Proposed Resolution on Conference Organisational Arrangements

Proposer: Privacy Commissioner, New Zealand

Co-sponsors:

- Privacy Commissioner, Australia
- Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong
- Information Commissioner, United Kingdom
- Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Federal Data Protection Commissioner, Switzerland
- Information and Privacy Commissioner, British Columbia
- European Data Protection Supervisor, European Union
- Data Protection Commissioner, Ireland
- Federal Data Protection Commissioner, Germany
- Data Protection Commission, Belgium
- Data Protection Commission, France
- Data Protection Commissioner, Poland

Resolution

That the 28th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners resolve to establish a working group to:

(a) prepare a document recording existing organisational arrangements of the conference and the conference’s expectations of hosts
(b) explore ideas for improving organisational arrangements with a view to ensuring the continued viability of annual conferences and promoting continuous improvement and to offer recommendations to the 29th Conference.

Explanatory note

The International Conference of Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners is now into its third decade. It continues to grow in size and to be valued by participants. The need for effective cooperation between data protection authorities is recognised now more than ever before and the conference has a key part to play.

The conference should have a strong and bright future. However, in the last seven years one conference ended without any arrangements settled to host the next and on two occasions hosts have withdrawn their invitations.

It is timely to reflect on the organisational arrangements underpinning the conference given the growth in size. This is an opportunity to build on earlier work. For example, in 1996 a survey was undertaken of all participants as to the future
shape of the conference leading to an options paper. The conference has, from time
to time, reflected on aspects of its organisational arrangements and documented a
consensus. It has also implemented an accreditation regime that places the
conference on a sound footing to move forward.

The resolution anticipates a working group being established to study the issue and
provide fully thought out proposals back to the conference. The resolution identifies
two tasks.

**Record existing arrangements**

The resolution first calls upon the working group to document existing arrangements
at a general level. It might, for example, consolidate in a convenient single place
certain positions the conference has previously taken in relation to, for instance,
charging fees, admitting observers and selecting hosts three years in advance. It
might touch on such aspects as the usual month, translation arrangements and
processes for selecting future hosts. In addition to its value as a guide to future hosts
it will provide a useful starting point to formulate any proposals to alter current
arrangements.

It is suggested that the accreditation framework, and processes for adopting
resolutions, be excluded from the consideration of the working group as those
aspects have already been the subject of detailed recent work.

**Exploring ideas for change**

The working group would explore ideas for improving organisational arrangements.
Given the experiences this year, consideration should be given to steps to ensure the
continued viability of annual conferences. Perhaps the processes for identifying and
selecting hosts need to be refined rather than leaving that matter to a brief
consideration in the closed session of the conference. This might involve, for
example, circulating “bids” to host the conference in advance as is done for
proposed resolutions. Perhaps an executive committee is needed to take proactive
steps to ensure that there is a schedule of sound hosting arrangements into the
future. Other options may be identified by the working group.

The working group would also look at other means by which the organisational
arrangements underpinning the conference can be refined to promote continuous
improvement. For instance, are there means by which the expectations of
participant authorities can be better captured and translated into conference
organisation? Would mechanisms such as programme committees and satisfaction
surveys be useful? Can the conference better facilitate the transfer of experience
from host to host?

It is expected that in this phase the working group would solicit views from
participants and also revisit ideas previously placed before the conference but not
implemented (such as the 1996 options paper and the Montreux Declaration
proposal for a permanent conference website).