

**International Data Protection Day  
28 January, 2012**

Your Excellencies, Dear Guests,

I also would like to welcome you on behalf of the Hungarian Data Protection Authority.

You know that today everyone, working in the data protection field, is celebrating. Thirty-one years ago, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, the Council of Europe opened *Convention 108, the Data Protection Convention* for signatures. *The Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data* identified a common set of principles that have been key to the development of privacy protection legislation in Europe and beyond. Today, Data Protection Day is observed throughout the world, as virtually everyone--from government entities to private citizens--recognizes the need for standardized, transparent privacy protections and rights awareness.

So why are data protection standards so important in our lives?

When you swipe your credit card, order a book on-line, chat with your friends, you share information with others. Ideally, you know with whom. You have to trust the controller; otherwise you cannot use these services.

Online transactions that require users to share personal data have become routine. But of course there are risks. An ever-evolving technological landscape provides a steady supply of new opportunities to collect, disseminate and potentially abuse personal data.

How can you protect your privacy in a world that is so tightly stitched together by electronic data? Facebook has started revolutions. But where doesn't it reach? Where shouldn't it? Where does privacy end and public interest begin?

Here in Hungary, the day holds special meaning as it quite closely coincides with the establishment of the new Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, which came into being on January 1st of this year. New beginnings, however, do not have to mean that we are unable to benefit from the past. Our staff members bring with them many years of experience in data protection and freedom of information. Familiarity with the issues will be key to effectively handling the cases that have already been submitted to our office.

And such experience tells us the tasks ahead of us are more involved than merely following the rules. We do that, most definitely...but there's more. The defense of those rules has to reflect our core European values, and fairly balance a myriad of interests. We have to work cooperatively with a range of stakeholders, yet maintain complete independence.

With this in mind, the Authority keeps an open door. Let's stay in touch to ensure that Europe's best practices when it comes to privacy protection are implemented here in Hungary. This is what we are working on, and we do hope that we'll have the opportunity to cooperate with your countries, with your organizations, in the future. Thank you for your kind attention, and enjoy your meal.

---