

Data Protection: in 2020 fines for € 307 millions in Europe

Last year there were imposed 341 sanctions for personal data violations in the countries of EEA. 133 of the 341 administrative actions have been imposed by the Spanish Data Protection Authority, but the sternest authority has been the French one, with €138,300,000 in only 8 administrative actions. Illicit data processing, lack of transparency, lack of consent or other reasons produced 59% of the cases. Mr. Bernardi said: "The digital market is an opportunity, but we need to develop more sensitivity about the issue of data protection". The segment that has been target the most has been that of telecommunications.

Florence, January 11th 2021 – The Covid-19 emergency has not stopped the data protection authorities in Europe that during 2020 have imposed more than € 307.000.000 of sanctions. This is outlined in the "[Rapporto statistico 2020, sanzioni privacy in Europa](#)" prepared by the Osservatorio Federprivacy. This report has analyzed official sources of information in the 30 countries that are part of the European Economic Area (EEA), and it has underscored 341 actions with sanctions.

In the list, the Spanish authority (AEPD) has been the strictest one: it has imposed 133 sanctions, the average of 1 fine every 3 days, for a global amount of € 8,000,000. Second in the list the Italian authority that guarantees data protection with 35 administrative actions, while the Romanian authority (ANSPDCP) has imposed 26 sanctions.

There is anyway a different perspective if we consider the economic value of the sanctions instead of their number. The French authority (CNIL) with only 8 administrative actions was able to impose almost half of the total of the fines (44%) with an amount of €138,300,000. Following it, the Italian authority with €58,100,000, UK with €45,000,000 and Germany with €37,300,000.

These are only some of the different figures that are itemized in the Federprivacy report. However, the motivations that caused the sanctions are outstanding, according Mr. Nicola Bernardi, chairman of the most important Italian professional data protection association:

"In the 59% of the cases, the sanctions are about data processing, like the lack of transparency toward the user or his lack of consent. Many companies claim to have a legitimate interest or they think to comply with the Gdpr, but since they have no legal basis, they often are undergoing the heavy punishment of the authority, especially if there are many complaints from the users. The digital market is an opportunity, but we need to develop more sensitivity about the issue of privacy" says Mr. Bernardi.

Besides the infringements because of illicit processing data, in 20% of cases (1 out 5) lack of safety (often underscored by data breaches), no respect for the users rights (9%) and privacy policies (3.8%) are the causes of the violation.

Telecommunications has been the most targeted sector with highest number of sanctions (69), while internet and e-commerce has been the sector that had to pay more economically (€144,900,000 in fines). Telecommunications has been the second in this list with €62,400,000, and business the third with 38,100,000.

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