

Annual report of the GPA Executive Committee 2019-2020

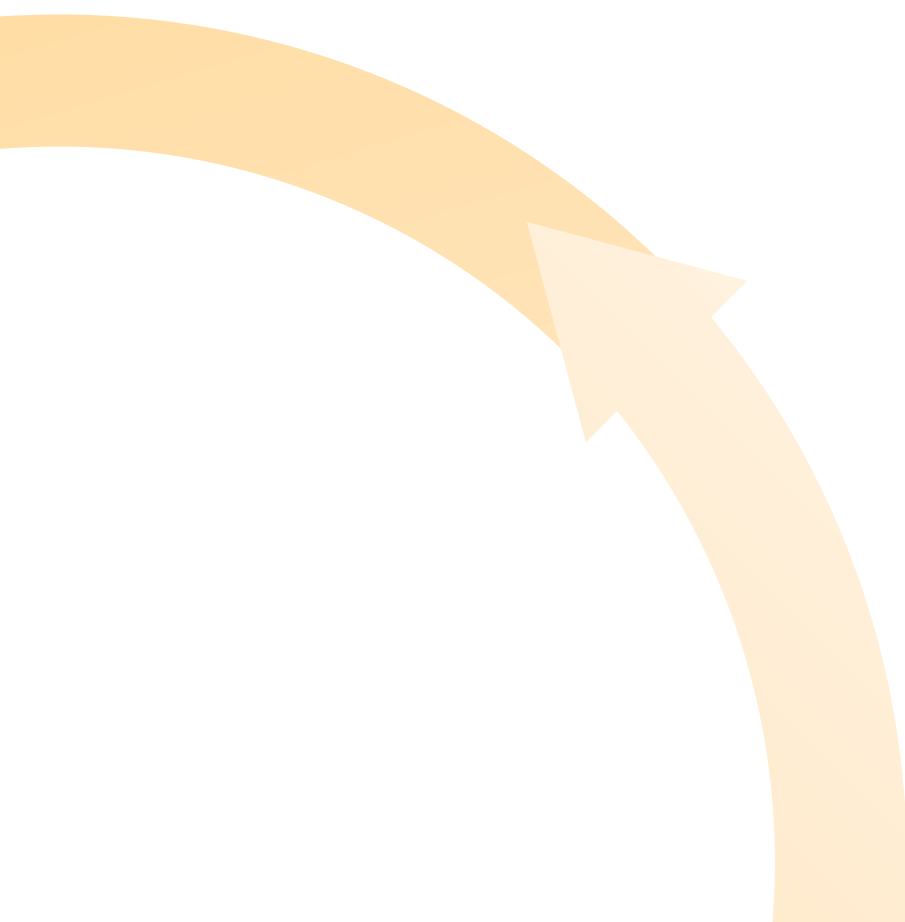


GPA

Global Privacy Assembly

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Foreword from Elizabeth Denham

There is a phrase that has stuck with me across this most unusual twelve months, said by my colleague Raymond Liboro, the Philippines Privacy Commissioner: our role is one of both enabler and protector.

That feels a neat summary of the challenge we face as regulators, authorities and commissioners around the globe, and especially when we consider our role in response to challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must reflect the conditions, requirements, and reality of those we regulate, and ensure we are not putting unnecessary philosophical barriers in the way of practical solutions. But we must not shy away from standing up for people's privacy rights, particularly when the decisions we make today can have such an impact on tomorrow.

The positive approach GPA (Global Privacy Assembly) members have shown in response to the pandemic proves that balance, and whether I am talking to government officials, business leaders or public sector innovators, I hear the same view - that our community is seen as pragmatic, positive and fast-moving.

While the impact of COVID-19 was felt across only part of the year, the response of our community supplies a perfect illustration of the impact of our recent modernisation of the GPA.

Firstly, it showed the value of our collaboration. We are a truly global, inclusive organisation, where every view is valued. Through our 2019-21 Strategic Direction, driven forward by the work of our sub committees and Working Groups, we now have an infrastructure that maximises our ability to share expertise and experience in a structured way that brings practical benefits. We were able to build on that proven approach with our COVID-19 Taskforce, which I know a vast number of you contributed to and benefited from.

Secondly, our response to the challenges of the pandemic showed us to be an outward facing group. The GPA fails if it only engages and influences

members rather than the organisations influencing data protection and privacy practice globally, such as business, governments or international organisations. Data has become less the trail that we leave behind us, and more the very medium through which we live our lives. In turn, data privacy is too broad to be an insular topic among regulators and authorities. We must be open to listening and collaborating with other partners around the world, and with a desire to contribute proactively to wider discussions.

I think we should be proud then of the success of our influential workshops alongside the OECD, our work bringing Google and Apple into discussions around the privacy aspects of their contact tracing API (Application Program Interface) and our webinars with private sector stakeholders. Our new reference panel will further this work, giving us greater insight into views outside of our Assembly, while our joint statements mechanism will enhance our voice.

And thirdly and finally, our response to the pandemic shows our agility. When I was elected chair, I wanted to build on our position as a unique global forum, so we could better keep pace with the fast-paced, borderless digital world we all operate in. The past six months demonstrated our progress towards the modern assembly we all want to see, one which has a year-round presence and voice.

This report reflects a challenging year, an unprecedented year, but a successful year for the GPA.

I am grateful for your continued energy and support,



Elizabeth Denham

Chair of the Executive Committee, Global Privacy Assembly
UK Information Commissioner

Main achievements



Developing GPA's external voice through ExCo members' regional engagement promoting the GPA's work.



Important progress to achieve our 2019-2021 Strategic Direction despite the significant challenges of the global pandemic crisis.



An unprecedented year, requiring GPA to be agile in a fast-changing global environment, promoting recognition that data protection should not stand in the way of critical sharing of information to tackle the pandemic, and strengthening data protection and privacy authorities roles as both enabler for response strategies and protector of the public.

Practical leadership and global engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic:



- supporting members to meet new challenges by setting up a new temporary Taskforce to rapidly address emerging issues
- engaging with others – technology companies and other multilateral organisations - to share knowledge and expertise
- a focus on the key issues, including getting to grips rapidly with new innovations like contact tracing technologies, mass take-up of video-conferencing platforms, and better cooperation across borders in live investigations.



Progress on our modernising agenda, with a new look Global Privacy Assembly (GPA), presenting a fresh approach and building on the past ICDPPC, and changes to the Executive Committee's operation, enabling us to provide GPA members with a more strategically focused leadership on the future global privacy agenda priorities.



Delivering the first GPA online virtual conference, rapidly innovating in response to the pandemic.

Statistics



Connecting the efforts of **more than 130** data protection and privacy authorities from across the globe.



Creating a new Committee – **the Strategic Direction Sub-Committee (SDSC)** – to oversee achievement of the GPA's Strategic Direction 2019-2021.



Overseeing work of **12 committees and Working Groups**, supporting collaboration between more than 40 leaders of these workstreams.



Enabling Working Groups to deliver over **10 laser-focussed reports** on cutting edge emerging privacy issues.



Two GPA Executive Committee statements in reaction to emerging global priorities, followed by a proposal to enable the GPA to do more throughout the year to strengthen its voice.



Strong collaboration with relevant external organisations active in privacy thought leadership: **two workshops** with the OECD, **two webinars** with private sector stakeholders to inform members on latest developments in COVID-19.



33 GPA members and observers stepped up to join the COVID-19 Taskforce, from the regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, and Oceania.



Three editions of the GPA Newsletter, revamped and refreshed with new content features for changing audience needs in a fast-changing world.

Members of the 2019-2020 GPA Executive Committee



Elizabeth Denham

GPA Chair and UK Information Commissioner



Marguerite Ouedraogo Bonane

President of CIL, Burkina Faso



Angelene Falk

Information Commissioner at the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner



Raymund Enriquez Liboro

Privacy Commissioner and Chairman, Philippines National Privacy Commission



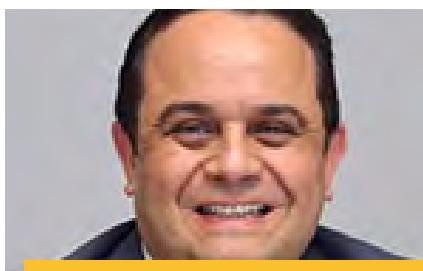
Eduardo Berton

Director of the National Access to Public Information Agency, Argentina



Besnik Dervishi

Information and Data Protection Commissioner, Albania (Host 2019)



Francisco Javier Acuña Llamas

President Commissioner, INAI, Mexico (Host 2020)



John Edwards

Privacy Commissioner, Office of the Privacy Commissioner, New Zealand (Host 2021 and Observer to the Committee)

The Chair offers her sincere gratitude to Raymund Liboro, representing the National Privacy Commission (NPC), Philippines, who announced he will be stepping down from the Executive Committee in 2020 at the end of his term.

The Chair also takes this opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution of the authorities of OPC Canada and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) for their work, whose terms on the Executive Committee expired at the end of the 41st conference in 2019.

The GPA's response to COVID-19

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting responses to contain the spread of the virus revealed common data protection and privacy challenges across jurisdictions within the GPA community.

Against the backdrop of the Assembly's strategic priorities of maximising the GPA's voice and influence and of enhancing capacity building for the Assembly – and **recognising the unprecedented challenges posed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – the Executive Committee directed an agile response, providing leadership to the GPA community**, and ensuring we maintain influence as individual members as well as collectively.

The Committee issued **two public statements**: [the first](#) setting out the Executive Committee's support for a coordinated response to the challenges arising from the pandemic and [the second](#) highlighting the importance of privacy by design in contact tracing measures.

The Committee also recognised the **importance of building synergistic relationships** to maximise opportunities for sharing knowledge and best privacy practices in the unprecedented context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, GPA held an **early joint workshop with OECD** in April 2020 and also quickly established a [resource library of statements and actions](#) taken by individual members, thereby enhancing capacity building for the Assembly as a whole.

The Executive Committee also recognised the need for a **sustained practical and strategic response to the emerging issues** arising from the pandemic. At an extraordinary meeting held on 23 April 2020, the Committee agreed to establish a GPA Covid-19 Taskforce, chaired by Executive Committee member Raymund Liboro, National Privacy Commission, Philippines.

Responding to the need for global and coordinated action, **33 GPA members and observers stepped up to join the Taskforce**, from the regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, and Oceania, as well as two global organizations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN Global Pulse.



Executive Committee member Raymund Liboro
Philippines National Privacy Commission

The first aim of the Taskforce was to identify the most pressing privacy issues emerging in the context of the pandemic in order to strengthen data protection and privacy authorities' roles as an enabler and protector during these unprecedented times.

As a first step, the Taskforce conducted a survey among the GPA community to identify the most pressing data protection and privacy issues and top priorities for immediate response. Building on this, the Taskforce produced the following outputs:

- **Compendium of Best Practice of the GPA community** to be presented at the GPA Closed Session in October 2020;
- Taskforce-initiated activities aimed at **enhancing capacity building** for the GPA membership community, including **two webinars** held in July 2020, on:
 - digital contact tracing which featured a presentation from Apple and Google;
 - the role of data protection and privacy authorities in confronting the pandemic.

- Outreach activities including collaborative capacity-building webinars. The Taskforce recognized the importance of building synergies through regional engagement and cooperation with relevant organizations in order to attain the GPA's strategic objectives. This resulted in the following joint events:
 - two joint webinars, one with the Centre for Information Policy Leadership (CIPL) and one with the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) both held in August 2020; and
 - a follow-up GPA – OECD workshop held in September 2020;

This active and broad engagement has achieved the GPA COVID-19 Taskforce's aims outlined above. The Taskforce has helped to increase the visibility of the GPA amongst a wider audience, amplifying messages and strengthening the role of the Assembly as a policy leader and influencer in the international privacy arena.

Other implications of COVID-19 for the GPA in 2020

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has also led the Executive Committee to ensure its planned deliverables across all the GPA's spheres of activity are realistic in this new, challenging context.

Accepting the Mexican member's decision to postpone the physical GPA annual meeting was important, resulting from **the need to adapt to the changes in the global environment and putting members' safety and health first**. The Executive Committee was committed to ensuring our community could still come together to progress work on key workstreams leading to the organisation of a virtual meeting, albeit with a slimmed down agenda compared to previous years.

Unfortunately this has impacted the GPA Awards which were postponed to 2021. The New Zealand authority, originally appointed as Host 2021, also agreed to defer their hosting of the GPA to 2022.

But doing things differently has not meant a lost year. On the contrary, it has shown that **we have been able to swiftly adapt to rapidly changing global circumstances**. We have responded to the needs of the GPA membership community, **supporting each other** in these difficult times and **making new stronger internal and external connections** through our online events.



Strategic direction sub-committee activity

2020 has been an unprecedented year for all of us – both personally and as a global privacy community. Despite the challenges we have each faced this year, I have been struck by the GPA’s resolve to ensure that 2020 is nonetheless a year of achievements.

Last year, the GPA adopted its Strategic Plan at the 41st Conference in Tirana which identified three ambitious strategic GPA priorities: to advance global privacy in a digital age; maximise the conference’s voice and influence; and capacity building.

This year an immense amount of work has been undertaken to bring that Strategic Plan to life. The Executive Committee established the Strategic Direction Sub-Committee (SDSC) to support the oversight of the GPA’s progress, particularly the co-ordination and review of the Policy Strategy actions. This year I have had the privilege to chair the SDSC and I am pleased to present its achievements below.

The SDSC has ensured the GPA working groups are resolutely advancing their workplans, and cohesively contributing to the shared GPA Vision. The SDSC has also focussed on developing a clear and transparent mechanism which will allow the GPA to have an active voice and influence year-round on data protection and privacy issues as they emerge. This work will ensure a global regulatory environment with clear and consistently high standards of data protection.

Thank you to my fellow SDSC members, Albania IDP, Philippines NPC and the UK ICO for their time and commitment, and to our Executive Committee Chair for her leadership through an unprecedented year. It has been an honour to work alongside you to help implement the vision of the GPA.

Reviewing Policy Strategy progress: engagement with working groups

Through its engagement with GPA working group chairs, including review of their quarterly progress reports and inviting them to attend and present at a ‘deep dive’ meeting throughout the year, the SDSC has maintained oversight and insight into the work continuing across the GPA. The ‘deep dive’ meetings brought to life the important work done, allowing the



Chair: Angelene Falk

Information Commissioner at the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

SDSC to review progress effectively, as well as giving working group chairs the opportunity to link in with each other where their work is complementary.

The SDSC would like to thank the GPA Working Group Chairs for their collaborative approach this year. In the 2020 online Closed Session, Working Groups will join the SDSC in a dedicated event to discuss progress made in implementing the GPA’s strategic direction and Policy Strategy.

Enhancing the GPA voice year-round: joint statements mechanism

The Strategic Plan identifies that a mission of the GPA is to be an outstanding global forum which provides leadership at an international level in data protection and privacy. The GPA has committed to maximising its voice and influence by being an active forum which engages on privacy and data protection issues year-round. With this aim in mind, the SDSC – on behalf of the Executive Committee – developed a detailed proposal for enabling joint statements to be made on emerging issues of global relevance outside of the Closed Session. The proposal was

endorsed by the Executive Committee. Following a membership-wide consultation, a revised version of the Procedure for Joint Statements is being put forward for adoption at the Closed Session.

Engaging externally: GPA observers

The GPA continued to be represented by its observers at international organisations: NPC Philippines at APEC; CNIL France at OECD; EDPS, EU at the Council of Europe and OPC Canada at the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee.

While the number of events might have been reduced this year in the current unprecedented global circumstances, our observers continued to engage where possible. A key part of the SDSC role is to develop and direct key messages for GPA external engagement, and to this end the SDSC has this year developed slide decks about the GPA's work for observers to use as they represent the GPA externally, as well as templates for observers to efficiently report back the details of their engagement to share with GPA members. The new, regular 'Observers on the road' feature in the GPA newsletter has also enhanced the visibility of the valuable work our observers do.



New feature – GPA reference panel

With the adoption of the Resolution on a Roadmap on the Future of the Conference in 2018, the Global Privacy Assembly mandated the Working Group on the Future of the Conference (FOTC WG) to develop a proposal on the creation of a contact group with external stakeholders. The proposal was presented and adopted at the 41st Conference in 2019.

The proposal recommended the creation of a GPA Reference Panel – a multi-stakeholder contact group aimed at **providing expert knowledge and practical expertise on data protection and privacy to the Assembly**. With the proposal's adoption at the 41st Annual Meeting, **the GPA Reference Panel has now become one of the Assembly's permanent pillars**, with the GPA Executive Committee – as the Assembly's representative body – being responsible for the proposal's implementation.

The call for interest and shortlisting process were launched for the first time in 2020. The application process closed on 15 May 2020, after an initial

extension aimed at further promoting the call amongst under-represented regions. A total of 33 applications were received from a variety of stakeholder groups across GPA global regions.

The GPA Secretariat conducted an initial shortlisting of the applications, on the basis of the selection criteria originally proposed by the FOTC WG and subsequently endorsed by the Executive Committee at its 57th meeting. The recommended shortlist was approved by the Executive Committee and the recommendation was circulated in September to the membership for approval.

Following the GPA Closed Session 2020, the set up of the GPA Reference Panel is currently ongoing.



GPA census

The Resolution on Developing New Metrics of Data Protection Regulation, adopted by the GPA membership at its 38th Annual Meeting in 2016, mandates the Executive Committee to undertake a Census of the membership every three years, centrally receive the results, make them available and calculate benchmarks.

The census is so important because it enables individual members to use information provided from other countries, whether it be about best practice or legislative features, to strengthen their own domestic legislative environment for protection of data protection and privacy.

This may range from effective ways to manage data breach notifications, to understanding variations in enforcement powers, to authorities' ability to raise public awareness and handle individual complaints. Many members struggle with attracting sufficient

resources from the public purse to do their job well, so sharing data can help shine a light on where governments can do better to support the right to data protection and privacy.

The second Census exercise was due to take place in 2020, with the membership consultation being carried out in Spring 2020 to allow enough time for the collection and analysis of the data to be presented at the 2020 closed session.

However, at its 58th meeting in April 2020, the Executive Committee recognised that the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in that timeframe and the impact this was having on the daily work of GPA member authorities deeply changed the landscape. As a result, the Committee made the decision to delay the 2020 GPA Census with a view to launching the Census consultation in October 2020 to gather the data. The census results will be published in 2021.



GPA conference communications

This year has been a pivotal, defining year for the Global Privacy Assembly (GPA) and external communications has been at the core of this transformation. These two key initiatives have significantly contributed to building success and establishing both the global reputation and recognition for the work of the GPA.



New GPA name and logo

The Resolution on a Roadmap on the Future of the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners (ICDPPC), adopted at the 40th annual meeting in October 2018, set out an objective to strengthen the Conference's visibility from an external communication point of view, to support its main missions, and included a commitment to:

“launch an inclusive internal process in order to adopt a new (shorter) name for the organization able to convey the ICDPPC main mission and objectives and to redesign the ICDPPC logo and overall visual identity”.

Adopting a fully inclusive, consultative approach, colleagues from the Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos Personales (INAI), Mexico undertook the challenge to design options for the new logo and name, with the membership having the final say at the 41st Conference in Tirana, Albania.

On 15 November 2019, the ICDPPC launched a new logo and a new name for the organisation: Global Privacy Assembly (GPA).

Francisco Javier Acuña Llamas, President Commissioner of the Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos Personales (INAI), México, explained:



Francisco Javier Acuña Llamas

“Thanks to the collaboration of our colleagues, we created a logo which represents the organisation's main attributes: international cooperation, knowledge sharing, independence and leadership.

“The implementation of elements that point towards progress, such as the arrow, indicates the leadership of the representatives of each country, and the circular forms aspires to reflect the exchange of knowledge and the capacity for cooperation among the international authorities involved.

“For the name of the Conference, it was sought to recall, in an easy and short way, the nature of the Conference itself, but not with less strength. And with the intention of expressing modernity and balance together with the other elements of the logo, Global Privacy Assembly (GPA) was created.”

Elizabeth Denham, GPA Chair and UK Information Commissioner, said:



Elizabeth Denham

"Our new name feels hugely significant. Data protection and privacy is now too great an issue for this community to only have a role once a year. In Tirana, we agreed a set of strategic priorities that strengthen the group's position as an effective and influential international forum. The new name reflects a group that supports one another year round, sharing knowledge and building stronger cooperation."

New look GPA Newsletter responding to GPA member interests/needs

Current audience reach for the Newsletter is more than 13,000 on social media, including many external policymakers and media, extending GPA members' voice and influence.

In January 2018, the Chair of the GPA launched the new GPA Newsletter. A year on, in January 2020, the GPA Secretariat canvassed the views of the GPA Membership and Observers on the Newsletter design and content.

Members liked the layout of the Newsletter, but offered suggestions on content.

Headlines from the survey results:

94% of respondents requested more features on current data protection and privacy issues.

82% of respondents requested more updates from the GPA Working Groups.

64% of respondents (Enough: 36%) requested more on members' and observers' work.

50% of respondents requested more content on Regional Perspectives.

41% of respondents (Unsure: 36%; No: 24%) called for a thematic focus for each Newsletter.

Consequently, the May 2020 edition provided a fresh approach, with a thematic focus incorporating the following new features:

- **‘Horizon Scanning’** – the Lead Feature – a thought piece by a notable, key international figure, taking stock of the current data protection/privacy landscape and the important emerging issues with relevance to best practice and innovation in data protection/privacy authorities.
- **‘Focus’** – a new feature which identifies a specific current/emerging data protection/privacy issue from the viewpoint of an expert in the field of data protection and privacy.
- **‘Case Study’** in best practice – an article on a given topic either related to the above articles or of particular timely relevance to the GPA Community.
- Expanded ‘News’ and knowledge sharing ‘for and from’ the GPA community.

The GPA Newsletter has been well received by the membership and the wider data protection and privacy community.



GPA Executive Committee acknowledgements

The Executive Committee wishes to thank the following individuals for their work:

The GPA Secretariat

For their contributions to the day-to-day running of the Secretariat: Christine Ferguson, Hannah McCausland, Fabiana Marinaro, Annabelle McGuinness, Victoria Cetinkaya, Debora Biasutti and Suzanne Forshaw with their ICO Communications Team. Overseen by Paula Hothersall, Director Regulatory Strategy (International) at the ICO, United Kingdom.

Acknowledgements for the work of the committee members' respective support teams

With particular recognition of the work contributing to the 2019-2020 Executive Committee business from: Eldor Budo, Segi Berberi, Pjerina Gaxha and the 2019 Host Conference team at IDP Albania; Rasiele Rebekah DL. Rellosa-Saguiguit, Alyssa Mae E. Tupas, Shaira V. Aragona, and Jerilyn Mae T. Argana for the Philippines NPC; Agustina Sirven, Mauro Meloni, and Juan Otero at the AAIP Argentina; Vanya Vida, Linda Williams, Annabel Fordham and Demi Mitchell at the New Zealand OPC; Elizabeth Hampton, Melanie Drayton, and Emi Christensen for the OAIC, Australia; Joaquín González Casanova Fernández, and José Joel Peña Llanes at Mexico's INAI; Steve Wood and James Dipple-Johnstone, Simon McDougall, John Kavanagh, Dave Murphy and the Private Office Team for the ICO, United Kingdom.

GPA conference contacts for more information

The GPA is active across several digital platforms. Sign up to our newsletter by contacting the Secretariat at:



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