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Czechoslovakia's new law, the first in the former Communist countries, entered into force in June (p.8). Early this month, Spain's legislature finally adopted a data protection law after years of political inaction when the pace was set by opposition parties' proposals. The impetus for Spain was a domestic stimulus, a personal data scandal (p. 3) for which the arrested suspects had to be released while the public prosecutor decided on the most appropriate charges. The external stimulus was undoubtedly the EC's Data Protection Directive (p.2) which has also had an influence in speeding up progress on Belgium's bill (p.6).

Professor Dr. Simitis makes it clear that these laws are only a "provisional response" to the problems arising out of the processing of personal data (p.21). Privacy images pervade this edition. Simon Chalton suggests that "the time has come to tackle head on the central issue of privacy, and to move away from the too limited field of data protection" (p.20). Canada's Privacy Commissioner aims to "close privacy loopholes" (p.13) while the UK Registrar warns that "without adequate protection there is a grave danger that individual privacy will simply be whittled away" (p.9). Professor George Trubow in our debate at the Cambridge Union warned: "Let us be sure that we do not let personal freedom and human dignity be short-circuited and strangled by a telephone cord" (p. 16). Pierrot Peladeau from Quebec reminds us that patients are not "packages of information." (p.16). It is my privilege to keep you informed of privacy laws, bills, standards, contracts, codes and trends worldwide.



Stewart Dresner, Publisher

P.S. Please make a note in your diary. The Privacy Laws & Business 6th Annual Conference will take place at St. Catherine's College, Oxford, June 28th-30th 1993.

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