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EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR

A SMALL INSTITUTION WITH A BIG TASK

by Courtenay Mitchell, EDPS

The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) is a small institution with a big task – to make sure that all EU institutions and bodies respect people’s right to privacy, when processing their personal information. **Xanthi Kapsosideri and Amanda Joyce tell Commission en direct about their experience working for the European Union’s youngest institution.**

What did you do before joining the EDPS?

Amanda Joyce: Directly before joining the EDPS, I was working in DG JUST’s Data Protection Unit in the Commission. I worked there for eight years, before joining the EDPS as an Assistant two years ago. I came to Brussels for a break, having already worked four years as a secretary in Ireland, but I ended up staying here!

Xanthi Kapsosideri: My background is in law, which I studied in both London and Paris. Cyprus joined the EU soon after I qualified as a lawyer, and curiosity led me to Brussels. I was working as a trainee in the Commission’s Legal Service in 2004, when the EDPS was established. I joined the EDPS in 2005, so I’ve been here a long time and I’ve seen a lot of changes – data protection is an evolving subject, and the Institution is always adapting to reflect this.

How does working at the EDPS compare to places you have worked in the past?

A. J.: I love the fact that the EDPS is a small institution. There are around 60 staff in the whole institution and, after working in a big unit in a big DG in the Commission, I was actually quite nervous about coming here. It’s been fantastic though. I know everyone who works here! In only my first week I met Giovanni Buttarelli, the Assistant Data Protection Supervisor. He invited me into his office, offered me a chocolate, and we even shared a joke! I remember thinking: “Wow, they really do have an open-door policy here, even on the top floor!”

X. K.: That’s a really positive thing for me, too. We’re like a small family here, with a wide range of expertise. We all cooperate, communicate and interact at a high-level to make sure we get the work done and produce results.