



In February, Spain's long awaited data protection law formally entered into force. Despite the fact that the law had not yet become operational, it faces a challenge in the constitutional court (p.2). We bring you a full analysis. In Belgium, the Data Protection Commission is in place and currently working on registration forms and other practical aspects of interpreting and implementing the new law which started entering into force in April (p.8). The texts of both of these new laws are enclosed as part of our legislation service.

A few countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Portugal and the USA have enacted legislation covering data matching in the public sector (see the Computer Matching entry in the *Privacy Laws & Business* index). By contrast, Denmark is one of the first countries whose Data Protection Authority has evolved a data matching policy for the private sector (p.9). The direct marketing sector is seeking a high profile for its efforts to use personal data contracts (p.12).

The personal data corruption scandal in New South Wales was uncovered only through the considerable efforts and powers of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (p.14). How would Data Protection Authorities in Europe have managed in similar circumstances? Even more so, in the absence of a Data Protection Authority, what sanctions would have been available in the United States (p.19)? Is President Bill Clinton interested in a stronger regulatory approach?

Our popular annual feature, European Data Protection Laws at a Glance, has now expanded to 20 countries. In Italy, the data protection bill introduced into the legislature in September last year has now been revised to reflect the EC's amended draft directive. We will bring you, in a future issue, news on the bill's progress plus proposals for information privacy law reform in Hong Kong, privacy aspects of drug testing, genetic screening and AIDS testing and more book reviews.

Stewart Dresner, Publisher

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