
**PRESS
RELEASE**

**PRESS
RELEASE**



INDUSTRY GROUPS JOIN FORCES TO AVERT DATA RETENTION LAWS

Brussels 4 June 2003

A coalition of industry groups have joined forces to resist government moves towards mandatory data retention prior to meetings of European Telecommunications and Justice and Home Affairs Ministers this week.

The coalition, representing worldwide and European business, including most major electronic communications service providers and manufacturers, is challenging EU Member States on proposals which would require communication service providers to store details of all calls, emails and transactions for use by law enforcement agencies.

In a joint statement, the coalition expresses concern at the lack of consultation with business over plans which are being discussed behind closed doors, and warns that they risk affecting not only consumer confidence but also business competitiveness.

“Business is concerned about the lack of co-ordination internationally. In addition, the low level of dialogue with experts will result in national policies on traffic data that severely harm communication service providers, and in turn, their end-user customers,” the statement says.

“Business is committed to co-operating with law enforcement agencies to combat crime and terrorism, but is seeking to ensure that legal requirements do not conflict with the legitimate expectations of customers and existing obligations to protect the privacy of customers, or unduly harm a competitive and dynamic market.”

Current European government plans would require communication service providers to bear the cost of retaining all communications data passing through their companies.

The statement also argues that the cost of any mandatory data storage requirements imposed by governments should not be borne by industry – and by extension, the consumer.

Instead business is arguing for a European data preservation regime rather than disparate blanket data retention regimes. Data preservation is a more focused form of information storage, requiring a company to only retain specific data on specific customers in response to a specific request from a law enforcement agency.

“The data retention requirements should be focused, government-funded, limited only to what is absolutely essential to protect society and should balance the interests of law enforcement agencies, companies and users.”

The coalition of industry groups comprises the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Union of Industrial and Employers’ Confederations of Europe (UNICE), the European Information, Communications and Consumer Electronics Technology Industry Association (EICTA) and the International Telecommunications Users Group (INTUG).

“Data retention is an intrusive measure that should not be taken until less intrusive alternatives, such as data preservation, have been tested and proven insufficient,” the statement asserts.

“Any government measures should be justified, limited, proportionate and necessary for the purposes of investigating and prosecuting terrorism and other crime only.

“Governments should not impose data storage requirements on communication service providers which would result in unreasonably high costs or technological impediments or would yield merely marginal benefits to law enforcement agencies.”

The full text of the Common Industry Statement on Storage of Traffic Data for Law Enforcement Purposes can be downloaded from the following websites:

www.iccwbo.org

www.unice.org

www.eicta.org

www.intug.net

For further information, please contact:

ICC: Maria Farrell, +33 (0)1 49 53 28 07

UNICE: Maria Fernanda Fau, +32 (0)2 237 65 62

EICTA: Leo Baumann, +32 (0)2 706 84 77

INTUG: Ewan Sutherland, +32 (0)2 706 82 55