

German privacy watchdog loses Facebook appeal

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A German privacy watchdog has failed in its bid to stop Facebook from forcing users to register with their real names.

Schleswig-Holstein state's data protection office had argued that the ban on fake names breaches German privacy laws and European rules designed to protect free speech online.

But a state appeals court has confirmed a lower tribunal's ruling that German privacy laws don't apply to Facebook because the social networking site has its European headquarters in Ireland, where privacy rules are less stringent.

[Data protection Commissioner](#) Thilo Weichert said in a statement Wednesday that he would accept the ruling, but urged lawmakers to consider changing legislation to harmonize privacy laws across the European Union.

Facebook officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

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