

Belgian watchdog takes Facebook to court over privacy concerns

15 June 2015



Belgium's privacy protection committee filed suit against Facebook in the main civil court in the capital Brussels

A privacy watchdog said Monday it is taking Facebook to court in Belgium for tracking Internet users, including those who are not members of the US social media network.

Belgium's [privacy](#) protection committee filed suit against Facebook in the main civil court in the capital Brussels, which was to begin hearing the case on Thursday, said Sarah Boulterhcha, a watchdog spokeswoman.

Last month, the watchdog charged that "Facebook flouts European and Belgian law in the area of privacy" before it made several recommendations that it said the firm failed to act on.

It charges that Facebook tracks Internet users, whether or not they are members of the social network, by tracking them through browser histories, or "cookies," left on the computer after they click "like" or "share" on a site.

It said the suit will seek to determine whether Belgian courts have jurisdiction in the case

because Facebook "only accepts monitoring by the Irish privacy protection committee and the application of Irish law."

Facebook's European headquarters in Dublin registers all accounts outside the United States and Canada—making up some 80 percent of Facebook's 1.35 billion users.

Besides targeting Facebook Belgium, the suit also takes aim at Facebook USA and Facebook Ireland.

"We also demand more transparency for Facebook users, that they are told what data is gathered," Boulterhcha said.

Beyond asking Facebook to respect the rules, the Belgian watchdog recommends that operators of Internet sites use "a two-click solution" to obtain the explicit consent of visitors before latter say click "like" or "share."

A Facebook spokeswoman in Europe, Tina Kulow, was quoted by the Belga news agency as saying the firm was "surprised" and "disappointed" that the [watchdog](#) was taking it to court even though there was a meeting planned Thursday to discuss the recommendations.

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