

## "LobbyPlag" brings light to the EU Data Protection jungle. Online project evaluates more than 3,100 amendments.

**LobbyPlag is a project in which europe-v-facebook.org, together with data journalists, wants to make EU legislation more transparent. With new tools and an analysis of more than 3,100 amendments LobbyPlag shows which MEPs advocate for weakening or strengthening data privacy in Europe.**

**Ambitious reform.** In January 2012, Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding presented one of the EU's biggest reforms: Data protection should be uniformly regulated in all 27 member states. All national data protection laws should be replaced by a single EU law. Through less bureaucracy and higher penalties this new law was supposed to make privacy regulations fit for the online environment. In addition it was meant to ensure that companies that don't comply with law face serious sanctions. After all, data protection is a basic EU law.

**More turns into less.** After a year of negotiations, the euphoria is gone. An armada of industry lobbyists has made the EU Parliament and the Council of the EU take a U-turn. Instead of more privacy, the level is to be lowered. In more than 3,100 amendments, the European Commission's proposal is torn apart by the EU Parliament. Max Schrems (speaker of europe-v-facebook.org): *"After millions have been invested in lobbying the proposal has changed from promoting more privacy to the contrary, without any public discussion. Right now certain parts of the industry are undermining a fundamental right and nobody takes notice."*

**No one wants to take the blame.** After we had uncovered in the spring of 2013 that amendments from individual MEP had been directly copied from lobbyists ([PDF](#)), the fear in Brussels was great. However, towards the public, no MEP admitted to just copy from the industry. Everybody pointed fingers at their colleagues. If the "lobby/paste"-approach was admitted, the excuse was that it was supposedly happening in the interests of the citizens. MEPs were hiding in the shelter of endless paper stacks of numerous amendments that no one was able to overlook.

**The Brussels jungle.** With more than 3,100 amendments, it was practically impossible for the general public, and even for interested journalists, to investigate, which MEPs were for or against the reform. Many MEPs only gave vague and general statements about the importance of privacy and the economy. The watchful eye of the public was blinded by the events in Brussels.

**New online project brings clarity.** In a new project, the data journalists of "Open Data City", together with "europe-v-facebook.org" have (for the first time) made EU legislation transparent for everyone. Changes have been evaluated and analyzed in a simple and neutral way and categorized by countries, themes and deputies. Anyone can zoom into single amendments and check for themselves how they correspond to data protection reform. Informational text boxes explain the context of the various articles. The tool is designed primarily for journalists, but also for interested citizen.

Who is the greatest privacy protector among MEPs in a country? Who are the "TOP 10" in trying to undermine the fundamental right to data protection? On [LobbyPlag.eu](#) you find the answers. Schrems: *"The project is really exciting because so far, some MEPs have been hiding behind generic statements. We now have evidence-based evaluations that cannot be so easily brushed aside. So far, no one has done something like that with EU legislation. This is not only about privacy, but also about transparent democracy."*

LobbyPlag.eu has gone online today and will receive many additional features in within the coming days.