



COVID-19 – How to support the role of data and the European data marketing industry

Brussels, 14th May 2020

Europe is facing an extraordinary public health crisis which sees most of its countries confining their population, with significant economic consequences attached to it. FEDMA welcomes the different support packages negotiated at European level and calls for a coordinated European response to the crisis.

Along with the rest of the European economy, the European Data Marketing industry is struggling with the economic crisis as ad spend is heavily impacted. Nonetheless, we play a crucial role in helping marketers to effectively communicate reliable information and services to individuals seeking more and more to navigate these difficult times, stay safe and healthy.

Reaching the right audience is particularly important for small on medium sized enterprises which are trying to survive in a highly competitive environment. Data marketing contribute to a vibrant European business community, by giving them the opportunity to communicate to consumer alternative offers to well established brands and large commonly known online platform.

In order to survive, many businesses have accelerated their transition towards digital, or strengthened their online presence. The data marketing industry supports them in this move, ensuring that their communications stay visible, relevant in a fast-changing environment and reach the right audience, whichever the channel of communication. Privacy, data protection and consumer trust are keys to the sustainability of the data marketing industry and are at the core of FEDMA's activities. People need to be able to rely on the brand they interact with, especially in this difficult time where consumers are forced to substantially change their habits. In the close future and progressive deconfinement, the data marketing industry will play an even more fundamental role in helping the European economy by connecting businesses with relevant audiences.

In order to contribute fully to the economic relaunch that will take place, FEDMA is calling for a legislative and regulatory environment which will support us in our efforts, with the following considerations:

- **Ensuring the industry can leverage the flexibility provided by existing legislations.** Interpretation of the GDPR at national level should maintain the existing balance adopted by legislator, between the protection of personal data, and the ability to process data, and should not attempt to limit the use of the flexibility afforded by the law (such as the risk based approach of the GDPR). In addition, interpretation of the GDPR should not lead to additional administrative burden for companies.



- **Supporting businesses towards compliance during this economic crisis.** In a time when all businesses are fighting for their very survival, we are calling on Data Protection Authorities to support the effort of the industry, and to do their best to accompany the industry towards compliance, and to limit strict enforcement actions to extreme cases.
- **Strengthening the role of data as a driver for the economic relaunch.** Data will play a key role in the relaunch of the economy. Any future legislations should ensure the EU can derive the full benefit from data while ensuring balanced user's privacy. Economic impact assessment, including assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, should play a key role in the development and adoption of legislation, ensuring that everything is done to support Europe's economic relaunch.

We urge the European Commission, legislators and regulators at national level to take these considerations on board and to accompany our industry through this crisis and help us support the relaunch of the European Economy.

Mathilde Fiquet – Director General