

**Joint press release of the Chairman of the Article 29 WP and the President of the
Office for Personal Data Protection in the Czech Republic within the framework of the
European awareness campaign on Internet and minors**

Prague, 3 March 2009

Setting up of combined actions for awareness and education at the European and international levels

Today, around the world, young people connect to the Internet from their homes, school and mobile phones and use the Internet for social interaction, to share ideas, photos and videos with their friends. However, young people today are mostly unaware that the information they put online are tracks that reveal their ways of life and their behaviours and which can be capitalized for profiling or marketing purposes.

To this end, young people should learn from an early age about the importance of privacy and data protection to enable them later to consciously decide upon the nature of information they wish to circulate, to whom and under which conditions. Data protection should be systematically included in school programs, according to the age of the pupils and the nature of the subjects taught.

Consequently, the raising of consciousness of the younger generations to the fundamental right of the protection of their personal data accounts among the top priorities of our Data Protection Authorities. In 2008, they have taken several actions in this direction.

At the last International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners held in Strasbourg in October 2008, the representatives from 60 Data Protection Authorities from all continents have thus adopted two resolutions focused on social networks and on the protection of minors on line¹.

Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in its declaration on protecting the dignity, security and privacy of children on the Internet adopted on February 20, 2008, declares being convinced of the need to inform children about the permanently lasting record and enduring presence and risks of the content they create on the Internet.

The European Commission has, for its part, established a multiannual Community programme aiming at protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies. Thus, its 2005 – 2008 "Safer Internet" programme² has been extended over the period 2009 to 2013³. It provides community financing of multiform and complementary actions to ensure public awareness, fighting against illegal content and harmful conduct online, promoting a safer online environment and establishing a knowledge basis specialized in these issues.

The Article 29 WP adopted in 2008 and in 2009 as well several key opinions⁴ related to the use of personal data by search engines and the protection of minors. It calls upon awareness and education of young people by all those who have the responsibility for it: parents, teachers, youth workers, data protection authorities.

¹ http://www.privacyconference2008.org/adopted_resolutions/STRASBOURG2008/resolution_child_privacy_en.pdf
http://www.privacyconference2008.org/adopted_resolutions/STRASBOURG2008/resolution_social_networks_en.pdf

² Decision No 854/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 establishing a multiannual Community programme on promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies

³ Decision No 1351/2008/EC the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 establishing a multiannual Community programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/privacy/workinggroup/wpdocs/2008_en.htm

The operators of Web sites intended for children must also adapt their privacy policies to the minors' needs, through the development of codes of conduct.

As a matter of fact, several countries have all already implemented innovative education-based solutions that need to be promoted at the international level so as to contribute to the policy developed in this direction by the European Union. A number of Data Protection Authorities have realized important projects, campaigns and other systematic activities focused to the same goal as well.

As an example, we may mention the effort of the Office for Personal Data Protection in the Czech Republic which has prepared an educational programme called "Protection of Personal Data in Education" supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. This programme has been running already for the third consecutive year in the framework of further training of pedagogical workers. It offers teachers and school directors, by means of seminars, valuable inspiration for teaching: How to implement knowledge about the value of privacy as fundamental aspect of the European civilization? How to bring about awareness of dangers that modern technologies, particularly the Internet may pose for the inviolability of the right of privacy? What in terms of privacy and personal data protection can be offered for tuition in subjects like literature, informatics, biology, history...?

Another example, the project titled "You decide", is a brain child of the Norwegian Data Inspectorate, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and Norwegian Board of Technology. The Norwegian DPA issued, in cooperation with the other two institutions, comprehensive brochure accompanied with a series of films. Predominant concern was put on the use of Internet by young people. Both projects were awarded in 2007 with a special mention in the European Seminar on Best Practices in Data Protection by the Data Protection Agency of Madrid.

In France, the French data protection authority, CNIL, represented by its President, Alex Türk, signed, in July 2008 a Convention of partnership with the French Defender of Children, Dominique Versini, with the aim of developing awareness campaigns to young people about the protection of their personal data, in particular on the Internet. CNIL takes part in a national awareness program called "Internet sans craintes"⁵, "Internet without fear", led by the French Delegation on the Use of the Internet (films and comic books "Vinz and Lou on the Internet" designed to children from 8 to 12 years old).

And so we might go on. Thus bearing in mind that the 2010 European Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners' Conference will take place in Prague, the Czech Office for Personal Data Protection has decided to make an inventory of the projects and campaigns organised or initiated by the European Data Protection Authorities so as to facilitate exchange of experience and to intensify cooperation between all the data protection authorities.

Igor Němec
President of the Office for Personal Data Protection

and

Alex Türk
Chairman of the Article 29 WP

⁵ French plan of action to raise awareness to the challenges and risks of the Internet, funded by the European Commission within the framework of its "Safer Internet" programme