



Press Release

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## **EuroPriSe celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and looks forward to acting as an accredited certification body under the GDPR**

*On June 07, 2007, the kick-off meeting for the EU-funded project “European Privacy Seal (EuroPriSe)” took place in Kiel/Germany. 10 years later, EuroPriSe has developed into a well-established and renowned certification program for IT products, services and websites with its network of 100 accredited experts in 18 countries. At this time, when there is less than a year to go until the General Data Protection Regulation becomes applicable, EuroPriSe awaits its accreditation as a certification body under the GDPR.*

The idea of a European Privacy Seal assumed shape in 2004 when trust and accountability increasingly became factors and data protection their essential conveyor. EuroPriSe was first introduced as an EU-funded project. The EuroPriSe project phase lasted from 2007 until 2009. During that period, a general framework for the European Privacy Seal was established and is essentially valid until today. Three data protection authorities (DPAs) took part in the initial set-up of the certification criteria and procedures, namely the DPAs of Schleswig-Holstein/Germany (ULD), France (CNIL) and the community of Madrid (APDCM).

From 2009 until 2013, EuroPriSe was operated by ULD. Today, the European Privacy Seal stands on its own feet, profiting from its advisory board including current and former high-level representatives of several European DPAs. “I am very proud to see EuroPriSe at the forefront of data protection certification, having served as a model from the beginning. EuroPriSe clearly shows that trustworthy and accountable certification provides benefits to business and citizens alike,” says Kirsten Bock, former lead and initiator of EuroPriSe.

“Against the background of our traditionally close ties with EU data protection authorities, our long-term experience in the field and the presence of our not less than 100 accredited experts from 18 countries all over the globe, EuroPriSe is well-prepared for the co-regulatory approach of Art. 42 f. GDPR and for making a major contribution to a future European Data Protection Seal,” says Sebastian Meissner, Head of the EuroPriSe Certification Authority. “We are ready for GDPR and strive towards accreditation as a certification body soon, since the date of the GDPR’s applicability approaches rapidly, and companies have already indicated high interest in certification pursuant to Art. 42 f.”

EuroPriSe is convinced that a truly European approach is of the utmost importance for the success of data protection certification under the GDPR. Without a common EU GDPR baseline certification, there is a high risk of the emergence of a multitude of seals of different quality, particularly on the Member State level. This would jeopardize the intention of the European legislator to particularly encourage certification mechanisms at Union level and is

predestined to cause confusion on the part of consumers and organizations alike. It may even have the potential to result in a race to the bottom in terms of cost and quality as well as in forum shopping.

Experience already indicates that focusing on technology or sectors like “Cloud Services” or “Banking,” “Health” and “Games” does not work for privacy certifications. Nowadays, websites rely on cloud services and banking apps and games make use of health data for specific purposes. Categorizing certification schemes is, thus, expected to lower the acceptance of certificates in general.

The vast experiences that EuroPriSe gained over the past 10 years offers a bouquet of knowledge in trustworthy certification, which can make an important contribution for the future European Data Protection Seal to ensure the consistent application of the GDPR by all Member States and stakeholders.

EuroPriSe calls upon European regulators to bestow consideration to contribute to harmonisation and not to fragmentation when deciding about the parameters of certification under the GDPR.

### ***About EuroPriSe***

EuroPriSe started as an EU-funded project aimed at establishing a trans-European privacy seal. Today, EuroPriSe offers certifications for IT products, IT-based services and websites throughout the EU. A unique certification, the EuroPriSe seal assures users that their personal data are handled in accordance with European data protection laws. As the only EU-wide, independent privacy seal, EuroPriSe enables enterprises to demonstrate their compliance with European laws and regulations. EuroPriSe certifications have been awarded to businesses of all sizes, including small and medium-sized companies as well as multinational organizations such as Microsoft, SAP and Siemens.

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