

FACEBOOK OWNER META BREAKS PRIVACY RULES, NORWAY REGULATOR TELLS COURT

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Meta has been fined one million crowns per day since Aug. 14 for breaching users' privacy by harvesting user data. | Photo Credit: Reuters

Meta Platforms is breaking European data privacy rules in Norway, the country's data regulator told a court on Wednesday, in a case that could have wider European implications.

Meta has been fined one million crowns (\$94,145) per day since Aug. 14 for breaching users' privacy by harvesting user data and using it to target advertising at them.

So-called behavioural advertising is a business model common to Big Tech.

The owner of Facebook and Instagram is seeking a temporary injunction against the order, which imposes a daily fine for the next three months.

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The fine is valid as Meta is not respecting European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), said Hanne Inger Bjurstroem Jahren, a lawyer representing the regulator, Datatilsynet.

"There is no discussion on whether the company is in violation of these rules ... Today Meta breaks GDPR rules," she told the court, speaking on the last day of a two-day hearing.

Meta told the court on Tuesday it had already committed to ask for consent from users and that Datatilsynet used an "expedited process" that was unnecessary and did not give the company enough time to answer.

The regulator has said that it was unclear when, and how, Meta would seek consent from users and that, in the meantime, users' rights were being violated.

Datatilsynet could make the fine permanent by referring its decision to the European Data Protection Board, which has the power to do so, if it agrees with the Norwegian regulator's decision.

That could also widen the decision's territorial scope to the rest of Europe. Datatilsynet had yet to take this step.

Norway is not a member of the European Union but is part of the European single market.

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