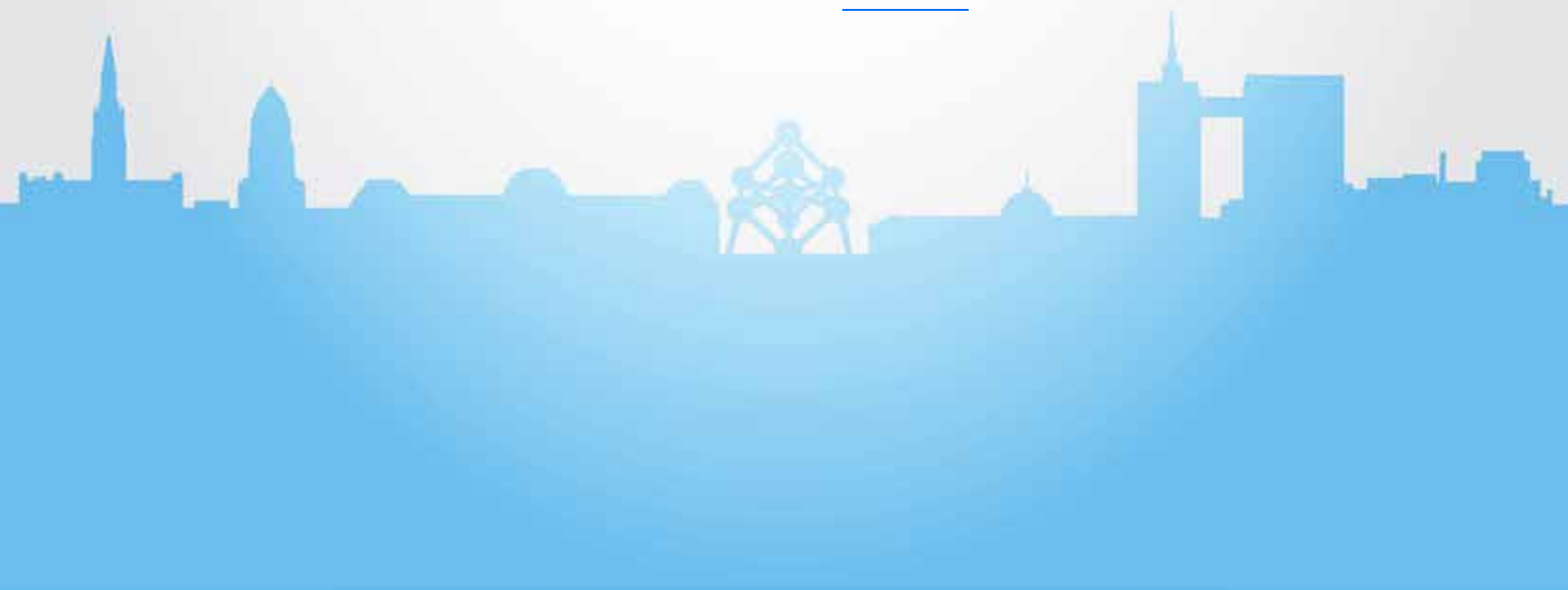




PROPOSAL TO HOST

The International Data Protection
and Privacy Commissioners

Conference 2018



FOREWORD	2
THE STRENGTHS OF THE PROPOSAL	3
Why the EDPS and the CPDP?	5
Indicative dates	6
SESSIONS AND SIDE EVENTS	7
Closed session	7
Public session	7
Side and social events	10
ORGANISATION	12
The EDPS	12
Our experience and organising team	14
Conference planning	14
LOCATION AND VENUE	15
Location	15
Venue	19
Accessibility	20
Accommodation	21
FINANCES	21

FOREWORD

Privacy and data protection have moved from the margins to being well and truly part of the mainstream of public policy. Across the world we are witnessing new and revised legal frameworks which are now in place in over 100 countries, as governments grapple with the disruptive impact of technology and the forces of globalisation. Personal data flows have gone global and are growing exponentially. Big Data and the Internet of Things open new horizons for public and private businesses entities, but among the promised benefits for individuals and society some core principles are placed under ever more intense strain.

Advances in Artificial Intelligence, Digital Health and fine-grain personalisation of services will call into question notions of controllership, purpose limitation, data retention, anonymity, and even consent, as the relationship between humans and machines becomes more and more complex. We would like to further explore how data technologies can be made to serve humans and the meaning of respect for human dignity and the individual, not merely as users, consumers or subscribers amid unpredictable technological developments.

Now is the moment to ensure that our values steer technology, based on a common respect for the individual and her dignity; to define a new Digital Ethics for sustainable innovation in the decades to come.

Along with its partners the EU is active in seeking an international consensus on how to meet these challenges. Organisations within and outside the EU as well as regulators will be preparing for modernised privacy and data protection rules and for the implementation of the Digital Single Market. Brussels will be the natural venue for these discussions and some regional events in Sofia may help to increase the reach out in Eastern Europe, Caucasus region and in Central Asia.

The EDPS will be able to draw from its in-house expertise and cooperation in the EU institutions and the data protection community in the EU and around the world. The Bulgarian Data Protection Authority will be able to contribute with its own experience at national level and as facilitator in a regional area where European and Asian neighbours outside the EU are following data protection developments with great interest.

We will work with colleagues to develop and deliver a programme which builds on the themes explored in Amsterdam and planned for Morocco and Hong Kong, particularly questions about accountability and global partnerships between all regions of the world where individuals share common challenges in the face of the global data economy. Within the theme of the conference: “New technologies and fundamental rights: 40 years of ethics and regulation”, we will look at the impact of new laws and regulations, in Europe and in other regions of the world, and we will promote a global reflection towards a new ethical approach to handling personal data, using among other contributions the report of the Advisory Committee on Ethics established by the EDPS in 2016.

It would be a privilege and an honour to serve the international data protection and privacy community by hosting this outstanding event.

The legal framework of data protection in the European Union

Since the adoption of the Data Protection Directive in 1995, all EU Member States have similar data protection laws. The same legal framework applies to the institutions and bodies of the EU by virtue of the Data Protection Regulation of 2001, the legal instrument that establishes the EDPS.

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Article 16 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union have enshrined data protection as a fundamental right in the EU, which includes supervision by independent authorities such as the EDPS as an essential element of this right.

This legal framework that has been in place for over twenty years underwent a fundamental review. The new General Data Protection Regulation, a legally binding instrument directly applicable to all EU Member States, was adopted on 25 May 2016 and will enter into force on 25 May 2018.

THE STRENGTHS OF THE PROPOSAL

This document is the official joint application of the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) and the Commission for Personal Data Protection of the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgarian DPA) to host the 2018 International Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners Conference.

The Bulgarian DPA and the EDPS have assessed their approaches to the organisation of the ICDPPC, and found that our respective strengths are complimentary and mutually reinforcing. Together, we would be able to organize a conference that offers a number of unique features and unprecedented opportunities for the participants of the closed and open parts of the conference and of side events.

The EDPS is the independent European data protection authority charged with monitoring the processing of personal data by more than seventy EU institutions and bodies of the European Union.

It enjoys the same range of powers as the other EU data protection authorities at national level and is an active member of the Article 29 Working Party and other data protection fora. The EDPS cooperates with other data protection authorities and international organisations to ensure consistent and effective data protection.

The Bulgarian DPA, placed in an excellent geographical position in South-East Europe, represents a strategic link between the EU and the countries in Western Balkan, Caucasus region and Central Asia. Bulgaria, and Sofia in particular, would be a very welcoming and accessible host for these regions of the world which traditionally have been underrepresented in the ICDPPC events with very few exceptions.

Furthermore, this joint initiative offers complete support for the ICDPPC's strategic direction in advancing Global Privacy in the Digital Age.

We are encouraged that a similar proposal from the EDPS to host the 2017 International Conference was considered by the Executive Committee to be 'promising, credible, well-thought-out and well-constructed'. We are pleased with this application for 2018 to build on and to strengthen that earlier proposal.

'Strengthening our connections, working with partners'

We can facilitate unlocking the capacity of privacy and data protection authorities, identifying practical solutions to domestic/ regional challenges. Both entities invest huge energies in dialogue and support for regional networks outside Europe and international organisations. As hosts, we would leverage these connections, facilitating unique networking opportunities with leading EU decision makers.

'Advancing global privacy in a digital age'

Working in an international framework, we are fully geared to meet the UN Special Rapporteur's need for resources and a knowledge hub. The report of the Ethics Advisory Group set up by the EDPS will be one of the contribution for the public sessions aimed at finding common approaches and tools to meet the digital challenge.

'Completing Conference Capacity-Building'

We will engage high-level public and non-governmental expertise to support the Strategic Direction Working Group in identifying options for Secretariat funding.

'Assessing our effectiveness'

We stand ready to help explore satisfaction survey improvements. Our expertise in rigorous performance and impact evaluation can add value to the secretariat's review of past resolutions, ensuring tangible, ambitious and achievable outcomes from ICDPPC 2018.

— Why a joint application?

The EU has long been the flag bearer of strong fundamental rights, particularly in the protection of privacy and personal information. The EDPS, together with the national data protection authorities of the EU member states, wish to be at the forefront in shaping a global standard for privacy and data protection. For this reason we have decided to submit a common proposal to the Executive Committee for the organisation of the ICDPPC in 2018, with Brussels and Sofia, connected electronically. In 2018, Brussels is expected to be the home of the Bulgarian Presidency of the European Union which has pledged its support to this event.

We would be honoured to host the core events of the conference in Brussels, the heart of the European Union, with the active support of the other EU institutions and with an electronic connection to Sofia, which will also host events with particular regional focus. Side events may take place at both locations.

The conference would be an opportunity to advance our discussions on important developments to a new stage. Two important themes may be inspired by the two locations:

- The next phase in data protection and data transfers between the major economies after the review of the main international instruments,
- The rapid and impressive developments for privacy and data protection in regions whose economic and political importance is growing fast, not the least due to their location between the Asian economies, the Middle East and Europe.

Furthermore, the 2018 conference would be the right moment in time and space to deepen our reflections on into an issue which will determine our discussions and work for many years to come, and while already visible now, will be a major concern already in 2018:

- The impact of massive and sophisticated processing of personal data on the rights and freedoms of individuals beyond the established framework of privacy and data protection and the need for new ethical guidance to address the resulting challenges.

Technological developments have been an on-going theme at the conference for many years, and several aspects have been taken and will be taken in focus: e.g. IoT in Mauritius, genetics in Amsterdam, AI and robotics in Marrakech. Each of these technologies requires thorough analysis and assessment in order to enable us to develop our legal frameworks and practices.

However, we need more than technological and legal expertise in order to understand fully the importance of the developments which are in the process of changing many of the circumstances of our daily lives in social, economic and political terms. We need the

analytical powers of philosophers and other thinkers to develop a fuller understanding and to realise which are the levers enabling us to influence the future structure of our world. In 2018, we will see the outcome of work on ethical issues which is already underway and has given us access to some of the thought leaders in this area.

We live in a time of unprecedented change. It is a period where the political and social importance of privacy and data protection in the international arena are higher than they have ever been, because data protection laws are national but personal information is increasingly not. In 2018, Brussels will be an ideal place to witness the opening of a new page in the history of privacy and data protection, a moment of truth for the defence of those values that we, the Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners all around the world, deeply profess.

We believe that the combination of an attractive location like Brussels, unparalleled timing, just a few months after the entry into force of the new European legal framework on data protection, and an innovative approach to the ethical dimension of data protection will provide strong leadership and keep privacy and data protection high on the political, diplomatic and public agenda of the international community.

Building on the work of previous conferences, we are considering a public session focused on the theme “New technologies and fundamental rights: 40 years of ethics and regulation”. We propose to conduct a global reflection towards a new ethical approach to handling personal data.

In the light of the guidance from the IDPPCC Secretariat, as this application is on behalf of only two authorities who already have enjoyed many years of close and fruitful cooperation, we did not consider it helpful to nominate a single lead hosting authority. However we would of course be pleased to do so should the Executive Committee consider this necessary.

— Indicatives dates

We have identified 22-26 October 2018 as the dates for the International Conference. We have checked and, as far as we are aware, these dates do not conflict with any major religious festival¹.

There will be a European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg that week, which will allow us to use the European Parliament premises in Brussels for the Closed Session of the conference. The Parliament’s plenary session in Strasbourg will also mean significantly more hotel room availability for delegates in Brussels.

Nevertheless, we can expect the participation -where appropriate- of Commissioners and members of the European Parliament on 22 and 25 October, before they leave for Strasbourg and on their return.

¹ We are of course open to considering other dates earlier in the year to coincide with the point at which the EU General Data Protection Regulation becomes fully applicable. This alternative option may also fit with the precise calendar of the 2018 Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which in any event has already allocated resources to support the Conference, and the role of the Bulgarian Personal Data Protection Commission and of its Chair in 2018.

The focus of the conference will be the ethical dimension of data protection and the need for global approaches relevant to rapid technological change, a topic that is global in scope. Where appropriate, and in cooperation with other independent DPAs, we remain available to facilitate a consecutive side event dedicated to the important legal development of the new EU General Data Protection if considered necessary or advisable by the Executive Committee.

In conclusion, the days of 22-26 October are identified as the optimum dates of the hosting of the international conference in Brussels and in Sofia in 2018. Of course the Executive Committee may decide to dedicate a closed session to specific EU legal developments, which may offer new members of the newly-established European Data Protection Board an opportunity to introduce themselves to colleagues.

SESSIONS AND SIDE EVENTS

Closed Session

The Closed Session will be devised by the Executive Committee, of which the EDPS and the Bulgarian DPA would be members. If selected, we plan to rely on the prestigious premises of the European Parliament on Monday 22 October and the morning of 23 October.

Public session

The public session would take place in a modern Conference Centre in Brussels on Wednesday 24 and the morning of Thursday 25 October. The main theme of the conference would be focused on “New technologies and fundamental rights: 40 years of ethics and regulation” by means of a global reflection towards a new ethical approach to handling personal data.

The fundamental rights to privacy and to the protection of personal data have become more important for the protection of human dignity than ever before. In today’s digital environment, adherence to the law may not be enough and we have to consider the ethical dimension of data processing. These are issues that have engineering, philosophical, legal and moral implications.

We would like to use the public session, which will be organised with the support of non-profit associations experienced in organising data protection events, to stimulate an open and informed discussion with data protection authorities and distinguished stakeholders from all parts of the world.

Draft programme for the public session

24 October 9.30-13.00 (Ethics)

9.30-10.30 *Opening and key note speeches by the President of the European Parliament, the Presidency of the Council and the European Union, the Bulgarian Data Protection Commissioner and the EDPS.*

10.30-11.00 *Perceptions of privacy in the 21st Century (video featuring interviews to personalities all around the world)*

11.30-12.00 *Report on the closed session*

12.00-12.30 *Presentation by the Advisory Group on Ethics*

24 October 14.00-17.30 (Ethics)

14.00-15.30 *Parallel discussion sessions I*

16.00-17.30 *Parallel discussion sessions II*

25 October 9.00-12.30 (Regulation)

9.00-9:30 *Keynote speech by the President of the European Commission*

9.30-10.30 *Various topical issues on new regulation*

- o *The events in Europe - the new General Data Protection Regulation and beyond*
- o *The events in other continents and regions*

11-11.45 *Reports from parallel sessions*

11.45-12.30 *Closing panel on Digital Ethics*

Venue: A well-known modern conference Centre in Brussels with excellent facilities for speakers and participants, advanced technology and media centre.

Draft programme for the events in Bulgaria

22 October 9.30-13.00: Meeting of the DPA representatives from the Western Balkans

9.30-10.30 Opening and key note speeches by the Bulgarian Data Protection Commissioner, the EDPS and high-ranking representative of the Bulgarian authorities.

10.30-11.00 Global, European and regional data protection systems – establishment, functioning, challenges

11.30-12.00 Moral and legal dimensions of personal data processing (with regard to Convention 108)

12.00-12.30 *Regional networking possibilities*

23 October 9.30-13.00: Meeting of the DPA representatives from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

9.30-10.30 Opening and key note speeches by the Bulgarian Data Protection Commissioner, the EDPS and high-ranking representative of the Bulgarian authorities.

10.30-11.00 Global, European and regional data protection systems – establishment, functioning, challenges

11.30-12.00 Moral and legal dimensions of personal data protection (with regard to Convention 108)

12.00-12.30 *Regional networking possibilities*

24 and 25 October: video conference with Brussels

Venue: A conference Centre in Sofia with excellent facilities for speakers and participants, advanced technology and media centre.



Side and social events

Side and social events will be mainly organised in Brussels with the support of EU institutions and bodies and non-profit associations, including a program for partners of delegates.

Sofia will also host regional side events before the main sessions in Brussels, so that rapporteurs from these events will be able to inform the plenary about the discussions and their outcome.

Sunday 21 October (evening)

Welcome drink for Data Protection Authorities
Venue: Premises of an EU institution.

Monday 22 October (evening)

Dinner-debate of Data Protection and Data Privacy Commissioners, with the support of an EU institution
Venue: EU neighbourhood - location to be determined

Tuesday 23 October (afternoon)

Side events
Visit to the EU institutions. History of EU (Museum of EU History, Parliamentarium)

Tuesday 23 October (evening)

Cocktail reception with the support of an EU institution

Wednesday 24 October

Gala dinner in Brussels with the support of a non-profit association

Thursday 25 October (afternoon)

Side events organised with the support of EU institutions and bodies and non-profit associations
Visit to the EU institutions. Walking tours of Brussels

Friday 26 October

Tour of historic Belgian cities (choice of Brussels, Bruges or Antwerp)

Draft programme for events in Bulgaria

Sunday 21 October (evening)

Welcome drink for Data Protection Authorities
Venue: accommodating hotel.

Monday 22 October (evening)

Cocktail reception for guests and speakers
Venue: EU neighbourhood - location to be determined

Tuesday 23 October (afternoon)

Side events
Early evening: Walking tour of historical sites in Sofia

Wednesday 24 October

Dinner in Sofia “Forging partnerships and networking”

Thursday 25 October (afternoon)

Visit to the Boyana Church in Sofia – a UNESCO world heritage site.

Friday 26 October

Tour of Plovdiv – the second largest Bulgarian city, 2019 European capital of culture and one of the oldest human settlements in the world.

ORGANISATION

The EDPS



The EDPS is an increasingly influential independent supervisory authority, with responsibility for monitoring the processing of personal data by the EU institutions and bodies, advising on EU policies and legislation that affect privacy and cooperating with similar authorities to ensure consistent data protection.

Set up in 2004, the EDPS has grown into a well-regarded and expert voice within the EU and the data protection community.

Led by Giovanni Buttarelli (Supervisor) and Wojciech Wiewiórowski (Assistant Supervisor), the EDPS is supported a dynamic team of around 60 skilled and experienced lawyers, IT specialists and administrators which aims to serve as an impartial centre of excellence for enforcing and reinforcing EU data protection and privacy standards, both in practice and in law.

The EDPS has been a long-time supporter and participant in the work of the International Conference and its working groups, in regional as well as many other international data protection fora.

The EDPS endeavours to monitor and provide advice to ensure that the international system of enforcement cooperation among data protection authorities, potentially including the exchange of personal data, respects EU and international data protection principles. However, in a hyper-connected world with evolving technologies and increasing exchanges of personal information, the protection of personal data requires global, coordinated and cross-border approaches; the EDPS' overriding aim is to strengthen cooperation in the search for consistent and pragmatic solutions to protect data and privacy.

Hosting the International Conference would be an honour for the EDPS and an important indication of the EU's commitment to strengthen its cooperation across nations.

— Commission for Personal Data Protection

The Commission for Personal Data Protection (CPDP) is the national supervisory body responsible for protection of personal data in the Republic of Bulgaria both in the public and in private sector. Being the only data protection authority (DPA) in the country, CPDP has a wide range of investigative, corrective and advisory powers and performs a number of different tasks, such as investigations, corrective measures, awareness-raising and information campaigns, international cooperation, training, etc. The Commission is a collective body, consisting of a chairman and four members elected by the National Assembly. Total number of the staff is 87 full-time positions. The administration is organised in 4 directorates – Legal Affairs, International Cooperation, Planning and Training Directorate; Legal Procedures and Supervision Directorate; Information Funds and Accountability Directorate and Resources Management and Administrative Legal Services Directorate.

The CPDP has a long history of participation in international organisations and forums in the area of privacy and personal data protection. Since its establishment in 2002, the Bulgarian DPA has been represented at every ICDPPC. The CPDP is active member of all major working groups and supervisory committees at EU level too. The chairman of the CPDP serves as vice-chair of the Article 29 Working Party. A CPDP member is a vice-chair of the Customs Joint Supervisory Authority to the EU Council.

The CPDP has an extensive experience in the organization of regional events, with special focus on the Western Balkans and the Black Sea region. The Commission strives to engage the data protection authorities from these regions in active cooperation and networking. To this end, the CPDP has concluded Memoranda of Understanding on international cooperation with the DPAs from Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania. The CPDP has hosted working visits for experts from Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and other countries which facilitated the transmission of the CPDP experience with regard to institutional building, cooperation within the EU, establishment of unified standards and transfer of good practices, etc. Furthermore, it is a regular participant in regional forums, such as the CEEDPA (Conference of Eastern European Data Protection Authorities), the PDP International Conference in Moscow and others.

— Our experience and organising team

The EDPS and the Bulgarian DPA will appoint a team of experienced colleagues to organise a perfectly synchronised, well-planned, well-conducted and memorable international conference, in close cooperation with, and with the support of, other EU institutions and bodies and non-profit associations.

Having organised many successful events over the years (such as the hospitality for the 2011 'Mini' Spring Conference in Brussels; annual EU Data Protection Day events; EU conference & dinner marking the 10th anniversary of the EDPS, or the Big Data Conference in September 2016 to name but a few), and benefitting from the support of other EU institutions and non-profit associations, the EDPS is confident that the organising team will be able to coordinate the planning and administration of this prestigious event efficiently.

The Commission of Personal Data Protection has substantial experience in organizing international events as well. Throughout the years the CPDP has hosted several major international forums in the sphere of data protection, such as the International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications spring meeting, the annual Conference of Eastern European Data Protection Authorities and numerous international meetings in the framework of the EU funded projects. In November 2015 CPDP organized an international conference "Trust, Privacy and Security of Personal Data in the Digital World²" with Bulgarian and international privacy and IT experts delivering a diverse set of presentations on accountability, big data, cloud computing etc. The conference attracted particularly strong interest from DPAs in the Western Balkan. As a result, the CPDP has developed the necessary practical experience and administrative capacity which ensures the smooth and efficient organisation of the ICDPPC regional events in 2018.

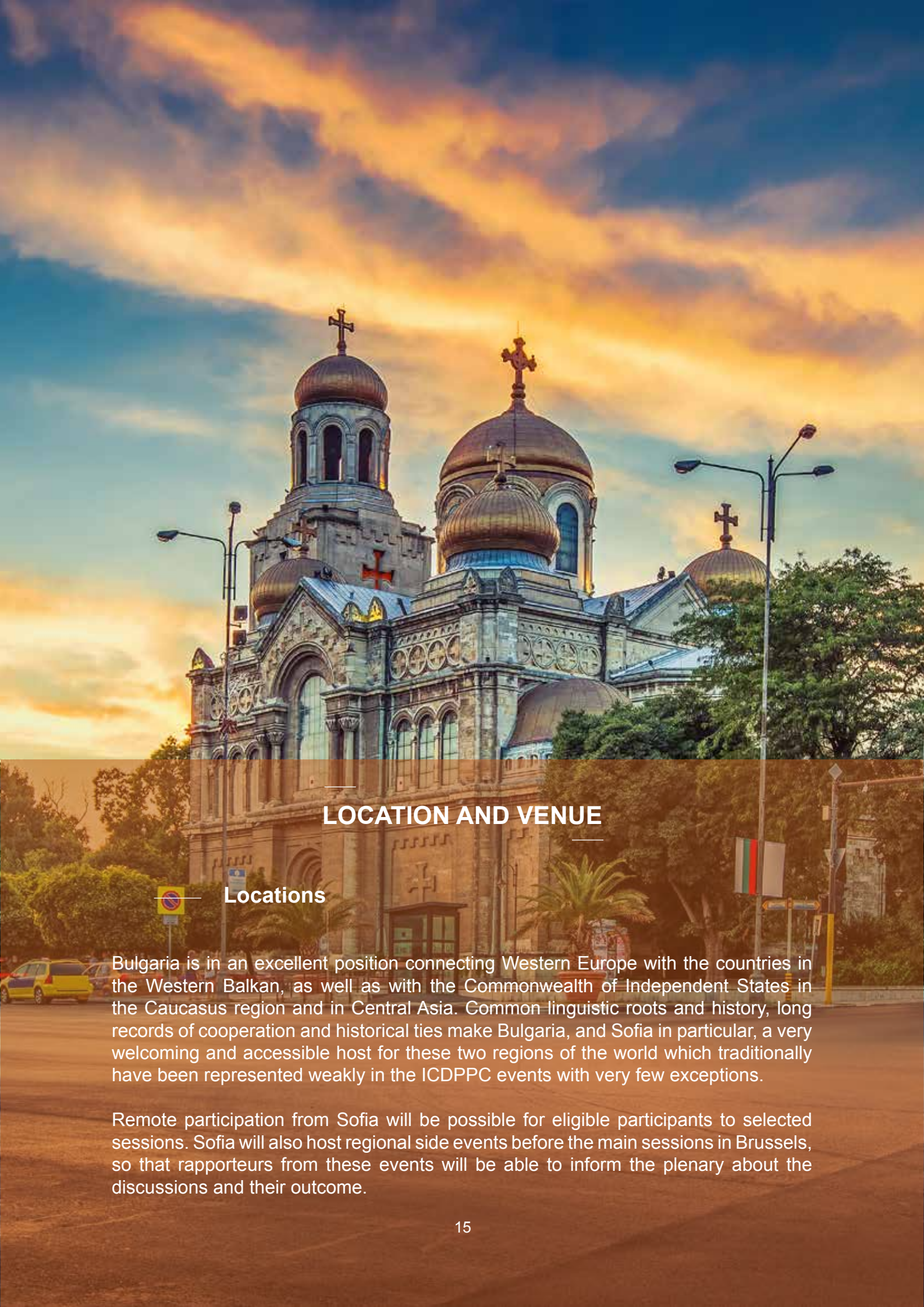
The support of the European Parliament and the European Commission in the provision of premises and security guarantees prestigious and well-equipped venues and facilities as well as considerable savings for the data protection community. The support of one or more non-profit associations with experience of organising data protection events for the public session as well as side and social events would also contribute significantly to their success.

— Conference planning

In summary, a five-day programme is proposed; the first day and half would be devoted to the Closed Session, the following day and half to the Public Session and a final day for side and social activities.

A dedicated website will be created to provide all relevant information about the International Conference and a team will be in place to respond to enquiries from delegates.

² Conference website <https://www.cdpd.bg/conference/en/2015/s/program/> .



LOCATION AND VENUE

Locations

Bulgaria is in an excellent position connecting Western Europe with the countries in the Western Balkan, as well as with the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Caucasus region and in Central Asia. Common linguistic roots and history, long records of cooperation and historical ties make Bulgaria, and Sofia in particular, a very welcoming and accessible host for these two regions of the world which traditionally have been represented weakly in the ICDPPC events with very few exceptions.

Remote participation from Sofia will be possible for eligible participants to selected sessions. Sofia will also host regional side events before the main sessions in Brussels, so that rapporteurs from these events will be able to inform the plenary about the discussions and their outcome.



Brussels, on the other hand, much more than for being the capital of Belgium, is known as the heart of Europe and is home to the UN, the EU and NATO. It's a hub of international political and business exchange, and a centre of policy for data protection which has just recently been the focal point of important developments influencing data processing and data flows at a global scale. 2018 will be the year where we will see the effect of the new EU data protection framework and of a new generation of international data flow instruments on economies around the world. Many of the relevant business and policy communities from the entire planet are already present in Brussels on a permanent basis.

Belgium is, thus, perfectly placed to host the core events of the conference and therefore act as the meeting point for delegates arriving from all over the globe.


Brussels is also within a few hours' travel of most European cities while providing a convenient midpoint between east and west for arrivals from Asia and the Americas. Due to the country's central location, Brussels' transport infrastructure is highly developed and the city is easily reachable by air, train, bus, car and even by ferry at affordable fares.

It is easy to move around in the City that hosts most of the headquarters of the European Union's institutions. There is a well-developed public transport system and there are many boulevards and major highways to navigate to the major tourist locations for drivers. The city centre itself is compact so there are good walking trails to take when you are touring the city's main attractions. To get around between major destinations you can use the public transport, car rental, taxis or trains.

At the hub of events that have shaped the history of Europe over the last two centuries, Brussels is a place of enormous interest for history lovers, with many places of historical significance close to the conference centre.

Brussels offers significant networking opportunities and these will be enhanced through the hospitality and functions held alongside the international conference.

Brussels has major event capability, ample hotel accommodation and a skilled workforce: the city offers world class facilities, providing a platform for promoting and engaging with a global audience of data protection and privacy professionals.



Language: Brussels is officially a bilingual city (Dutch and French) and most people also speak English. Delegates arriving from different countries and speaking different languages will have a good chance of being able to interact with locals and navigate their way around. For the conference, the customary practice of translation and interpretation will be in place, courtesy of the multilingual environment of the EU institutions in Brussels. Therefore, simultaneous interpretation for at least three languages will be provided during the conference and the dedicated website as well as any other communication item (app, brochure, etc.) will be available in three languages.


For the regional events in Sofia, the Bulgarian hosts will provide interpretation, in addition to English, also in Russian and at least one of the languages of the Western Balkan countries (Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian).



Good telecommunications and digital connectivity: With over 80% internet penetration rate, Belgium is one of the most digitally connected countries in the world. Internet access and Wi-Fi facilities are widely available in Brussels, meaning that delegates never need to be cut off from their important work back home. Mobile connectivity is equally universal, with a variety of providers offering good coverage.

Bulgaria is among the countries with the fastest internet speeds in the world. It ranks 25th³ in terms of peak internet speed, which guarantees that delegates attending the regional events in Sofia will be well connected to the conference in Brussels and the rest of the world.

3 <http://www.techinsider.io/akami-global-internet-speeds-rankings-2015-9>



Exciting leisure and entertainment options: As the capital of an expanding Europe, Brussels is a unique international city. Approximately thirty percent of the population is of foreign origin, and this creates a remarkable atmosphere in which cultures mix and mingle easily together.

The entertainment possibilities are endless both in Belgium and Brussels.

Belgian prestigious art cities such as Antwerp, Bergen, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent and Liege, are magnificent, even if you are not a fan of history, architecture or culture.

For those who enjoy walking, sports and the outdoors, the Ardennes, which are the green heart of Belgium, are the place to go. If you prefer the beach or enjoy cycling, you will not be able to resist the call of Belgian seaside!

Brussels offers a wide range of tourist attractions and engaging activities that will keep delegates entertained during their stay: art, architecture, fashion, history and the great outdoors, there are a number of pursuits to enjoy.

The capital of Europe has a wide and eclectic collection of museums. At the last count there are about 89 museums endorsed by the tourism information bureau. There are large, spacious and information-rich museums such as the Museum of Natural Sciences and the Museum of Fine Arts. And then there are small, quaint interest-based museums such as the Belgian Beer Brewers museum or the Museum of Cocoa and Chocolate.

Last but not least, Brussels is the place for concerts, opera, orchestras and cinema. If you want to go for a glamorous night, take advantage of Brussels fantastically exotic and trendy restaurants and bars.



Sofia is the capital and largest city of Bulgaria. The city has a population of 1.26 million, while over 1.5 million people live in its functional urban area. The city is located at the foot of Vitosha Mountain in the western part of the country. Its location in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula means that it is the midway between the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea, whereas the Aegean Sea is the closest to it.

Sofia has been an area of human habitation since at least 7000 BC. It has vast number of sites of interest from different epochs, including unique archeological discoveries and artefacts from pre-historic, Thracian and Roman times. Two UNESCO world heritage sites are situated in the vicinity of the city.

Sofia can offer more than 50 museums, 26 theatres, an opera, numerous cinemas and leisure activities, including spa and wellness (there are more than 40 natural mineral water springs in and around Sofia), hiking (Sofia is situated in the foothills of the Vitosha mountain and close to the highest mountain on the Balkan peninsular - Rila). Sofia is one and a half hour drive away from Plovdiv – one of the oldest cities in Europe and 2019 European Capital of Culture.

As Bulgaria's biggest city, Sofia is the academic, cultural and commercial centre of the country. Sofia is one of the top 10 best places for start-up business in the world, especially in IT technologies.



Gastronomy in Belgium is an art:

Belgium is a delight of local restaurants, affordable and charming inns, castles and small breweries throughout the rolling countryside. Brussels is bursting with cafés in which to enjoy a world-renowned Belgian beer and shops from Belgium's artisan chocolatiers are to be found everywhere. Meanwhile, the city's cultural diversity is reflected in the range of international cuisines found in Brussels, from African to Vietnamese and everything in between; international delegates will always find something to their taste.

Brussels is an eminent global city and worthy of the international conference. Delegates will appreciate the opportunity to visit or revisit Brussels.

Hosting this important international event will of course also benefit the city. Among these is the honour and prestige it will bring to Brussels, as it will be the centre of the data protection community for the duration of the event.



The Bulgarian cuisine is a representative of the cuisine of South-East Europe but it has some unique features. The relatively warm climate and diverse geography produce excellent growth conditions for a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruits and as result the Bulgarian cuisine is particularly diverse.

Famous for its rich salads required at every meal, the Bulgarian cuisine is also noted for the quality of dairy products and the variety of wines and local drinks. The Bulgarian cuisine features also a great choice of different pastries.

As an ancient home of the grapevine in Europe, Bulgaria is famous for its excellent wines.

Restaurants serving international cuisine have also made a presence in the country, offering various options such as French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Arabic and international contemporary.



Venue

Brussels offers an excellent range of locations for the different events during the conference, from traditional conference halls to breath-taking rooms in museums. For the main sessions of the International Conference, the EDPS will benefit from the support of the European Parliament and the European Commission to hold these events at their impressive premises, together with the provision of security.

As hosts, the security and safety of everyone involved in the 2018 Conference - whether staff, contributors and participants, in closed and public sessions - will be our paramount concern.

The city of Brussels is a generally safe environment, and the EU quarter in particular is always accorded a high level of security.

The service offered by the venue for closed and public sessions is comprehensive and includes adequate security personnel. We would not hesitate to put in place any further security measures considered necessary or advisable, under the guidance and advice of the security services of the EU institutions. For the public session, we would furthermore benefit from the events-management experience and expertise of those non-profit associations supporting us as hosts.

Just like Brussels Sofia also offers a fine choice of conference venues with excellent facilities. Special attention will be paid to the technical equipment of the conference premises in order to ensure high quality video conference connection with Brussels.



— Accessibility

Brussels has great transport networks: international airports, a busy cross-country, pan-European network of railways and well-maintained motorways. Getting in, around and out is easy for delegates travelling to events from overseas.

Brussels is more compact than many other European capitals, making it an easy city to traverse.

As well as hiring a taxi or a bike, thanks to Brussels underground, tram and bus lines, delegates can travel quickly and easily by public transport to and from the different venues.

Brussels is also a welcoming place for delegates who find it difficult to get around on their own. Many attractions, accommodation and public transport facilities are designed with persons of reduced mobility in mind.

Sofia has the perfect location and accessibility for congress tourism and this segment of the industry has grown exponentially in the last several years. This is also due to its strategic location, good connectivity, reasonable pricing and a wide variety of suitable conference venues. Sofia is logistically well connected to the rest of Europe and the world. It has a well-equipped airport, railway and motorway connections with the rest of the Balkans. The city lies at the junction of 3 highways, it is a major railway hub and has the fifth busiest airport on the Balkan Peninsula, with connections to Asia and virtually all of Europe.

Sofia has a well-developed public transport infrastructure with a dense network of metro lines, buses, trams and trolleybuses. Sofia is also home to a large number of taxi companies, with prices which are among the lowest in Europe.

Sofia is also well-connected to Brussels, which would facilitate the transportation between the two host cities. Sofia Airport has daily flights (8 times a week) to Brussels Airport (Zaventem) and also offers daily flights to Brussels South Charleroi Airport (11 times a week).

Accommodation

Brussels hosts over 50,000 registered meetings, conferences and exhibitions each year, with over 140 hotels across the city accommodating attendees. Delegates of the International Conference will be able to find accommodation easily. Those wishing to do so, will be able to take advantage of the special rates negotiated by the EDPS for hotels in the European quarter of the city where the EU institutions are to be found.

Sofia has a vast number of hotels from low-cost to luxury ones. The city hosts some of the largest and most popular hotel brands in Europe, such as Hilton, Novotel, Ibis, Radisson and so on. Guests for the conference will be able to easily find good accommodation at reasonable prices.

FINANCES

Both the EDPS and the Bulgarian DPA are small public institutions with limited budget. Therefore, this proposal relies heavily on the support of other larger institutions of the European Union as outlined in the different sections of this application, as well as on the logistical support of non-profit associations experienced in organising data protection events, in particular for the Public Session, side and social events (for example, hiring of premises as required, registration, catering services, etc.).

Fees from delegates would cover the majority of costs for both the Closed and Public Sessions; funding for the side and social activities would come from our supporters, both institutional and non-profit associations. As hosts of the conference, we will only accept institutional support and support offered by non-profit and non-advocacy associations.

As a matter of principle, we will not accept funding or support from private companies. On the basis of the support outlined, we will seek to reduce the impact on our own resources to a strict minimum.

Nevertheless, the EDPS and the Bulgarian DPA will be the sole hosts for this conference and will take full responsibility for the organisation of both the Closed and Open Sessions. We will also contribute to the funding of the Conference from our own budget and involve our own staff in the organisation of the event. A team of at least seven officials from the EDPS and the Bulgarian DPA would be closely involved in the organisation and development of the event, together with the involvement of other colleagues at different stages and assignments (for example, the Information and Communication team for the development of a dedicated website and other communication activities; colleagues from the data protection teams in preparation of the different panels and selection of speakers).

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