



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

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International agreement to uphold privacy rights

Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners from around the world have today outlined a joint initiative to ensure our privacy is effectively protected in the surveillance society. A communiqué was agreed by the Commissioners at the 28th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners. The Commissioners have also adopted several important resolutions.

As technological advances increase the amount of surveillance the Commissioners have recognised the challenges facing data protection. They have identified the key areas where they will work together to overcome these issues and reinforce the fundamental importance of data protection and privacy. These include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of their traditional approaches, and adapting where necessary, to ensure they remain relevant in a fast changing world
- Engaging with policy makers and citizens more effectively about privacy issues
- Developing communications to raise awareness of individuals' data protection rights

Commenting on the communiqué, Richard Thomas, UK Information Commissioner, said: "Hosting the 28th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners has been a real privilege for the UK. We have debated the issue of surveillance society in detail. The challenges facing society and Commissioners are substantial. Not just in terms of surveillance but also due to rapid technological developments. I fully support this initiative and it is encouraging to see data

protection and privacy Commissioners around the world committed to ensuring data protection remains relevant and effective.”

The conference highlighted how the surveillance society is already with us and addressed a number of themes, including:

- Surveillance activities can be well-intentioned and bring benefits
- Unseen, uncontrolled or excessive surveillance activities also pose risks that go much further than just affecting privacy
- Privacy and data protection regulation is an important safeguard but not the sole answer
- Public trust and confidence is paramount

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner’s Press Office on 020 7025 7580, or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk.
3. For more information about the Information Commissioner’s Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk
4. To read the statement “Communicating Data Protection and Making it More Effective” and for more information on the resolutions please go to <http://www.privacyconference2006.co.uk/> or www.ico.gov.uk