

Privacy Laws & Business

NEWSLETTER

data protection and privacy worldwide

No. 37

December 1996

The year has ended on an unexpected note. Italy has finally adopted a data protection law (PL&B June 1996 pp.2-4) after more than a decade of successive bills and debates in the legislature. On 18 December, a Legal Commission of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate agreed on the final wording. The Law on Protection of Individuals and Other Persons in Relation to Processing of Personal Data was published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* on January 8, 1997. The law enters into force in stages: January 9, 1997 for mainly police data covered by the Schengen Agreement; May 8, 1997 for automated data and January 1, 1998 for manual data. The law requires registration for some data and covers both manual data and legal persons. An export licence will be needed for some data and the law will be overseen by an authority called the *Garante*. We are co-operating with Business International in organising a conference in Rome, on March 14, on the new law (p.24).

The European Union's Telecommunications (ISDN) Draft Directive (PL&B Sept. 1996 p.24) reached the common position (Member States' political agreement) on September 12 and the text was published in the Official Journal on 24 October. Although the European Parliament's second reading amendments were minor, there is one main point to be resolved in the conciliation procedure. Should the decision to extend the Directive's provisions on unsolicited calls to legal persons (companies) be optional or mandatory for Member States? Whatever the result and the date of this Directive's final adoption, it must be implemented by October 1998, the same date as the general Data Protection Directive.

Use of personal data on the Internet and in telemarketing, is an increasingly important privacy issue, as shown by the EU DP Commissioners' working group (p.14); the UK DP Registrar's latest guidance (p.20); pressure for stricter rules in the USA (p.15); tighter provisions in the amendments to Israel's law (p.11). To help you keep track, we propose a multi-client international study on Telephone Privacy (p.20).

Stewart Dresner

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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)

E-mail: info@privacylaws.co.uk

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