

International Working Group
on Data Protection
in Telecommunications

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

**Working Papers ‘E-Learning Platforms’
and ‘towards International Principles or Instruments to Govern Intelligence Gathering’ adopted**

The International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications, chaired by the Berlin Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Ms. Maja Smoltczyk, has adopted Working Papers on E-Learning Platforms and on International Principles to Govern Intelligence Gathering at its 61th meeting in Washington D. C. (USA) on 24-25th April 2017.

Working Paper on E-Learning Platforms

The use of e-learning platforms which becomes increasingly popular in many countries leads to an increase in the amount of digitized personal data being generated about students and their behavior and performance. In addition, detailed digitized data about pupils and students may drive the demand for increased use of data within education, including the use of so-called “learning analytics”.

This development may lead to a lack of transparency if parents and students have no access to the data used to make decisions and the decision-making process. Moreover, the risk that private companies collecting data on such platforms might also use it beyond the academic objective is evident. Apart from obvious marketing purposes such data could even be used to make real world decisions about student future opportunities, including employment, housing, and credit.

The Working Paper on E-Learning Platforms outlines these and other privacy risks for students associated with such platforms. It provides recommendations for educational institutions, e-learning platform providers and data protection authorities handling with such platforms without infringing key privacy principles.

Working Paper ‘Towards International Principles or Instruments to Govern Intelligence Gathering’

In recent years, partly in response to the revelations of Edward Snowden in 2013, there has been increased public awareness and discussion of the tensions in the digital arena between States’ interest in national security and individuals’ rights to privacy. One consequence of the policy debate about the legitimacy of, and conditions under which, governments undertake interception of communications, is that there is growing consensus there should be some internationally agreed principles governing these activities.

The International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications holds that with their experience and expertise in data regulation and the promotion and protection of the right to privacy in law enforcement and security contexts, data protection authorities have a unique and important contribution to make. It is timely for data protection authorities to promote approaches to improve the governance of intelligence gathering in accordance with principles that reconcile respect for the right to privacy with the legitimate needs of national security.

The Working Paper ‘Towards International Principles or Instruments to Govern Intelligence Gathering’ outlines the recent calls for consensus on international standards in this field and provides recommendations for data protection authorities contributing to the development of new principles.

The papers are available for download at <http://www.berlin-privacy-group.org>.

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The Working Group has been initiated
by Data Protection Commissioners
from different countries in order
to improve privacy and data protection
in telecommunications and media

About the International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications (“Berlin Group”)

The International Working Group on Data Protection in Telecommunications (IWGDPT, a.k.a. “Berlin Group”) includes representatives from Data Protection Authorities and international organisations dealing with privacy matters from all over the world. It was founded in 1983 in the framework of the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners at the initiative of the Berlin Commissioner for Data Protection, who has since then been chairing the Group. The Group has adopted numerous recommendations (“Common Positions” and “Working Papers”) aimed at improving the protection of privacy in telecommunications. Since the beginning of the 90s the Group has focused particularly on the protection of privacy on the Internet.

More information about the Work of the Group and the documents adopted by the Group are available for download on the website of the Group at <http://www.berlin-privacy-group.org>.