

Frequently Asked Questions

What has happened?

The Commission is aware of a cyberattack that has impacted the IT systems of its contractor Eurail, which is implementing the DiscoverEU action through issuing travel passes to the participants on behalf of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and the Executive Agency for Education and Culture (EACEA).

In this data breach, attackers gained unauthorised access to Eurail's data, including personal data of customers. This unfortunately includes an as yet undetermined number of participants in the DiscoverEU action. According to Eurail, the attack has been contained.

According to Eurail, the identity and exact number of persons affected is unknown at this stage.

Eurail (data processor), as well as the European Commission and EACEA (data controller) take this matter very seriously, and are currently conducting a thorough investigation to determine the full scope of the issue and its potential impact on the protection of your personal data. The Commission has mobilised its internal digital and cybersecurity experts to monitor and support Eurail's investigation.

We will continue to provide you with relevant information about the breach and the measures taken, as it becomes available during the investigation.

The Commission ensures that participants potentially affected are duly informed by Eurail. Eurail is communicating on the Commission's behalf to ensure DiscoverEU participants potentially affected are informed individually.

What personal data may be involved?

The personal data affected may include data that you have provided as a DiscoverEU traveller:

- name, surname, date of birth or age, passport/ID information or photocopies;
- email address, postal address and country of residence or phone number.

If you have provided the following information to the Eurail Helpdesk, where Eurail is the processor, these data categories may also be affected:

- bank account reference (IBAN) data concerning health. The DiscoverEU travellers whose very high-risk data is potentially compromised will be notified separately by Eurail.

I am a DiscoverEU participant, has my data been exposed?

According to Eurail, at this stage it is not possible to establish whose data might have been exposed. The Commission is requesting Eurail to share all information about this data as soon as it becomes available to ensure that all impacted DiscoverEU participants can be notified.

We will inform you once we have more information about this incident, insofar as our investigation shows specific consequences for you.

What does this mean for me as a DiscoverEU participant?

To our knowledge, there is currently no evidence that the data has been publicly disclosed. Eurail reassured the Commission that this is consistently being monitored by external cybersecurity specialists.

Preventing and limiting negative consequences for you is our highest priority. Therefore, in addition to informing you about the incident, we would like to provide you with guidance on what to do, if you suspect your personal data is being misused.

Criminals may attempt to misuse your data, for example for identity theft or to impersonate you or access other accounts and data. The data may also be used for the purposes of impersonating banks. You may also be the subject of phishing attempts or spamming. Therefore, we advise you to be very attentive, and not to share personal information with new contacts who approach you in the framework of the DiscoverEU action, or Eurail, unless you are sure of their authenticity.

The general recommendations in data breach cases are also to change passwords linked to your email address, social media, and banking for example, and equally to pay particular attention to any unusual transaction in your bank account and report them to your bank immediately.

Should this affect my travel plans?

The data breach does not affect anyone's travel plans. Eurail services are not impacted by the attack and DiscoverEU participants can travel and use their passes as foreseen.

What can I do as a DiscoverEU participant?

We would advise DiscoverEU participants to follow general precautions that are recommended in similar data breach cases.

- Change passwords linked to your email address, social media, and banking for example,
- Remain alert for suspicious and/or unsolicited emails or messages,
- Be attentive not to share personal information with new contacts who approach you in the frame of the DiscoverEU programme, unless you are sure of their authenticity,
- Pay particular attention to any unusual transaction in your bank account and report them to your bank immediately,

- Report to the competent [data protection authority in your country](#) any other suspicious activity, if you think your personal data are used in a malicious way.

What is the Commission doing?

The European Commission takes this matter very seriously. We regret any inconvenience for DiscoverEU participants, and we are taking all possible measures to mitigate the effects of the data leak and inform the users.

The Commission is monitoring the investigation of Eurail and has activated its own investigation. We mobilised our internal digital and cybersecurity specialists to support all efforts on our end.

Eurail has informed us about the following steps to address the incident and reduce any potential impact:

- securing the affected systems and closing the vulnerability
- resetting access credentials
- enhancing monitoring and security controls
- working with external cybersecurity specialists, including to monitor potential misuse of any data
- continuing a detailed forensic investigation into the incident to determine the full scope of the issue and its potential impact on your data
- cooperating with the relevant authorities, as required by law.

I have questions, who can I contact?

If you are a DiscoverEU participant and you have further questions, do not hesitate to contact us at EAC-DiscoverEU-Security@ec.europa.eu.

We are also sharing information as it becomes available on the European Commission's Youth Portal: [European Youth Portal](#)

DiscoverEU users have the right to address the Data Protection Officer of the European Commission, if they consider that their rights as data subject, which they have exercised with DG EAC, are not being fully respected.

Name of the Data Protection Officer: Michelle SUTTON

Email: DATA-PROTECTION-OFFICER@ec.europa.eu