



EU DATA ACT · BRIEFING

The EU Data Act and the software-defined vehicle

Why the regulation that frees vehicle data is the first domino of the software-defined vehicle — and an opening for whoever turns data into services.

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From January 2024, EU law obliges connected products to open up the data they generate. For carmakers that is not just a compliance task — it is the regulatory push that makes the software-defined vehicle inevitable, and an opening for whoever can turn vehicle data into services.

Data is not the value — services are

Ask most carmakers what their customers actually pay for and the answer is not 'data'. It is services: the navigation that reroutes around traffic, the maintenance that arrives before the breakdown, the feature that improves after the car is sold. Data is only the raw material. The question the EU Data Act forces is who gets to turn that raw material into value — and under what conditions.

What the Data Act actually changes

The Data Act — the EU regulation on fair access to and use of data — entered into force on 11 January 2024 as a central pillar of the European data strategy. Where the earlier Data Governance Act set up the structures for voluntary data sharing, the Data Act sets the rules: it clarifies who can create value from data, and how. For connected products, that means they must be designed and built so users — businesses or consumers — can easily and securely access, use and share the data those products generate.

For a vehicle, that is a significant shift. The data a car produces can no longer sit locked inside one company's systems by default. When that data has to be made available, more parties can build on it — and the competitive question moves from who holds the data to who does the most useful thing with it.

Why this is the first domino of the software-defined vehicle

Opening up vehicle data is not a self-contained compliance exercise. To share data securely and usefully across a product's life, a manufacturer needs the data to be structured, the software that produces it to be governed, and the whole system to be updateable and verifiable in the field. Those are precisely the foundations of the software-defined vehicle: a clear separation of hardware, middleware and application; one common way to communicate; and one aligned tool chain across the life cycle.

In other words, the regulation that obliges carmakers to free their data also pushes them towards the architecture that makes the rest of the software-defined vehicle possible. The Data Act is the first domino; the ones that follow — modular software, continuous updates, data-driven services — fall more easily once the first has been pushed.

So, what do you do now with your products and business models?

The honest answer is that the Data Act is more opportunity than threat — but only for the companies ready to act on it. The work is concrete: structure the data the vehicle produces; establish one source of truth and one tool chain across research, manufacturing and the aftermarket; and put the diagnostics,

software-download and verification discipline in place so that data can be trusted when it is shared.

That is the ground Diadrom has worked for more than two decades — the diagnostics and embedded-software backbone that lets a manufacturer know exactly what software is in the field, prove it, update it and learn from the data it produces. The Data Act simply turns that backbone into a business advantage rather than a back-office cost.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The EU Data Act has been in force since 11 January 2024; connected products must let users access and share the data they generate.
- For vehicles, value moves from holding the data to building services on it.
- Opening data securely requires software-defined-vehicle foundations: structured data, one tool chain, governed and verifiable software.
- It is an opportunity for the prepared — and a diagnostics and software-download backbone is how you get ready.

Working out what the Data Act means for your products and platforms? Diadrom has built the diagnostics and embedded-software backbone behind systems in serial production across automotive and defence since 1999. Talk to us: viktor.eliasson@diadrom.se.