



News from around the world

EU Commissioners' Vienna Conference focuses on Schengen and PET's

The EU Member States' Data Protection Commissioners held their Spring Conference in Vienna at the end of April. The Group has now been expanded by new members, Greece and Italy. Norway attended as an observer.

Apart from discussions on implementation of the EU Data Protection Directive in different Member States, the Commissioners looked at problems related to current data protection issues. In a statement to the Austrian press, Commissioners concentrated on two topics, the Schengen agreement and privacy enhancing technologies.

Schengen agreement

In the light of the Annual Report of the Schengen Joint Supervisory Authority, the Commissioners demanded a sufficient budget for the Authority. The Commissioners stated that a sufficient budget is a prerequisite for taking care of the functions outlined in the Schengen agreement, especially regarding the Schengen Information System. This cannot be guaranteed in the current situation of inadequate finances.

Privacy enhancing technologies

The second part of the press release described the progress that has been made with privacy enhancing technologies (PET's). First it was explained that PET's are technologies used to minimise or eliminate identifiable data from any information system. An example of work done so far are field tests which began on May 1st in seven large Dutch hospitals with electronic patient records systems. The objective is to ensure maximum privacy protection for the patient in a hospital environment.

The conference decided to produce a PET's brochure by September's Privacy Commissioners' Conference in Brussels, which will include an overall review of PET's applications.

The provisional dates for next year's EU Commissioners' Conference in Dublin are 23rd - 24th April 1998.

This report was prepared by Laura Linkomies, Associate Editor, *Privacy Laws & Business*. She also formerly provided the secretariat for the EU Data Protection Commissioners Group.

New Commissioner for Ontario

Dr. Ann Cavoukian has been appointed as Information and Privacy Commissioner for Ontario, replacing Tom Wright, whose term has expired. She had served for several years as Assistant Commissioner, Privacy for Ontario. In that time, the office has produced a number of management guides very useful to any organisation in any country on the privacy aspects, for example, of faxing and electronic mail (PL&B pg. 6, June 1996 and pg.8-10, Dec 1994).

Her office has recently produced a paper entitled: *Moving Information: Privacy & Security Guidelines*, on the subject of safeguarding personal and confidential information during an organisation's move. Her office has been made aware of two recent incidents involving unauthorised access to personal information at the final stages of a move. Further information available from the Information and Privacy Commission, Ontario (for contact details, see directory pp. 24-28).

UK DPR Publications

Recent publications from the Office of the UK Data Protection Registrar (for contact details, see directory pp. 24-28) include:

- The 1996/7 Annual Report
- Guidelines on developing codes of practice on data matching
- Advice on homeworking and computer information
- Data protection and the Internet: guidance on registration
- Private Lives and Public Powers - A Guide to the Law on the Use and Disclosure of Information about Living Individuals by Public Bodies.