



EDPS PRESS RELEASE

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"Building a new institution": European Data Protection Supervisor presents first annual report (2004)

Peter Hustinx, the European Data Protection Supervisor, and Joaquín Bayo Delgado, Assistant Supervisor, presented today their first annual report (2004).

The new independent authority started from scratch, but thanks to assistance of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, a successful start was made. "One year ago, there was very little apart from a legal basis and two newly appointed members of a new authority. Today, we have a multidisciplinary team of some 20 individuals ensuring data protection at European level", Peter Hustinx observed with some satisfaction. The EDPS has developed the capacity to carry out his mission with growing effectiveness. His duties, as described in Regulation (EC) 45/2001, are threefold: "supervision", "consultation" and "cooperation".

It is a new experience for Community institutions and bodies to be bound by data protection standards and to be supervised. "The full implementation of the Regulation has now become urgent. After all, the EU cannot afford not to deliver on the rules it has imposed on itself and on the member states, and which are also visible in the Constitutional Treaty currently subject to ratification", Hustinx said.

The EDPS has the intention to become a key player in the debates on freedom, safety and security in the 21st Century. So far, the institution has taken position in the debates on criminal records and the Visa Information System. "Other opinions on the subjects of data retention, e-monitoring and Schengen II are to be expected in the near future", says the Supervisor, who clearly pictures himself as a reliable and predictable player in the process of European legislation.

Hustinx: "It is my ambition to promote a high level of data protection in all EU policies." This clearly indicates that issues of data protection will be high on the European agenda in the months and years to come. The European Court of Justice validated the EDPS' broad interpretation of his mission. Peter Hustinx concludes: "A growing number of the EU's activities depend on the lawful use of personal data. Data protection should therefore be seen - and of course acted upon - as a condition for their success."

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A policy paper on the advisory role of the EDPS can be found at:
<http://www.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB/edps/site/mySite/lang/en/pid/21>