

# Privacy Laws & Business

No. 30

June 1995

The European Parliament voted unanimously on June 15th to adopt its Legal Affairs Committee's seven minor amendments to the European Union Data Protection Draft Directive. This means that we expect the text, as covered in your April newsletter, to be adopted with these amendments later this year.

Data users in Europe now face different national legal constraints. For companies operating internationally and for increasingly mobile consumers, there will be *benefits* from a single legal framework in Europe. In fact, on June 1st, the European Commission announced a "Citizens First" initiative to begin this autumn. Commissioner Mario Monti plans a series of booklets to outline the rights of EU citizens to work, travel, or live in another Member State, and to make purchases or use financial services across national borders. All of these rights are dependent on the free flow of personal data which necessarily accompanies such international movement. He says that this initiative aims to reach as many European citizens as possible and helps bring the Union closer to them. Consumers will also be asked to report any difficulties they experience in exercising their rights. This would help the Commission to address problems by making new legislative proposals or starting legal proceedings over infringements of EU directives and policies. Each sector will wish to ensure that it is not the object of a legitimate complaint about a denial of data protection rights.

National laws continue to develop, not waiting for the EU directive. Belgium and Spain have now adopted decrees (pp.2 and 11) and the latter has achieved a fast rate of registrations, encouraged by the threat of huge fines. Denmark has adopted new legislation which addresses some weaknesses of current data protection law (p.8). The Hesse Data Protection Commissioner assesses the role, in German law and practice, of a company data protection officer (p.5).

Our next issue will include reports from the *Privacy Laws & Business 8th Annual Conference* in Cambridge.



Stewart Dresner, Publisher

# NEWSLETTER

data protection and privacy worldwide

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Publisher: Stewart H Dresner  
Privacy Laws & Business

Roxeth House, Shaftesbury Avenue, Harrow,  
Middlesex, HA2 0PZ, United Kingdom.

Tel: 0181 423 1300 (UK) +(44) 181 423 1300 (Int)

Fax: 0181 423 4536 (UK) +(44) 181 423 4536 (Int)

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