

Script Video Four: Nora on personal information

In a nice small restaurant not far from the city center Nora and Alice meet.

Alice can't wait to tell her friend all about the citizen science project she got involved into and the great people there. Just 3 minutes in the brunch Alice can't hide her excitement. Nora regrets that she has so much to do at work and can't join the project. Still, she says, she will help in any way she can.

This is what Alice was expecting and she asked to be acquainted with the legal perspective of personal data. Alice asked what personal data is and why it is important.

Nora explained that under the European legislation personal data is any information that would identify an individual. That would naturally include personal ID number, credit card number, occupation, race, sexual orientation, and religious denomination. The term has not been defined on purpose, as it may change depending on the context - like in the project in question. Without any doubt if a person has recovered from COVID-19 and what long-term effects the sickness caused is personal information.

The owner of the data is the individual, according to the EU law. Which, Nora added, is not the case in other countries like the US or China. As the individual owns his or her data everyone that collect the personal data must obtain the consent of the owner.

The individual as an owner may also withdraw his or her permission the data to be used. This, Nora explained, is the right to be forgotten. In this case the data collector - usually a business - needs to delete from its records the data individualizing the person.

The waiter brought the brunch. The conversation was just starting.