

Joint call: U.S. civil society groups call on the EU to protect digital regulations

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We, the undersigned U.S. civil society organizations, write today to call on the European institutions and EU enforcement bodies to hold firm against U.S. attempts to weaken EU digital regulation and enforcement.

The Trump administration has been a vocal critic of EU digital regulation efforts for years, framing EU laws that protect personal data and digital rights as a targeted attack on U.S. businesses. The EU's announcement of "simplifying" the very laws the administration has criticized only added new fuel to these attacks. Rather than appeasing the administration, simplification has become a new weapon for critics of EU digital efforts, with U.S. leadership [framing](#) the simplification proposal as an admission by the EU that its digital laws do, in fact, stifle innovation as U.S. Big Tech companies have long argued.

Criticisms of the EU's newer digital protections go hand-in-hand with attacks on enforcement of existing laws, such as the GDPR. Combined with tariff threats and blocking individuals working on tech regulation from entering the U.S., the U.S. administration and tech industry have effectively hindered EU regulation efforts and created an environment of anti-enforcement to appease U.S. partners.

Now, the U.S. State Department is [continuing](#) attacks on EU laws with a new report looking into how the DSA "stifles American speech" and Representatives are [introducing bills](#) explicitly exempting U.S. companies from any of these laws (or attempting to). It is clear the U.S. administration will not stop pushing until the EU fully removes its digital protection regime or weakens it to the point of utter uselessness. U.S. civil society groups have been watching this unfold with growing frustration.

The administration and tech industry's arguments and attacks on EU digital regulation and enforcement are familiar to us. We have seen these exact arguments play out at the state level as states try to protect their residents from digital harms when the federal government will not. Arguments about "stifling innovation," "damaging the market," or "denying people access to services they want" have been infuriatingly effective in blocking some of the most fundamental protections regarding people's data and how technology impacts their lives. The EU's willingness to suddenly introduce an irregular process to weaken existing laws that have been under direct attack appears to be a continuation of this pattern. This is true both for the AI Act, where EU bodies are reportedly considering removing crucial transparency safeguards and limiting the scope of the law to exclude some high-risk AI-embedded products entirely, but also for EU bodies weakening people's rights to data protection and private communications in the European digital rulebook at large.

We are aware that we cannot know the precise motivation behind the simplification proposal, but we can certainly say what it looks like—that the U.S. tech industry and the administration it has [openly courted](#) have succeeded in weakening the EU’s resolve to protect EU residents from digital abuses.

We do not say this to undermine or insult the EU. For many years, U.S. civil society and digital rights groups have pointed to the EU as a model for how we should move forward in establishing federal privacy and digital laws that would protect U.S. residents in a similar way. Indeed, the EU’s historic leadership on digital protections and privacy is why we are so concerned and disappointed with this shift.

Weakening EU laws does not just endanger those in the EU. It weakens privacy and digital rights globally. It shows that even established laws are not safe from Big Tech influence and diplomatic bullying. Regardless of intent, it is clear that introducing simplification at this time and in these conditions weakens digital rights and emboldens the U.S. administration and tech industry to continue pushing for deregulation. We, the U.S. groups, call on the EU to stand up for digital and privacy rights, to back their own laws, and to refuse to soften or weaken them.

Signed,

The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)

Public Citizen

National Association of Consumer Advocates

Consumer Federation of America

Rethink Trade

Fairplay

Consumer Action

Center for Digital Democracy

Greenpeace USA

NextGen Competition