initiative will help achieve these goals while promoting a more flexible, risk-based approach to data transfer mechanisms, in line with existing regulations such as the GDPR.

We advocate for flexible, risk-based and globally harmonised interpretations of privacy regulations. We urge the G7 Data Protection Authorities to consider the implications of privacy regulations and their interpretations holistically. This includes not only the direct impact on privacy but also the potential effects on innovation, economic growth, and societal benefits. A balanced approach that protects individual privacy while fostering innovation is not only possible but necessary for the continued growth and development of the global economy and society.