



*Concluding remarks at the 10th Computers, Privacy and Data Protection Conference*

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Happy 10th birthday to CPDP!

An esteemed New York Times journalist has just published a book about the speed of technological change.

The title of Thomas Friedman's book is "Thank you for being late".

(As an Italian I can approve of this!)

The book says that 2007 was one of the biggest moments for technology. Android and the iPhone were launched, Twitter and Facebook went global, AirBnB was founded.

So you see, CPDP anticipated this by one year. And its short life has charted perhaps the most extraordinary decade for society and technology.

My sincere congratulations and thanks to Paul and all the team who have put this together. The biggest ever CPDP.

1020 participants.

Many new young people.

A new beautiful fringe venue in Maison d'Autrique for discussing risk-based approaches, data capitalism and reflections about integrity and sponsoring privacy conferences.

Here in the main building rooms have been full from 8.45am to 6pm or and even later with side panels on voters privacy and ethics and robot agency.

It is an honour for my institution to have been part of CPDP from the start.

This conference uniquely reaches out beyond the confines of traditional policy circles.

And now you can carry CPDP around with you anytime, anywhere, because you can watch the panel sessions online.

The CPDP organisers have allowed space for an extraordinary cacophony of problems and trends in technology, in the commercial space and in government.

And the panels have been orchestrated into a magnificent symphony of potential solutions.

Everyone is able to rub shoulders and learn from each other on a neutral platform and on an equal footing.

You might recall that last year I invited you to prepare for Star Wars.

The epic film franchise seemed to epitomise the Zeitgeist of privacy and humanity at the beginning of 2016.

This year I would love you to promise you a future in La La Land.

But of course the world is far from being a romantic musical.

Big moments in our lives are not punctuated with pretty tunes.

And few of us have the opportunity to dance in front of a purple sunset seemingly painted by Van Gogh.

We are in a very uncertain place.

It's easy to forget that 2016 provided cause for celebration for those of us who have fought and laboured hard for modernised rules on data protection in the EU.

We have continued to see countries around the world emulating the approach taken by the Council of Europe and the EU.

The courts have continued to uphold and deepen our understanding of the correct application of principles of human rights.

Alongside the trends of adopting personal data and privacy laws with effective enforcement bodies, there are counter trends around the world - the construction of enormous databases of personal and sensitive information, either with too little control over who can access, or with too much control by state actors.

We have also seen a reversal in many countries of their protection of human rights and the freedom of civil society to advocate the rights of the weak and the vulnerable.

I predict that connected people around the world will soon begin to understand why we have data minimisation and purpose limitation, and now accountability, as essential principles of data protection.

People will realise that the limitless accumulation of personal data, including the most intimate genetic and biometric data, creates the risk of a tsunami (to use Caspar Bowden's analogy).

We cannot assume that the hands which use the data will be as benign as the hands which collected it.

I hope we do this the easy way, not the hard way.

Now is the time to think about values and turn them into reality on the ground.

In the EU, regulators like me, and controllers have 483 days to become fully ready to enforce or to comply with the GDPR and the directive on data protection in law enforcement and criminal justice, plus - I expect and hope - the ePrivacy Regulation and the Regulation on data processing by EU bodies.

That is, 322 working days - assuming you have the occasional day off!

As for my institution, we are approaching the half-way point of our mandate.

So in May this year we will be relaunching our strategy, with a fresh focus on getting the EU institutions ready for the new data protection and ePrivacy rules.

In collegiality with fellow independent DPAs, we will be preparing the new EDPB.

And we will take a truly global outlook.

To reflect this, we will shortly have a new-look website - if you go to our website you will find a short video about it.

And I can announce today that in the week of 25 September this year, in Hong Kong, together with the UN Special Rapporteur for Privacy, Joe Cannataci and the Belgian DPA, we will be hosting a major conference on Prospects for Global Privacy, with experts from all regions of the world, to take stock of where we are, and where we should be going.

This will be a side event to the International Conference of Privacy Commissioners. And I hope many of you will be able to contribute.

A lot of discussion on ethics and accountability this week.

But we need to start to internalise the notion of accountability, far more important than box ticking compliance.

And we need to apply these principles to international data flows.

I cannot predict the fate of the Privacy Shield. But this is just one bridge among many which need to be built in today's global society.

Here is one clear lesson from the events of 2016:

We have to start speaking a different and more direct language. Not always easy for lawyers.

And we have to start thinking about the real impact which current practices is having on ordinary women, men and children.

People who have no interest in the details of human rights or data protection law, but who know what it feels like when their rights are infringed.

People don't talk about their data protection rights.

They talk about their freedom to do what they want and to be left alone.

That is the big challenge for this year.

To escape La La Land, and get our hands dirty with the reality of people trying to navigate the digitised world which they are increasingly expected to inhabit.

Today we mark Data Protection Day, or Data Privacy Day, or European Data Protection Day - we should really try to harmonise the description next year!

But today something much more important and solemn is happening.

It is Holocaust Memorial Day. It is a reminder that totalitarianism did not happen overnight.

A reminder to all of us how fragile freedom and dignity are.

Because it's easy to weaken one right, and when you weaken one right it makes it even easier to weaken another one. And so on.

So we assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital and in every hall of power - from this day forward, we have a new vision:

It's going to be only fundamental rights first.

Fundamental rights first.

So, people, let's build those privacy bridges.

It's gonna be big. It's gonna be so beautiful.

And together we will make privacy great again.

Here's to the next 10 years of CPDP.

Thank you for listening.

I wish you all a very safe journey home.