X vows to end harvesting of EU users' personal data to train its AI

AFP – Social network X has committed to stop its much-criticised harvesting of European users' personal data to train its artificial intelligence program, Ireland's Data Protection Commission (DPC) said Wednesday.
Last month the social media giant – previously known as Twitter – suspended its processing of personal data contained in the public posts of users in the European Union and European Economic Area. It had used the data for almost three months to train its Grok AI chatbot.

The EEA includes all 27 European Union members EU members Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, allowing them to be part of the EU single market.

"It is now a permanent commitment," to end such harvesting, Graham Doyle, Deputy Commissioner of the DPC, told AFP.

The DPC, which acts on behalf of the EU, said in a statement that proceedings it brought before the Irish High Court last month have concluded.

"The proceedings have been struck out on the basis of X's agreement to continue to adhere to the terms of the undertaking (made on August 8) on a permanent basis," said the statement.

"The DPC welcomes today's outcome which protects the rights of EU/EEA citizens," it said.

Last month the DPC, which works in collaboration with European regulators, made the urgent High Court application for violation of EU rules on data protection (GDPR).

The authority said it had “significant concerns” that the harvesting “gave rise to a risk to the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals”.

Eight European countries have complained over X’s data collection practices, which advocacy group NOYB (None of Your Business) said were “very likely” in breach of the rules.

NOYB said that X should have made its practices more transparent to users and obtained their explicit consent before enabling data collection.

AFP