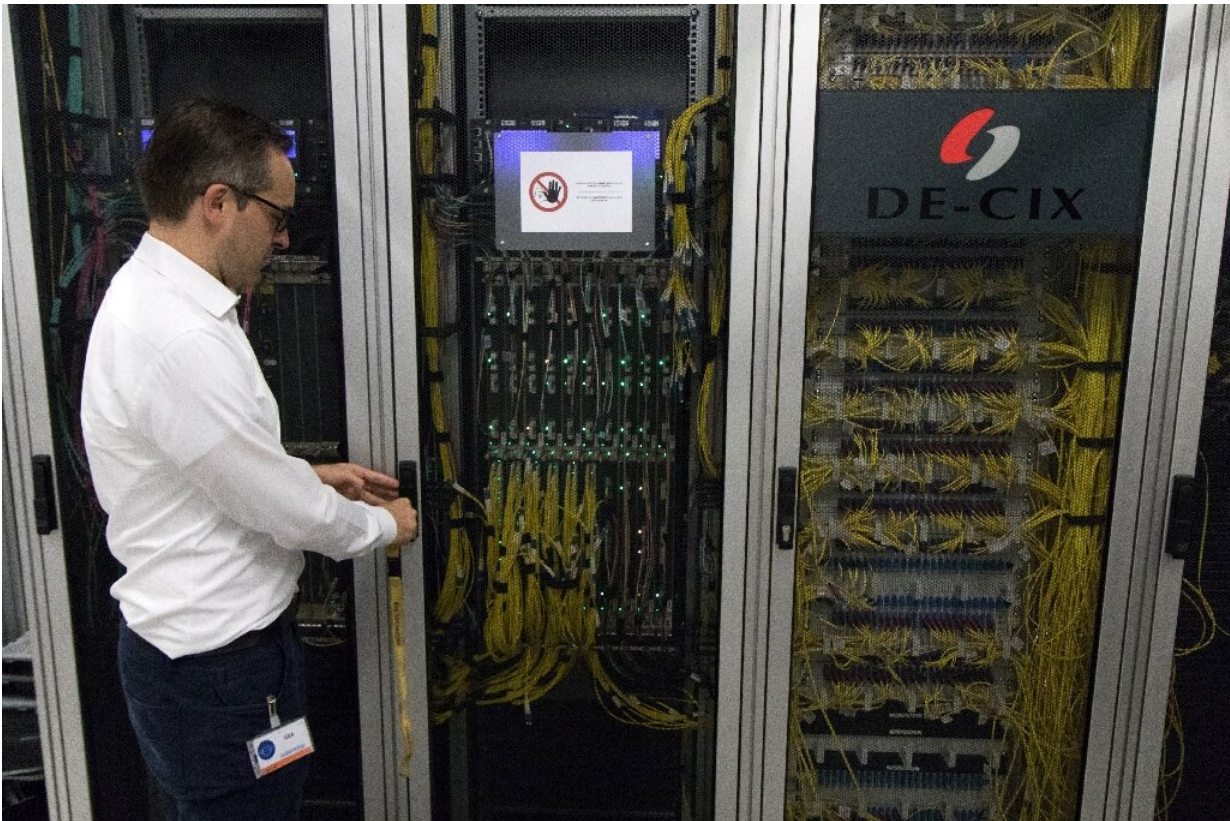


EU plans data shakeup to boost home-grown innovation

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The European Commission hopes simplified rules for sharing data around the EU will keep the bloc's economy competitive

The EU on Wednesday unveiled proposals for rules covering the transfer of valuable data as it aims to create an innovation hub on a par with the

US and China.

From autos to vaccines, access to industrial data is critical to the future of the global economy and the EU is worried that lack of trust among member states will stifle growth.

Brussels is also keen to protect European businesses from the supremacy of the US and China, the global superpowers widely perceived to dominate the [digital economy](#) in Europe.

And data privacy is a huge issue in Europe, where a series of top-level court cases threatened to shut down US tech giants' access to the EU.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, unveiled proposals to overcome those barriers and allow data to flow across borders and help businesses compete unimpeded.

"To ensure that data can circulate we need to have rules, which will build trust and confidence," said Thierry Breton, the EU's industry commissioner.

The rules would make it easier for companies and researchers to exchange data that is currently left idle because of concerns over privacy, confidentiality or [intellectual property rights](#).

Among other measures, the rules would encourage data-sharing services that could pool and organise data neutrally to increase trust and exchanges.

Other requirements could force [personal data](#) to be anonymised before companies were granted access.

In addition, even if the EU will not require [foreign companies](#) to keep

European data in Europe, Brussels will demand stronger legal safeguards for data going abroad and allow for encryption.

"You don't have to share all the data. But if you do and data is sensitive you should be able to do it in a manner where data can be trusted and protected," said EU executive vice president Margrethe Vestager.

The officials insisted measures were not protectionist nor intended to punish the US or China, but that they simply laid out Europe's conditions for handling business and [research data](#).

"It will be very important for us, maybe not for other continents, but for us, to be fully compliant with WTO rules," Breton said.

As part of the plan, the EU will also seek to overhaul Europe's patent system in order to avoid expensive legal battles that dissuade from innovation.

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