

EU to launch cybersecurity 'safety labels'

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The European Union unveiled plans Tuesday to step up its response to cyber attacks, including a new intelligence-sharing agency, cyber war games and product safety labels.

The proposals by the European Commission, the executive arm of the 28-nation bloc, come amid growing concerns over election hacking by foreign states, ransomware attacks and other cybercrime like identity theft and bank fraud.

"Cyberattacks are becoming more frequent, imaginative and global," Andrus Ansip, the European Commission Vice President for the Digital Single Market, told a press conference. "The EU needs to respond to them 24/7."

Building on an existing agency based in Greece, the new EU Cybersecurity Agency would help countries deal with [cyber threats](#). It would also organise yearly pan-European cybersecurity exercises and ensure better sharing of intelligence.

The agency would also help create EU-wide

certificates—much like labels that are currently used for food safety—for trusted energy, transport and other networks, as well as new consumer devices, like connected cars.

"I want high cybersecurity standards to become the new competitive advantage of our companies," said Mariya Gabriel, commissioner for the digital economy and society.

The EU will also launch cyber defence training next year and work with Brussels-based NATO on the issue.

Meanwhile the commission also unveiled fresh steps towards creating what it calls a digital single market for data for the world's biggest free-trade bloc of around 500 million people and worth tens of billions of euros.

It proposed the free flow of non-personal data across the bloc, rather than have member states require firms to store and process data within their borders, unless there are public security reasons.

The new rules still have to be approved by EU states and the European Parliament.

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