

28 January marks a historic day for data protection. It is the day of the opening for signature of Convention 108, the global data protection Convention. For over 40 years, Convention 108 has influenced and shaped the protection of privacy and of data protection in Europe and beyond. Its modernised version ('Convention 108+') will continue to do so. The possibility of accession by any state that fulfils the Convention's requirement stresses its global importance. Iceland's ratification of the modernised Convention this month brings the number of the parties to 21. The importance of further ratifications can only be underlined. In this context, the Convention 108 Committee works on further interpretation of Article 11 of the modernised Convention to further facilitate the ratification process.

The worldwide celebration of the Data Protection Day shows a global recognition that the right to privacy and specifically the right of the individual with regard to the processing of their personal data are of fundamental importance in today's digitised world. The Data Protection Day is also a moment to take stock of the current work within the Committee. With its commitment to the evolution of data protection beyond regional borders, it is in a unique position to tackle data protection issues combining perspectives from across continents.

In this spirit, the Committee has recently adopted new Guidelines on National Digital Identity highlighting the privacy issues and solutions when establishing a national digital identity scheme. In addition, its ongoing work on Guidelines for the processing of personal data for Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Financing of Terrorism purposes, makes the Committee filling a need for guidance in an area of great public interest. The Committee also works on updating the Model Contractual Clauses, which will give data exporters an instrument to safely transfer personal data, thus supporting the free flow of personal data in today's globalised world.

The Data Protection Day is an opportunity and an international effort to raise the awareness on the right to data protection and privacy. It is also a day where we can use the opportunity to appreciate a Convention that has been opened for signature 42 years ago and continues – at a global level - to lay the foundation for the autonomy and human dignity in a globalised and digitised world.

Happy Data Protection Day!