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# FOCUS

## President's Message

Ray Stefanski



Dear Northeast Ohio Chapter Members:

As we finally begin to see a light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, thank you so much for your engagement and feedback throughout it all.

Hopefully we can meet in-person again very soon; in the meantime, we are lining up a full calendar with CLEs, RoundTables and social events. We're also developing our first-ever half-day Mini MBA for our members and are creating new (or enhanced) programs that

will focus on health + wellness and diversity + inclusion initiatives.

I want to acknowledge our 2020 and 2021 sponsors for their support: the former for your creativity and flexibility when we suddenly had fewer options to do so, and the latter for your willingness to commit, even when the future is still hazy.

Finally, this is *your* Chapter and we are here to serve you. If you have any suggestions or feedback on how we can do this better, please feel to reach out to me, another Board member, or our Executive Director, Betsy Keck.

We look forward to seeing you soon—whether virtually or in-person—and hope you take advantage of the wonderful opportunities that our Chapter has planned in 2021!

Regards, Ray Stefanski 2020 - 2021 Chapter President We'd like to thank our 2021 sponsors for supporting our Chapter's educational and social programming:

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## My Take: Pursue Justice!

## By Jo Anne Schwendinger

A message from the Chair of the ACC Global Board of Directors

Even as the world was grappling with COVID-19, other threats demanded our attention in 2020. Following the disturbing killing of George Floyd at the hands of police officers in the United States, people from many nations marched, protested, and demanded change. In the United States, this was followed by a period of political tension, culminating in an attack on the Capitol building in January of this year. On the world scene, refugee crises continue, with a growing number of people living in a country other than the one where they were born. Income gaps continue to widen. Food insecurity remains an intractable issue. Employers continue to make hiring and promotion decisions based on factors other than objective qualifications, thereby denying opportunities to disadvantaged groups. These events and realities are sobering reminders that we must be relentless in our pursuit of social justice.

The pursuit of social justice is not new. Gaps in social justice are not unique to a particular time, community, or place. In fact, the global dimension of social justice issues was recognized by the United Nations when, on November 26, 2007, the General Assembly declared that February 20, would be celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice.

The pursuit of social justice is not new. Gaps in social justice are not unique to a particular time, community, or place.

As lawyers, who are also a part of a world in need of repair, what can we do? How can we contribute to the fight? Certainly, we must uphold the laws of the lands in which we work and live. As in-house counsel, we advise and instruct our clients on all areas of the law. We can therefore be advocates for compliance with laws that call for things like greater diversity and inclusion, as well as protections for



the planet. And some of our in-house colleagues work for nonprofits and NGOs that promote social justice causes like fairness in housing, healthcare, and access to the legal system. There any many ways that in-house counsel can engage in the pursuit of social justice daily.

That said, is there a role for in-house counsel that goes beyond compliance with laws? If so, what should that role be, both within our organizations and within society?

Finding a role that is both meaningful and acceptable within work norms can be daunting. Nevertheless, there are tangible actions we can take to become allies for change within the profession and within our own legal departments. I encourage you to use the ACC Docket article, "The Time is Now: 10 Ways In-house Counsel Can Advocate for Change," as a jumping off point for ideas on how to leverage your position to promote diversity and inclusion, call out bias, and make colleagues feel welcome.

If taking up the social justice challenge feels like the right approach for your legal department, there are many avenues available to you. For one, you can hire legal service providers who promote social issues. For example, you can include in your outside counsel RFPs questions about a firm's diversity and inclusion initiatives — and even better — ask for their D&I metrics and scorecards.

Ask about the causes they support, and perhaps even suggest partnering on pro bono activities that promote the social justices causes that are important to you and your client. Also, consider choosing law firms that demonstrate a commitment to work-life balance, with programs or policies that encourage lawyers to take time beyond the billable hour to care for family, community, and themselves.

If you choose your legal service providers based on their social commitments, I challenge you to keep track of how they are doing, and to take work away if they do not live up to their promises. These are hard conversations to have, especially with trusted counsel or firms your organization has worked with for years. But they are necessary to move the needle and go beyond platitudes. While no one action will end injustice, each thoughtful act moves us closer.

If you are looking to do more with social justice, reform, and corporate citizenship, don't forget that ACC is always there to help. For example, following the release of ACC's statement on George Floyd last summer, the ACC Foundation launched its IDEAL initiative and has since released many resources and produced programming on diversity. Recent programming, featuring notable diverse counsel, includes the two-part series, "What Every GC, Board, and Corporation Needs to Know About Diversity,

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<u>Inclusion</u>, and <u>Equity</u>." You can find both sessions and more <u>On-Demand</u>.

In addition to IDEAL, we continue to expand our Seat at the Table initiative. While it's critical that we champion the access and reporting structure of CLOs and those in leadership positions within the legal department, it is equally important that all levels of our teams have a clear pathway to earning their seats. I recently had a conversation with ACC's Ramsey Saleeby to discuss this topic in "Find Your Seat – Earning the Role of Strategic Business Partner." And as I encourage individual lawyers to seek and earn recognition, I also ask those in leadership positions to take a stand on

equity within your departments. Being an ally to diverse communities truly matters in this area. I am optimistic when I read in the recently released 2021 Chief Legal Officers Survey that 72.7 percent of CLOs surveyed believe a focus on diversity and inclusion will continue to grow in importance in 2021 and beyond.

How we show up in our personal and professional lives matters. Standing up and saying something matters. Whether through a company statement or via a hiring decision, we have the power to make a difference, to be allies for change. As the keepers of the law, and those charged with managing risks and liability, we are uniquely positioned to champion

these issues. I applaud you for the strides you are making and challenge you to do more; to go further. And as you grapple with finding a response to the question, what can we do, I encourage you to share your thoughts and insights with your fellow ACC members.



Jo Anne Schwendinger II-VI Incorporated Chief Legal & Compliance Officer & Secretary

### **ACC News**

# **ACC In-house Counsel Certification Program** April 19–29

The <u>In-house Counsel Certification Program</u> covers the core competencies identified as critical to an in-house career. This virtual training is a combination of self-paced online modules and live virtual workshops. The workshops will be conducted over a two-week period, four days a week for three hours each day.



#### ACC Xchange 2021

16-17 June

This two day experiential learning experience was specifically created for in-house counsel and legal operations professionals. Over the course of two days, attendees will be immersed in an advanced, practical, and interactive educational environment. Get the details and registration rates.



### **ACC Executive Leadership Institute**

20-23 July

Invest in your high-performers and put your succession plan in place. Nominate your rising stars to gain the professional development they need to one day lead your department at the 2021 Executive Leadership Institute.



#### **Introducing the ACC Data Steward Program**

Your law firms are holding some of your company's most sensitive data but are you certain that it is secure? The <u>Data Steward Program</u> – Single Client Option – allows you to gain assurance that your law firms are secure, while the DSP Program does all the work.



## European Data Transfers in the Post-Schrems II Era

By Bruce F. Martino, CIPP/G, CIPM

The methods under which the personal data (PD) of persons covered by the EU General Data Protection Regulation<sup>1</sup> (GDPR) may be transferred from European Union member states and EEA member states (collectively, the EU) to the United States and elsewhere became fewer in number and more restrictive in July 2020. The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), Europe's highest court, issued its decision in Data Protection Commission v. Facebook Ireland and Max Schrems<sup>2</sup> on July 16, 2020. The decision is popularly known as 'Schrems II'. This article discusses the effects of Schrems II and the type of assessment organizations need to make to lawfully transfer PD to countries outside the EU.

#### A. Background

There were several recognized methods for transferring PD of persons covered by the GDPR<sup>3</sup> from entities in the EU to entities outside the EU prior to the CJEU's decision in Schrems II. The methods included:

1. Adequacy. GDPR, Chapter V, Article 45 permits transfers of PD to countries outside the EU whose privacy laws are deemed adequate by the European Commission (Commission). That is, the law of the importing country provides EU data subjects with rights and protections substantially similar to those found in the GDPR.

With the exception of California, whose California Consumer Privacy Act<sup>4</sup> (CCPA) took effect on January 1, 2020, and its California Privacy Rights Act<sup>5</sup>, which amends the CCPA and is not yet in effect, current US law regulates privacy in a sectorial way<sup>6</sup>. We have separate federal laws that deal with health information, financial information and credit information. The EU believes U.S. law is not adequate because we do not have national omnibus privacy legislation.<sup>7</sup>

2. <u>Privacy Shield.</u> Privacy Shield was a program developed in cooperation

between the U.S. Department of Commerce (Commerce) and EU authorities. Privacy Shield took the place of the Safe Harbor program which was invalidated by CJEU several years ago. See further, Section B. below. More than 5,000 U.S. multinationals participated in Privacy Shield adopting it as their mechanism to transfer Europeans' PD from the EU to the U.S. The Privacy Shield required participants to make certain commitments about how the PD would be handled and secured in the U.S. The participants were deemed to have achieved a level of adequacy similar to EU counties. Privacy Shield applied to transfers from the EU to the United States only and not to other countries within or outside the EU.

3. Binding Corporate Rules (BCRs). BCRs are recognized in the GDPR. See, Chapter V, Article 47. BCRs are sets of internal policies and practices which satisfy EU adequacy standards. They must be approved by the data supervisory authority of each EU country from which PD is being transferred.

There are two disadvantages to relying upon BCRs as a transfer mechanism. First, BCRs can be used only for intercompany transfers. Second, the cost and length of time for approval can make them an unattractive alternative especially for small to mid-size organizations.

4. Standard Contract Clauses (SCCs). Perhaps the most widely used mechanism to transfer PD from the EU to countries outside the EU is the SCCs. The SCCs are recognized in GDPR Chapter V, Article 46. The SCCs were approved by the Commission while the European Data Protection Directive<sup>8</sup>, the predecessor to the GDPR, was in effect. The SCCs is a set of contract provisions entered into between the European exporter (usually a 'data controller' under GDPR and an Exporter for the purposes of this article) and the importer (usually a 'data processor' under GDPR and an Importer for the purposes of this article)

located outside the EU. The Exporter and Importer cannot change the terms of the SCCs; both parties agree to terms concerning use and protection of the PD. The Importer is deemed to have fulfilled the adequacy standard, irrespective of its location, by having agreed to the SCCs. Schrems II added a twist to the adequacy standard as will be discussed further below.

GDPR recognizes another mechanism known as the 'derogations,' in GDPR, Chapter V, Article 49. The derogations are to be used for infrequent transfers. They will not be discussed further in the article.

#### **B. Schrems II**

The Schrems II decision was longanticipated by the privacy community. Schrems II is the follow-up case to Maximillian Schrems v. Data Protection Commissioner, known as 'Schrems I'9. The CJEU held in Schrems I that transfers of PD from the EU to the U.S. under the Safe Harbor program, the predecessor to the Privacy Shield, were unlawful. Thus, the CJEU invalidated the Safe Harbor program.

After Schrems I, Mr. Schrems, an Austrian national, complained to the Data Protection Commission (DPC), Ireland's supervisory authority, that Facebook's use of SCCs to transfer his PD from Ireland to the US was unlawful. He sought to suspend the transfers. The DPC brought the case to Ireland's High Court and ultimately to the CJEU.

Schrems II pit against one another the U.S. focus on digital surveillance<sup>10</sup> and Europe's focus on individual rights under the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights (Charter). The CJEU said the Commission erred in granting an adequacy decision to the Privacy Shield. It invalidated data transfers from the EU to the U.S. by entities participating in the Privacy Shield. The CJEU gave two reasons as the bases for its holding: (1) the authority given to U.S. intelligence agencies under U.S. law exceeds what is

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reasonably appropriate and proportional, a critical concept under the Charter, and (2) U.S. law does not give aggrieved European data subjects adequate judicial remedies, i.e., remedies substantially comparable to those available in Europe.

The CJEU then turned to data transfers under the SCCs. The Court held transfers between entities which are parties to the SCCs are still valid. However, the Court added a significant caveat. Entities using the SCCs to transfer PD outside the EU are required ... to verify whether foreign laws concerning government access to transferred data meet EU standards The Exporter must analyze the risk of access to the PD by governmental authorities in the Importer's country and, if needed, apply safeguards This has come to be known as the 'case by case' analysis.

It is vital to remember that Schrems II, with its invalidation of Privacy Shield as an acceptable data transfer mechanism, was decided upon a set of facts that included the risk of access to the imported PD by U.S. government authorities. However, the case by case analysis must be done for exports of PD to any country outside the EU. The European supervisory authorities will look to the Exporter to demonstrate the analysis has been done. The Exporter and Importer need to work together on the analysis. The Importer is likely to know more about its local law than the Exporter and is in a better position to implement needed safeguards. This is equally applicable when the Exporter and Importer are affiliated and when the transfer is to a third party Importer providing services such as cloud storage or SaaS for example.

#### C. Responses to Schrems II

There were several significant responses to the Schrems II decision, all in the latter part of 2020.

1. Response by Commerce. Commerce, with the U.S. Department of Justice and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, published a white paper in September 2020 entitled "Information on U.S. Privacy Safeguards Relevant to SCCs and Other EU Legal Bases for EU – U.S.

Data Transfers After Schrems II"<sup>14</sup>. The white paper takes issue with some aspects of Schrems II. including the CJEU's failure to recognize current safeguards present in U.S. law.

2. Recommendations on Supplementary Measures. On November 10, 2020, the European Data Protection Board (Board) issued a set of recommendations on ways to supplement data transfers<sup>15</sup>. The Board used the phrase "essentially equivalent" in describing the supplementary steps the Exporter and Importer can take to assure PD transferred outside the EU receives similar protections given to it under the GDPR.

The Board outlined six steps to follow:

- a. Know the transfer. The Exporter should inventory its PD and know the countries to which its PD is being transferred.
- b. Verify the transfer method. Has the destination country outside the EU received an adequacy determination? If not, which transfer method is being used to transfer the PD?
- c. Assess the law of the third country. Presuming the destination country has not received an adequacy determination, does the law of that country give European data subjects essentially equivalent rights as they would receive in the EU?
- d. Adopt supplemental measures if needed. The supplemental measures can be technical, contractual or organizational. They include encryption, data minimization and anonymization.
- e. Formal Steps. The Exporter and Importer can modify their SCCs with the consent of the appropriate supervisory authority.
- f. Re-evaluate periodically.16
- 3. Revised SCCs. The Commission published a draft set of revised SCCs on November 12, 2020<sup>17</sup>. The revised SCCs are to replace the current SCCs. The draft was open for comments through December 20, 2020.

The new SCCs require an assessment of whether the Importer can provide transferred PD with an adequate level of protection and whether supplementary measures may be needed. The Commission is likely to adopt the revised SCCs in early 2021.

In addition, it is anticipated that Commerce and the Commission will open talks on a new Privacy Shield. Gina Raimondo, President Biden's nominee for Commerce Secretary, affirmed this during her confirmation hearing.

#### D. What About Brexit?

The UK's exit from the EU was effective on January 31, 2020. However, both sides agreed to keep many aspects of their relationship the same while negotiating a trade agreement. 2020 was seen as a transition year. The UK and the remaining EU member states reached a deal on December 24, 2021. The trade agreement discusses, among other things, PD transfers between the UK and the remaining EU members.

The UK's exit from the EU leaves it as a third country to which PD cannot be transferred to or from without a transfer method recognized by the GDPR. The trade agreement permits transfers for four months with the ability to extend for an additional two month period. The free flow of PD will continue during the four (or possibly six) month bridge period. The UK already recognizes the law of the remaining EU member countries, the GDPR, as adequate.

The GDPR is no longer effective in the UK, though the UK's data protection law substantially incorporates the GDPR. An adequacy decision by the EU is to be made during the bridge period . The EU will likely find UK law adequate giving the UK the same status as, for example, Argentina, Canada and Japan.

Schrems II will be relevant in the unlikely event the EU does not give the UK adequacy status. EU Exporters of PD to Importers in the UK will need to be parties to an agreement that includes

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the SCCs. Alternatively, Exporters and Importers affiliated with one another can adopt BCRs.

#### E. Conclusion

PD continues to be transferred around the globe in support of the global economy. U.S. companies that were certified under Privacy Shield are moving to SCCs because U.S. law is not essentially equivalent to the GDPR. EU Exporters of PD to Importers located in any country not given adequacy status will need to consider Schrems II with whichever data transfer mechanism they choose. The CJEU said in Schrems II that violations are not subject GDPR fines. The supervisory authorities can seek a suspension on data transfers from Exporters to Importers who fail to conduct an adequate transfer impact assessment.

#### **Authors**

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC, 2016 OJ L 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Data Protection Commissioner v. Facebook Ireland Limited and Maximillian Schrems (Case C-311/18), July 16, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Referred to in GDPR as 'data subjects'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Cal Civil Code, §1798.100, et seq.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Proposition 24 passed by California voters on November 3, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia now has a robust privacy law. Virginia Governor Northam signed the Consumer Data Protection Act on March 3, 2021.

There are 12 countries whose laws the EU says are adequate. They include Argentina, Canada, Japan, Israel, New Zealand and Switzerland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Maximillian Schrems v. Data Protection Commissioner, (Case C-362/14), October 6, 2015.

 $<sup>^{10}</sup>$ For example, the authority given U.S. intelligence agencies under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act  $\S$  702.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>One set of commentators thought the CJEU was just as likely to invalidate the SCCs. See, Patel and Lea, UCL European Institute, EU – US Privacy Shield, Brexit and the Future of Transatlantic Data Flows, May 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>JDSUPRA, Dickinson, Mackaman, Tyler & Hagen, "Schrems II Decision and Its Inevitable on US Companies Processing Data in the EU, July 20, 2020, <a href="https://jdsupra.com/legalnews/schrems-ii-decision-and-its-inevitable-56685/">https://jdsupra.com/legalnews/schrems-ii-decision-and-its-inevitable-56685/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Id.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/SCCsWhitePaperFORMATTEDFINAL508COMPLIANT.PDF.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>European Data Protection Board, "Recommendations 01/2020 on measures that supplement transfer tools to ensure compliance with the EU level of protection of personal data | European Data Protection Board (europa.eu).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Id.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Hunton Williams Kurth, "European Commission Publishes Draft of New Standard Contract Clauses", <a href="https://www.huntonprivacyblog.com/2020/11/13/europe-an-commission-publishes-draft-of-new-standard-contractual-clauses-2/">https://www.huntonprivacyblog.com/2020/11/13/europe-an-commission-publishes-draft-of-new-standard-contractual-clauses-2/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Katen Muchin Rosenman, "Implementation of New Standard Contract Clauses", <a href="https://katten.com/implementation-of-new-standard-contractual-clauses">https://katten.com/implementation-of-new-standard-contractual-clauses</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>JDSUPRA, Wiley Rein, LLP, "Key Tech Takeaways from Hearing on Biden's Nominee for Commerce Secretary, January 28, 2021, https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/key-tech-takeaways-from-hearing-on-4134089/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Information Commissioner's Office, "Information rights after the end of the transition period – Frequently Asked Questions", <a href="https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/dp-at-the-end-of-the-transition-period/transition-period-faqs/">https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/dp-at-the-end-of-the-transition-period/transition-period-faqs/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Data Protection Commissioner v Facebook Ireland, et al., Id.

## **NEO CHAPTER NEWS**

#### We **V**OUR VIRTUAL PROGRAMS!

#### Littler Sticks the Landing with an Amazing Virtual Winter Social

This year's annual winter social took a surprisingly delightful turn as a virtual event. Hosted by the Littler team, each registrant received a home-delivered kit from Parma-



based Little Birdie Wine Nest that contained five vials of Ohioproduced specialty wines and a chocolate to complement each one.

Using the wine + chocolate cheat sheet that was included in each kit, the 25 attendees were walked through the tastings by Little Birdie Wine Nest's owner and certified sommelier. Robin Keenan. The



participants were so interested in Robin's insight and back stories on the products that we kept her on the Zoom much longer than planned.

#### **CLEs + RoundTables, The COVID-19 Series**

On January 28, FTI Consulting and Squire Patton Boggs co-presented a 1.5 virtual CLE, Heightened Risks, Mitigation Strategies and Investigations During COVID-19. The program covered the pandemic's impact on several areas, including the data security threats posed by working from home; how to protect and detect data compromises; best practices to preserve, collect and review data from emerging sources; and best practices for conducting investigations in remote working environments.

As COVID-19 vaccinations began to pick up speed, Littler hosted a virtual RoundTable on February 18 geared towards discussing the many unique and evolving issues tied to the vaccines.

On March 11, Fisher Phillips presented a 1.5 virtual CLE, Sticking Points: Legal + Practical Implications of Mandating, Encouraging or Incentivizing COVID-19 Vaccinations in Your Workplace. This seminar continued the discussion started the month before by providing the latest guidance and facilitating practical discussion for navigating employment-related issues created by the increasing availability of vaccinations, including legal considerations relating to mandating, facilitating or encouraging vaccinations, as well as the latest analytics and benchmarking trends among employers.

# Welcome New (and Recently Renewed) Members!

#### **Stephanie Adams**

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#### **Barbara Sanchez**

Nestle Health Sciences

#### **Mary Segulin**

The Sherwin-Williams Company

#### **Angela Simmons**

Parker-Hannifin Corporation

#### **Kristine Syrvalin**

TimkenSteel Corporation

#### **Suzanne Taylor**

Hyster-Yale Materials Handling, Inc.

#### Maria Tosheva-Nikolova

Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.

#### **Jason Veloso**

Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.

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www.acc.com/chaptersnetworks/chapters/northeastohio/events



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