

Civil Society Groups Warn About EU Digital ID Wallet Privacy, Discrimination Risks

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The European Digital Identity (EUDI) Wallet is about to create an "unprecedented" risk for Europeans in their online and offline life unless privacy and anti-discrimination safeguards are introduced, a group of civil society organizations, academics and research institutions are warning.

In an [open letter](#) published Tuesday, the group urged European officials to reconsider the current trajectory of the [eIDAS](#) 2.0 (Electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services), the legal framework for the adoption of a European Digital Identity system which aims to give every European citizen and business unique and verifiable credentials.

The letter has 24 signatories, including international digital rights groups such as Privacy International and the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

The main concern for the group is that eIDAS may spell the death of anonymity, leading to "over-identification" and a "real name internet." The eIDAS regulation could also introduce a unique and persistent identifier for every citizen allowing Big Tech actors to track their behavior.

"In its current form, the European Digital Identity System would be a gift for Google and Facebook to undermine the privacy of EU citizens," the letter notes. "This will impact everyone in the EU and put them at a lower privacy level than people in other world regions."

The eIDAS 2.0, which will amend an existing 2014 regulation, has faced resistance from other organizations. In May, Mozilla, the nonprofit developer of the Firefox browser, issued [similar calls](#) to rethink the regulation.

The new letter highlights other issues, including intrusive functions, susceptibility to system failures and cyber attacks and lack of redress for those who are excluded from the system. It also called for the EUDI Wallet to remain voluntary for natural persons with no discrimination against those who decline to use the app.

“With proper safeguards the European Digital Identity Wallet has still the potential to become a very powerful, fundamental rights respecting and privacy-preserving ubiquitous platform for digital interactions. The success of this system will ultimately depend on the level of trust citizens put in it,” the letter concludes.

European Member states have promised to offer their citizens the EUDI Wallet by the end of 2023, allowing them to access services such as digital travel credentials, driver’s licenses, university diplomas as well as bank and medical records. As the deadline is approaching, [however, countries are still facing a raft of challenges](#), including [achieving full interoperability](#), [setting technical standards](#) and avoiding [cybersecurity risks](#).

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