



Press Release

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Contact person at ANEC: Chiara Giovannini

Tel: +32(0)2 743 24 70

Will Privacy Impact Assessment protect consumers' personal data effectively?

Today, the European Commission is expected to sign a voluntary agreement with companies on how to assess the privacy and data protection risks from RFID applications.

"The results of such assessments should be reliable, comparable and made public so the consumer can know. We do consider today's voluntary agreement on the Privacy Impact Assessment Framework (PIA) for RFID tags a step in the right direction, as most consumers are nervous about losing control of their personal data through interactions with a tagged product" said ANEC Secretary-General, Stephen Russell. "However, we expect all companies to use the measures needed to ensure that consumers' privacy is protected in line with legal requirements. We will look to the Commission for action if industry does not respect today's commitment in the very near future" he added.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is a technology for the transmission of data stored on a microchip. As the technology is 'contactless', data can be read remotely from within the local environment of the microchip. ANEC, which contributed to the Recommendation adopted by the Commission on the privacy and security aspects of RFID¹, advocated that Privacy Impact Assessments be conducted before the deployment of RFID applications in order to assess the risks to which consumers are likely to be exposed.

During a consultation on elaboration of the Privacy Impact Assessment Framework, ANEC also called for the provisions of the Data Protection Directive to be translated in the most rigorous way in their application to the holding of personal data in an RFID system. This is why we are contributing to the development of European Standards for common European signage able to inform consumers about the presence and use of RFID readers and tags. The standards are intended to assist implementation of the Commission Recommendation.

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¹ Commission Recommendation of 12 May 2009 on implementation of privacy and data protection principles in applications supported by radio-frequency identification.

ANEC in brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing and defending consumer interests in the process of standardisation and certification. ANEC was set up in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and represents consumer organisations from the 27 EU Member States and 3 EFTA countries and Croatia. ANEC is funded by the European Union and the EFTA Secretariat, while national consumer organisations contribute in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

More information: www.anec.eu

Contact person at ANEC: Chiara Giovannini

Tel: +32(0)2 743 24 70

Email: anec@anec.eu

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