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Many European national Data Protection Authorities call for new EU and national laws on action needed when personal data is lost or stolen

A new survey and report by Privacy Laws & Business suggests that amendments to data protection legislation at both the EU and national levels are likely to tackle lost and stolen personal data, often known as data breaches.

The data breach notification laws which started in California have now spread to most of the USA. They have had an immense impact on companies which now take privacy far more seriously, recognizing the damage that can be done to their reputations by failing to protect the personal data, such as customer or employee data, in their care. The UK's Information Commissioner has received reports of hundreds of cases of data breaches since November 2007 when the HMRC data loss occurred. He published guidance for all sectors and Ireland's Data Protection Commissioner followed up with its guidance earlier this week.

Over the last two years the question of how the European Union should legislate on notifying data breaches to affected individuals and the regulatory authorities has become a conflict between European institutions, such as the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers. This conflict is at the core of the European Union's E-Privacy Directive covering, for example, Internet Service Providers. Which sectors should be covered? What constitutes a security breach? What should companies do?

Privacy Laws & Business will be unveiling the results of its 15 month survey and report on attitudes of 21 European national Data Protection Authorities towards EU and national data breach laws at its conference on Wednesday April 22 2009 in Edinburgh.

Stewart Dresner, Chief Executive of Privacy Laws & Business, said: "The conference and report will include the latest news on how the EU's E-Privacy Directive is expected to cover data breach requirements. It will also look at whether there is a need for specific legal provisions at EU and national levels on action to be taken when personal data is lost or stolen. The advantages and disadvantages of mandatory data breach notification provisions for Data Protection Authorities, companies and individuals will also be addressed. What is the best way to prevent such incidents occurring?"

The conference takes place the day before the European Data Protection Commissioners' annual conference, hosted by the UK Information Commissioner's Office in Edinburgh so several national Data Protection Commissioners have registered for this Privacy Laws & Business event.

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Notes to editors

1. The conference 'Data breach notification laws in Europe' takes place on Wednesday April 22 in Edinburgh when the report will also be published. Press passes are available. Further information on both registering for the conference and ordering the report are at http://www.privacylaws.com/Documents/data_breach_conference.pdf
2. Twenty-one Data Protection Authorities participated in the survey. They are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guernsey, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jersey, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The contribution from Switzerland was given by David Rosenthal, a Special Counsel at the Homburger law firm in Zurich.
3. Privacy Laws & Business provides an independent international privacy laws information service. Clients include many of the world's largest companies and specialist lawyers in almost 50 countries. In the United Kingdom, the company provides services to help its private and public sector clients comply with both the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act. The company's website is www.privacylaws.com