

EN

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Answer given by Mr McGrath
on behalf of the European Commission
(24.9.2026)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)¹ requires that personal data processing is fair, transparent and lawful² and in line with data protection by design and by default³. Smart glasses are not a new technology, and the data protection authorities have previously examined their compliance with the GDPR and recommended measures to increase transparency towards individuals⁴. The impact on privacy and data protection of individuals is also discussed by the European Data Protection Board⁵.

In addition to data protection requirements, these products must fully comply with EU product safety legislation⁶. Depending on their primary function, they may also fall under sectoral rules.

The use of such technologies may also raise concerns about technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF-GBV). Such concerns should be considered when applying the existing legal framework, including Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence (VAW Directive)⁷ which requires the criminalisation of the most widespread forms of TF-GBV by 14 June 2027. The covert use of AI-enabled wearable devices to record and subsequently disseminate images online may fall within the scope of the VAW Directive's framework. The Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030⁸ also reaffirms the Commission's commitment to preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, including TF-GBV. This includes addressing emerging digital and AI-enabled risks that may disproportionately affect women and girls.

Member State competent authorities and courts have a primary responsibility to monitor the application of the relevant legal provisions and to take the necessary steps for enforcement, without prejudice to the competences of the Commission as guardian of the Treaties.

¹ 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 (General Data Protection Regulation), OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, pp. 1–88.

² Article 5 GDPR.

³ Article 25 GDPR.

⁴ Statement Irish data protection authority: <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/latest-news/data-protection-commission-statement-concerning-facebook-view-glasses>; Data Protection Commission Annual report 2023 (p. 75) https://www.dataprotection.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/2026-02/DPC_EN_AR_2023_Final_ACO1.pdf#Glasses.

⁵ <https://www.politico.eu/article/new-privacy-frontier-europe-eyes-crackdown-smart-glasses/>.

⁶ Regulation (EU) 2023/988 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 on general product safety, amending Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and the Council, and repealing Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 87/357/EEC, OJ L 135, 23.5.2023, pp. 1–51.

⁷ Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024.

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030, COM(2026) 113 final.