

EU parliament demands Zuckerberg answer questions in person

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EU lawmakers want Zuckerberg to answer their questions in person, just like he did before the US Congress

The European Parliament on Wednesday demanded Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg appear in person to answer questions about the Cambridge Analytica scandal, rejecting his offer to send a more junior executive in his place.

Parliament President Antonio Tajani wrote to Zuckerberg saying the 2.7 million EU citizens affected by the data sharing scandal deserved a full explanation from him, after he spent 10 hours being grilled by US lawmakers last week.

The EU is introducing tough new data protection rules next month, which Facebook has said it will comply with, and Tajani warned the parliament was a "key decision maker in the regulatory process".

In the letter, seen by AFP, Tajani thanks Zuckerberg for his "kind offer" to send Joel Kaplan, Facebook's vice-president for public policy and external affairs.

"However, all political groups stressed the absolute

need of your personal presence, as was the case before the United States Congress," the letter continues.

"We are convinced that the millions of Europeans affected by the Cambridge Analytica scandal deserve a full and thorough explanation from Facebook's top manager, just as was the case for US citizens."

Facebook admitted earlier this month that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by British consultancy Cambridge Analytica, which worked for US President Donald Trump during his 2016 campaign.

The social media giant took out full-page ads in a number of European newspapers on Monday to trumpet the new EU data protection rules as it tries to win back trust.

The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which comes into effect on May 25, aims to give users more control over how their personal information is stored and used online, with big fines for firms that break the rules.

Zuckerberg, who has repeatedly apologised for the massive data breach, last week told the US Congress that the more stringent EU rules could serve as a rough model globally.

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