
Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the 40th anniversary of Convention 108 – Safeguarding the right to data protection in the digital environment

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 January 2021
at the 1393rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (more commonly known as “Convention 108”) is the only legally binding multilateral instrument on the protection of privacy and personal data open for accession to any country in the world. It currently already has 55 States Parties.

For forty years, since its opening for signature on 28 January 1981, it has influenced numerous international, regional and national privacy and data protection laws, facilitating data flows across national frontiers and supporting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including human integrity and dignity.

Considering that it is more than ever necessary for our democratic societies, given their exponential digitalisation as well as the intensification and globalisation of data processing and data flows, to secure the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data, and recognising the importance of international co-operation between data protection authorities, to this effect, even in times of emergency;

We reaffirm the potential of Convention 108, as updated by the amending Protocol adopted in 2018, to become the international and widely shared standard of reference with a global remit on privacy and data protection in the digital age, facilitating transborder flows of personal data while guaranteeing an appropriate level of protection and supporting better regulatory co-operation at the international level.

We recall the importance of the amending Protocol to secure a shared legal space fit for the digital age, in order to preserve the relevance of this landmark instrument for the decades to come.

We thus call upon all States Parties to Convention 108 that have not yet done so to ratify its amending Protocol.