

Civil Society Organisations Warn against UK's Participation in Prüm II

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News

In a [statement of 31 October 2023](#), 15 civil rights organisations from across Europe raised concerns over the United Kingdom's participation in the EU's Prüm II scheme. Prüm II is designed to expand the types of data that can be searched and exchanged by law enforcement authorities (→ [eucri](#)m 4/2021, 225-226; for criticism voiced in the EU → [eucri](#)m 3/2022, 194). The statement stressed that the necessity and proportionality of the envisaged changes to include facial images, police records and potentially driving licences into the police data exchange system have not been demonstrated.

The statement warns that UK participation in an expanded Prüm system could see unlawfully retained photos of millions of individuals who have never been charged with a crime, referred to as "custody images", opened up to searches by police forces in EU member states. It also criticises the broad definition of "police records" that could encompass vast quantities of files, including on people who have never been charged nor convicted of an offence. "Including police records in the system would make troves of potentially incorrect, unwarranted or unverified data available for cross-border searches", the statement says. With regard to plans to include driving license data, the statement points out that these data are not collected for policing purposes so that these data should not be made subject to routine use by law enforcement authorities. This is also true for other UK data stored in civil systems that could be made available at the end, such as the passport database.

The statement requests a thorough parliamentary scrutiny on the UK's participation in the Prüm II network and calls for a broad public debate on the issue.

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