



# INTERNATIONAL newsletter

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## Editorial

This issue of the International Newsletter contains several stories about the ongoing process of ensuring adequate levels of protection for personal data transferred outside the EU. Recent reports of the Article 29 Working Party on the legislative amendments in Australia and Canada – amendments designed in part to address EU adequacy concerns – suggest that the EU is being diligent about ensuring adequate levels of protection. However, testimony by two privacy experts in early March before a US subcommittee – Professor Stefano Rodota, Italy's Data Protection Commissioner and Chairman of the EU Data Protection Working Party, and Professor Joel Reidenberg of Fordham University School of Law – suggests that the EU may have been too generous in accepting US Safe Harbor Privacy Principles as adequate (p.14).

On another front, genetic science and its implications for privacy are again in the news (p.8). In late February 2001, scientists published the first drafts of the human genetic code. With this growing knowledge come increased fears about the misuse of genetic information. The stated purpose of much genetic research is to improve the health of individuals. Will that research instead turn into a vehicle for new ways to discriminate? And how will we control the uses of genetic information once it is assembled in the massive databases enthusiastically supported on some fronts? UK Home Secretary Jack Straw has said that the Home Office hoped to increase the national DNA database from its current one million samples to 3.5 million in the next three years. Some will welcome this development. Others, and not necessarily criminals, fear that the establishment of such a large DNA database may represent one more step towards the oppressive misuse of genetic science.

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