



**GPA**

Global Privacy Assembly

# Member Welcome Kit

[globalprivacyassembly.org](https://globalprivacyassembly.org)

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# Welcome to the Global Privacy Assembly

**We would like to extend a warm welcome to all new member authorities and observers of the Global Privacy Assembly (GPA). This Welcome Kit is aimed at providing capacity building advice and institutional guidance on privacy and data protection regulatory matters, as well as representing a handbook on the GPA structure, functioning and useful contacts.**

The Welcome Kit was an initiative of the 40th conference in 2018, as the Assembly grows significantly across many global regions, and it is intended for distribution spontaneously to all new members by email.

We hope you enjoy reading through the Welcome Kit. If you have any queries or require any further information, please contact the Secretariat at [secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org](mailto:secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org)

## A brief history of the GPA

The Global Privacy Assembly (GPA), originally named as the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners (ICDPPC), is the premier global forum for data protection and privacy authorities. The GPA first met in 1979, and has continued to provide leadership at an international level in data protection and privacy for more than four decades.

The GPA has grown substantially and now connects the efforts of more than 130 data protection and privacy authorities from across the globe.

Global data protection policy issues generate a number of work projects which continue throughout the year in the GPA, culminating in resolutions to be adopted for the following year and statements addressed to governments and policymakers presented at the highly successful annual conference.

The purposes of the GPA are:

- a. To promote and enhance internationally personal data protection and privacy rights.
- b. To improve data protection and privacy by providing a forum that encourages dialogue, cooperation and information sharing.
- c. To draft and adopt joint resolutions and declarations on subjects that warrant the common interest or concern of the accredited members, and promote their implementation.
- d. To be a meeting point between accredited members and other international fora or organisations that share common objectives.
- e. To encourage and facilitate cooperation and the exchange of information among accredited members, in particular regarding enforcement actions.
- f. To promote the development of international standards in the field of protection of personal data.



[Read more about GPA's history](#)

# GPA Strategic Direction, Vision & Mission

## VISION

**“An environment in which privacy and data protection authorities around the world are able effectively to act to fulfil their mandates, both individually and in concert, through diffusion of knowledge and supportive connections.”**

This vision is part of the [GPA Strategic Plan](#) that also includes a mission statement, strategic priorities and an action plan, which was adopted in 2019 at the 41st ICDPPC in Tirana, Albania.

## MISSION

**The Assembly seeks:**

- To be an outstanding global forum for privacy and data protection authorities.
- To disseminate knowledge, and provide practical assistance, to help authorities more effectively to perform their mandates.
- To provide leadership at international level in data protection and privacy.
- To connect and support efforts at domestic and regional level, and in other international forums, to enable authorities better to protect and promote privacy and data protection.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2019 – 2021

### 1. Advancing Global Privacy in a Digital Age

- Work towards a global regulatory environment with clear and consistently high standards of data protection.

### 2. Maximising the Assembly’s voice and influence

- Enhance the Assembly’s role and voice in wider digital policy.
- Strengthen relationships with other international bodies and networks advancing data protection and privacy issues, including through observer arrangements.

### 3. Capacity Building for the Assembly and its Members

- Support Members’ shared learning from experiences, strategies and best practice from around the world, including cooperation tools.

# GPA Structure

## GPA Executive Committee

The GPA is led by a seven-member governance body, the Executive Committee, which consists of the elected Chair of the Assembly, four other elected members, the member state hosting the current conference and the member state that hosted the previous year's conference. These members, representing national authorities, will be elected by the Closed Session of the Assembly for two-year terms.

To the extent possible and to encourage diversity in the cultural, geographic and legal background of the Executive Committee, at least one member – and no more than two members – will be elected from each of the following four regions: Africa/Middle East, the Americas, Asia/Oceania and Europe.

The Chair of the Assembly has a crucial role in that he/she can provide a steer for the Executive Committee and the wider membership of the Assembly in order

to develop a coherent approach and bold international agenda in the age of borderless data flows.

This Executive Committee provides leadership for the Assembly and ensures the attainment of the Assembly goals.

The Executive Committee meets at least twice annually, in person or by video/teleconference, with three members required to constitute a quorum.

The GPA Secretariat is provided by the current Chair of the Assembly, Elizabeth Denham CBE, UK Information Commissioner, with a permanent website which acts as a central archive of the Assembly's documentation. The current Secretariat is based in the International Engagement department at the UK Information Commissioner's Office.



[View the current Executive Committee](#)

## Functions of the Executive Committee

a. To implement the decisions of the Assembly.

aa. To provide leadership to the Assembly in attaining its strategic goals.

b. To ensure the application of the resolutions of the Closed Session.

c. To seek proposals from member authorities by a specified deadline to host or co-host the annual conference; to evaluate such proposals; and to recommend a hosting or co-hosting

authority to the members of the Assembly with sufficient time to allow the selected hosting or co-hosting authority to execute orderly preparations.

i. If no member objects within a period designated by the Executive Committee, the recommendation will become the decision of the Assembly.

ii. If any member objects, the Executive Committee will as soon as practicable arrange for a membership electronic vote on the recommendation.

- d. To assist the Hosting Authority in organising the next annual conference.
- e. To draft press releases, statements and any other media resources.
- f. To appoint, for renewable two-year terms, representatives of the Assembly to attend and report back from those fora and/or international organisations in which the Assembly has observer status or to which the Assembly may be invited to attend. Insofar as possible, the delegates shall be representing different cultural, geographic and legal backgrounds.
- g. Recommend the accreditation of new Members or Observers.
- h. Consider requests to review the status of Member or Observers.
- i. To maintain a permanent Assembly website as a repository for Assembly documentation.
- j. To keep Members informed of the work of the Executive Committee.
- k. To ensure that processes are in place to support the operation of the Global Cross Border Enforcement Cooperation Arrangement.

## List of Member Authorities

The GPA is an entity in its own right representing the collective accredited members. Supervisory authorities that meet the criteria as set out under article 5.1 in the Assembly's [Rules and Procedures](#) can apply to be members.

The current membership consists of approximately 130 data protection and privacy commissioners who come together to share knowledge and skills, providing leadership and disseminating learning, with more joining each year.

[View the full list of member authorities.](#)

## List of Observers

Specific entities and organisations can take part in the Assembly with an Observer status. This may be granted for a particular annual meeting or for a period of time covering more than one annual meeting as set out under article 5.3 of the Assembly's [Rules and Procedures](#).

[View the full list of Observer authorities.](#)

# GPA Work in Practice

## Working Groups and their activities

The GPA membership is organised into Working Groups that concentrate on the more significant Assembly initiatives identified by the membership, deriving their mandate and direction from the Closed Session, typically leading from the Assembly Resolutions.

Observers can be invited to participate in Working Groups on an ad hoc basis. Participation is voluntary. Working Groups are chaired by one or more member authority, and can come from the same or different regions. Working Group Chairs encourage participation from all regions and insofar as possible, a Working Group's members represent different cultural, geographic and legal backgrounds.

Working Groups typically operate for a single year and their work culminates in a report given to the Closed Session of the annual conference. However, the Executive Committee is kept informed of their progress throughout.

Working Groups may be temporary or permanent, as stated at the time of their establishment.

Current Working Groups are:

- Policy Strategy Working Group  
Workstream 1: Global Standards and Frameworks
- Policy Strategy Working Group  
Workstream 2: Digital Economy
- Policy Strategy Working Group  
Workstream 3: The relationship between privacy/data protection and other rights and freedoms
- Digital Education
- International Enforcement Cooperation
- Ethics and Data Protection in Artificial Intelligence
- Digital Citizen and Consumer
- Digital Education
- Future of the Conference
- Data Protection Metrics
- COVID-19 related Privacy and Data Protection Issues
- Personal Data Protection in International Development Aid, International Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Would you like to join a Working Group? Any member can join a Working Group. Please contact the Secretariat at [secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org](mailto:secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org) to be put in touch with the relevant Working Group coordinator.

In particular, members new and old all have the opportunity to join the Working Group on the Future of the Conference, which will make important steps forward in 2021, in determining the way the conference is funded and organised.

You can view the latest Working Group Reports on our [website](#), as well as their [Quarterly Stocktake Reports to the Executive Committee](#).

## International Cooperation: Tools for cooperation with other GPA members

The International Enforcement Cooperation Tools can help GPA members advance their knowledge in many areas, including:

- Understanding members' respective enforcement powers and how they differ to other authorities.
- Assisting in identifying which other members are able to cooperate on a cross-border investigation.
- Deepening cooperation via relevant agreements between authorities.
- Identifying other sectoral regulators of importance to cooperate with, e.g. financial, competition, etc.
- Discovering opportunities to avoid duplication in investigations running in two or more jurisdictions.

Significant work has been done by Privacy Enforcement Authorities, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to improve cooperation, particularly in the areas of enforcement and investigation, by concentrating in the first instance on practical measures that the authorities can take. Those authorities whose legislation already enables cooperation are, in fact, cooperating increasingly, in different ways, which has yielded great successes.

However, legal barriers still exist for some authorities, either with respect to their ability, or breadth of that ability, to cooperate.

The GPA has long been an active proponent of enforcement cooperation among its members. A number of historic [resolutions](#) at the annual conferences have focussed on this and advanced members' collective thinking on this important topic.

The GPA website features a section dedicated to enforcement cooperation which also links to the [enforcement cooperation tools](#), such as the Key Principles on Cooperation, and the Global Cross Border Enforcement Cooperation Arrangement.

One particularly important resource which can serve as a useful starting point for new members, and which was developed by members of the GPA community is the [Handbook on International Enforcement Cooperation](#).

### **Are you thinking of running a workshop or seminar on enforcement cooperation?**

The GPA can also endorse and promote members' enforcement cooperation events.

The Secretariat developed guidance for authorities submitting a proposal to host a GPA-recognised Enforcement Cooperation meeting which is available on our [website](#).

In addition, the Secretariat has prepared [suggestions](#) for organising a successful GPA-recognised enforcement cooperation meeting.

You can contact the Secretariat at [secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org](mailto:secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org) to find out more about how to obtain recognition for your event.

### **Would you like to reach out to other authorities who have worked on advancing enforcement cooperation?**

A list of previous events recognised by the GPA can be found [here](#).

The most recent work on international enforcement cooperation was undertaken by the GPA Working Group on International Enforcement Cooperation (IEWG) in 2017-2019.

For more information, you can contact the Secretariat at [secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org](mailto:secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org) to be put in touch with the authorities from the United Kingdom, the OPC Canada and the FTC of the USA, which are the Co-chairs of the IEWG working group.

Another important resource demonstrating effective GPA cooperation is the COVID-19 Taskforce Response Repository.

On 23 April, the GPA Executive Committee convened an extraordinary meeting to discuss the GPA response to data protection and privacy challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Committee agreed to establish a COVID-19 Taskforce. The National Privacy Commission of the Philippines represented by Privacy Commissioner Raymund Enriquez Liboro was appointed to chair the Taskforce.

The aim of the Taskforce was to examine data protection and privacy concerns, while finding the right balance between supporting innovation to combat the pandemic and ensuring individual's personal data and information rights are respected.

The focus would be on providing practical assistance to the GPA membership, enabling a practical response to the issues raised by developing insight through collaboration with GPA networks and stakeholders and establishing best practice through the delivery of capacity building activities.

The significant outputs of the 2020 work of the Taskforce have both informed and aided the global response by data protection and privacy authorities to the impact of COVID-19 on data protection rights, as both protectors and enablers. The outputs are listed below:

- The [COVID-19 Resources Repository](#) – a comprehensive database of guidance, statements and news items released by the GPA data protection and privacy authorities regarding the response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The '[Compendium of Best Practices](#)' – a document which brings together examples of best practice initiated by 52 member authorities and which focuses on five policy areas of critical significance during the Pandemic;
- Four capacity building Webinars and a [Workshop jointly held by the GPA and the OECD](#); and
- [The Resolution on the Privacy and Data Protection Challenges arising in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), a document which establishes the remit of a temporary Working Group on COVID-19 related Privacy and Data Protection Issues to continue the work of the former Taskforce to 2020-2021.

For more information on the COVID-19 Taskforce, please see the [COVID-19 Taskforce Response Repository](#) webpages on the GPA website. Please note: The Taskforce was operational between April – October 2020. If you wish to become a member of the new Temporary Working Group on COVID-19, please contact the GPA Secretariat.

## Rules & Procedures

The Rules & Procedures express the GPA's purposes and set out its governance arrangements and the processes for its annual meetings and ancillary matters. The Rules and Procedures as consolidated in their present form took effect in October 2019.

A consolidated version of the Rules and Procedures, incorporating amendments has been compiled by the Secretariat and is available [here](#).

## Resolutions

The GPA began routinely adopting and publishing resolutions in 2003, when firm procedures for submitting and adopting resolutions were in place.

Members or Working Groups may submit proposed resolutions or declarations to the Chair of the Executive Committee, with a copy to the Hosting Authority for consideration at the Closed Session of the annual conference.

Proposed resolutions or declarations must have at least four other co-sponsors, representing insofar as possible, different cultural, geographic and legal backgrounds.

Proposed resolutions or declarations are circulated to all GPA Members in advance for review and for the proposal of amendments, and following debate and Q&A in the Closed Session of the annual conference, it will be voted on by accredited members.

Proposed resolutions or declarations should be:

- clearly and concisely expressed;
- address matters that are sufficiently related to the purposes of the GPA;
- an offer of enduring guidance or contributing to public debate on matters related to data protection of privacy rights; and
- made available in English and the language of other major linguistic communities.

View more information on [Adopted Resolutions](#).

**Declarations and communiques** have been released by the hosts of various annual conferences both before and since the establishment of formal criteria and rules for adoption of resolutions. These differ from resolutions in that they often have not been debated by GPA Members, nor voted upon, but instead seek to celebrate and mark the event and reflect the spirit of the presentations and discussions.

View more information on [Declarations & Communiques](#).

## GPA Census

The GPA runs a census every three years since 2017. The second census launches in December 2020 until February 2021 with the intention of finalising analysis of results and presenting these to the 2021 Closed Session.

The GPA Census was designed to contribute to the aims of the [Resolution on developing](#)

[new metrics of data protection regulation](#) which include to:

- develop internationally comparable metrics in relation to data protection and privacy; and
- support the efforts of other international partners to make progress in this area.

The GPA Executive Committee would like to warmly encourage all GPA Members, and particularly those new to the GPA, to contribute a response to the GPA Census. It is important that we obtain via this exercise an accurate picture of the data protection and privacy landscape so that we can position the GPA in the best way for internal and external communications and projects.

If you have not received your invitation to join the Census by mid December 2020, then please contact the Secretariat who will be able to arrange this for you.

View more information on [GPA Census](#)

## Key dates

The GPA website has an [Events Calendar](#) which provides information on upcoming events of interest to the membership. We invite you to share the dates of key events upcoming on data protection and privacy in your jurisdiction and global region.

# Making the most of your membership

## Benefits and opportunities

We welcome new members to the Global Privacy Assembly (GPA) and hope that the information contained so far has helped with your understanding of its role and work.

We have included a list of new members below, as the GPA wishes to encourage the use of the 'Buddy Groups' – a list of authorities prepared to provide guidance to new members on how to make the most of the membership opportunities available.

List of New Members:

- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Bermuda, The Islands of Bermuda
- Cayman Islands Ombudsman, The Cayman Islands
- Data Protection Commissioner of Canton of Bern, Canton of Bern (Switzerland)
- Data Protection Commissioner, Dubai International Financial Centre

List of New Observers:

- The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC)

For more information or if you wish to take part in the 'Buddy Groups' project, please contact the Secretariat at [secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org](mailto:secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org)

## Resource repository

Members have offered some golden nuggets from their knowledge bank of resources in the [list](#) below which they believe might offer some assistance to new authorities which are just starting up.

The 2019 conference also presented ideas on management strategies of data protection authorities.

You can find a variety of ideas about good practice undertaken by other member authorities in the GPA community by visiting our roundup of the **Global Privacy and Data Protection Awards** entries [here](#). The Awards did not take place in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, but we intend to run these again as soon as possible.

Finally, the GPA website [resources page](#) also enables access to the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII) Privacy Law Library.

The International Privacy Law Library is the world's largest freely available online searchable database of privacy cases in one place.

## Contacting your member community

If you wish to contact another authority member, have you seen the list of [GPA accredited members](#)? Many members have a social media presence, so you can also follow them via these [channels](#).

You can also see the [Working Groups section](#) for a list of the relevant coordinators in charge of activities in each Working Group.

You can also contact the Secretariat at [secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org](mailto:secretariat@globalprivacyassembly.org) which can assist you in making contact to a particular authority.

## Other networks

The GPA as the premier global forum for data protection and privacy authorities has established collaborative relationships with other networks, for example, the African Network of Data Protection Authorities, the Ibero-American Network, the European Data Protection Board, the Common Thread Network (CTN), Global Privacy Enforcement Network (GPEN) and Asia-Pacific Privacy Authorities (APPA).

Moreover, the data protection authority members of the GPA also participate in a variety of networks of different kinds whether focussed on a specific regulatory/enforcement topic (e.g. border enforcement and telecommunications) and these exist at different geographic levels, either regionally, or globally.

In addition, the GPA has formal reciprocal observer arrangements with the following organisations:

- APEC Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG),
- OECD Data Privacy Committee,
- Council of Europe Committee of Convention 108,
- International Standards Organisation (ISO); and,
- UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The GPA is open to proposals for observing activities relating to data protection and privacy at other international organisations too. The Executive Committee will review existing arrangements in 2021.

Some privacy and data protection networks are also arranged on the basis of common language or cultural affinities.

Specialist networks can involve GPA member authorities. Some of these networks involve only member authorities while others include participation of other experts, government representatives or enforcement authorities.

More information can be found about this range of networks on our [website](#). While the GPA works closely with some of these networks, it should not be assumed that there is an established relationship between the GPA and these other networks in all instances.