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INTERESTING POINTS

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# Celebrating the European Data Protection Day

The protection of personal data and respect for private life is one of the fundamental rights of the European Union. Regardless of whether they are performing *Online* purchasing, opening a profile on a social network or doing research on medical examinations they plan on doing, they are, in fact, forced to enter their personal data almost every day. Depending on the service, one will often be asked to enter their name, address, email address, PIN or credit card number, so the protection of personal data is necessary, and the exchange must be carried out in accordance with the laws in order to ensure the necessary protection, as emphasized by the European Commission.

It's been almost ten years since the European Council adopted a decision that the 28 January of each year will mark the European Data Protection Day. In fact, in 1981 on this date the 108 Convention was signed - the first legally binding international instrument adopted in the field of data protection of individuals, the purpose of which is to guarantee the right to privacy of natural persons when processing personal data in each of the signatory countries.

The protection of personal data is of utmost importance for official statistics. One of the fundamental principles of official statistics that are used in all international statistical systems is the principle of statistical confidentiality, which guarantees that the data collected for statistical purposes will not be used to identify individual statistical units. On the basis of the Law on Official Statistics (NN, Nos. 103/03., 79/09. and 59/12.) concerning the confidentiality and protection of statistical data, statistical data on natural persons and legal entities, if they may be directly or indirectly associated with a person or entity, are considered confidential and are classified. Confidential data collected for the purposes of official statistics may only be used for statistical purposes and shall only be published in an aggregated form.

The issue of protection of personal data is particularly pressing at the time of the most important and most extensive survey by the National Bureau of Statistics carried out every ten years - The census of population, households and dwellings. Before and during the implementation of the Census, we get frequent inquiries from concerned citizens on whether the data collected by the Census are considered classified. Individual data collected by the Census are classified and as such are not published or forwarded to anyone for any purpose, which is, in addition to the Law on Official Statistics and the Law on Protection of Personal Data, regulated by the Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings.

Croatia is also taking part in celebrating this day whose primary goal is to acquaint Europeans with their rights regarding the protection of their personal data. In order to stress the importance of this issue, the Croatian Personal Data Protection Agency named privacy ambassadors – five public persons who, despite their popularity, try to keep their private lives private.

Whether citizens are afraid of sharing personal data over the Internet and how much they trust official institutions – find out in the last year's Eurobarometer survey of public opinion on data protection (<http://bit.ly/1PUDe3u>).

Sources: europa.eu, coe.int, ec.europa.eu azop.hr

