



## News from around the world

### European Commission sets its priorities

Directorate General 15, which piloted the EU Data Protection Directive into law, is continuing its active role in the following areas, in addition to helping progress the EU Telecommunications (ISDN) Draft Directive (see p.1) by:

- monitoring implementation of the general Directive in the Member States;
- extending the general Directive to the European Community institutions, such as the European Commission itself;
- arranging closer co-ordination with the Council of Europe;
- providing the secretariat for the Article 29 Working Party, which has advisory status, meets four times a year, and is composed of representatives of the national Data Protection Authorities and the European Commission. It is currently chaired by Peter Hustinx, President of the Netherlands Registratiekamer.
- considering data exports to non-EU countries.

### Argentina

The Constitutional Affairs, General Legislation, Freedom of Speech and Rights and Guarantees Commissions have recommended the approval of a Habeas Data Bill. Its purpose is explained in Article 1 as "the comprehensive protection of personal data stored in files, registries, data banks or other electronic or manual media, to guarantee the honour and privacy of persons and access to information registered on them, pursuant to the

third paragraph of article 43 of the National Constitution. The provisions of this law will also apply, where relevant, to data related to corporate persons."

### UK Registrar publishes Data Protection Guidance on Telephone Privacy

The UK Registrar's new guidelines on compliance with the 1984 Data Protection Act, *Keeping Customer Information Safe*, was published in December and is now available, free of charge, from her office and web site.

The guidance addresses the security measures financial services providers should adopt when responding to telephone and other enquiries seeking access to confidential customer information. Elizabeth France, Data Protection Registrar commented, "Our research shows that the public regard their financial details as particularly sensitive. They want them kept secure. This guidance therefore concentrates on one of the greatest threats to that security, the bogus telephone caller. It provides practical advice on how banks and others can ensure they only provide customer information to those entitled to receive it."

The guidance covers a number of areas, such as the verification of callers, the use of passwords and pass numbers, procedures used in telephone banking and automated information systems, and criminal offences that might be committed by those improperly attempting to gain access to customer records.

Tel: + (44) 1625 545740. Web site: Home page <http://www.open.gov.uk/dpr/dprhome.htm>

### Telephone Privacy: Proposal for a Multi-Client Study Impact on Telephone Marketing and Call Handling of National Privacy Laws and EU Data Protection Directives

In November and December, *Privacy Laws & Business* organised two workshops in London on the Data Protection Registrar's new guidance on how the UK Data Protection Act applies to handling customers' and enquirers' telephone calls (see above) and OFTEL's new licence condition on monitoring and listening-in to telephone conversations. As a result, some of our multinational clients asked about the feasibility of *PL&B* conducting a multi-client study of how the laws in several European countries apply to outbound and inbound call centres. We are currently:

1. assessing the level of interest in this project,
2. identifying the important issues, and
3. prioritising the countries to be covered.

Please contact our office if you are interested in participating in this project.