

28th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners

London, 3 November 2006

Resolution on Conference Organisational Arrangements

Resolution

That the 28th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners resolve to establish a working group to:

- a) prepare a document recording existing organisational arrangements of the conference and the conference's expectations of hosts
- b) explore ideas for improving organisational arrangements with a view to ensuring the continued viability of annual conferences and promoting continuous improvement and to offer recommendations to the 29th Conference.

Explanatory note

The International Conference of Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners is now into its third decade. It continues to grow in size and to be valued by participants. The need for effective cooperation between data protection authorities is recognised now more than ever before and the conference has a key part to play.

The Conference should have a strong and bright future. However, in the last seven years one conference ended without any arrangements settled to host the next and on two occasions hosts have withdrawn their invitations.

It is timely to reflect on the organisational arrangements underpinning the conference given the growth in size. This is an opportunity to build on earlier work. For example, in 1996 a survey was undertaken of all participants as to the future shape of the conference leading to an options paper. The Conference has, from time to time, reflected on aspects of its organisational arrangements and documented a consensus. It has also implemented an accreditation regime that places the conference on a sound footing to move forward.

The resolution anticipates a working group being established to study the issue and provide fully thought out proposals back to the conference. The resolution identifies two tasks.

Record existing arrangements

The resolution first calls upon the working group to document existing arrangements at a general level. It might, for example, consolidate in a convenient single place certain positions the conference has previously taken in relation to, for instance, charging fees, admitting observers and selecting hosts three years in advance. It might touch on such aspects as the usual month, translation arrangements and processes for selecting future hosts. In addition to its value as a guide to future hosts it will provide a useful starting point to formulate any proposals to alter current arrangements.

It is suggested that the accreditation framework, and processes for adopting resolutions, be excluded from the consideration of the working group as those aspects have already been the subject of detailed recent work.

Exploring ideas for change

The working group would explore ideas for improving organisational arrangements. Given the experiences this year, consideration should be given to steps to ensure the continued viability of annual conferences. Perhaps the processes for identifying and selecting hosts need to be refined rather than leaving that matter to a brief consideration in the closed session of the conference. This might involve, for example, circulating “bids” to host the conference in advance as is done for proposed resolutions. Perhaps an executive committee is needed to take proactive steps to ensure that there is a schedule of sound hosting arrangements into the future. Other options may be identified by the working group.

The working group would also look at other means by which the organisational arrangements underpinning the conference can be refined to promote continuous improvement. For instance, are there means by which the expectations of participant authorities can be better captured and translated into conference organisation? Would mechanisms such as programme committees and satisfaction surveys be useful? Can the conference better facilitate the transfer of experience from host to host?

It is expected that in this phase the working group would solicit views from participants and also revisit ideas previously placed before the conference but not implemented (such as the 1996 options paper and the Montreux Declaration proposal for a permanent conference website).