Group says kept in the dark about Facebook case

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"We have no access to the files against Facebook in Ireland," student Max Schrems, who launched the initiative Europe-versus-Facebook, told journalists.

"We have absolutely no idea what Facebook's arguments are, what the counter-arguments are to what we put forward.

"Although we are a party to these proceedings, we are as informed as the general public," he added.

Schrems and Europe-versus-Facebook last year took matters to the DPC in Ireland, where Facebook's European headquarters are located, complaining that the social networking website's privacy policies infringed European law.

In December, the DPC said Facebook had to better explain to users what happens to their personal data and give them more control.

But in April, a Facebook spokesman insisted the DPC "did not at any time say that Facebook should amend its privacy policy based on European data protection rules".

Schrems and his group have been seeking access to the files in the case since January, but to no avail.

Last week, "they (the DPC) told us they did not want to speak with us until further notice," Schrems said, questioning how the data protection authority hoped to continue proceedings if it refused to speak with one of the sides.

The DPC, which counts about 20 civil servants, none of them specialised in privacy law, was "overwhelmed" by the case, he said, adding that he would travel to Ireland next week to try to resume contact with the authority.

According to Schrems, Ireland's legislation does not require the DPC to give parties to a case access to the files.

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