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PRESS RELEASE

Data Protection Day 2020

Tuesday 28th January is Data Protection Day, an annual event celebrated internationally to commemorate the importance of privacy and data protection.

To celebrate Data Protection Day, the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (the "GRA"), as the Information Commissioner (the "Commissioner"), carried out a public Data Protection Survey (the "Survey"). The Survey found that the majority of individuals are concerned about not having control about the information that they provide to organisations and that data protection is important. The results also indicate that the public's experience and/or views in relation to the public sector are significantly poorer than that of the private sector.

For organisations, protecting the personal data of individuals is an issue of risk and trust. On the one hand, protecting personal data mitigates the likelihood of significant, costly incidents, including reputational loss and regulatory penalties. On the other hand, protecting personal data is also essential to an individual's trust in the organisation. Organisations depend upon the trust of their existing and prospective customers, clients, business partners vendors, and employees. When this trust is lost, it can have a devastating impact on both the organisation and the individual.

The Survey consisted of 17 questions aimed at learning about the public's -

- a. awareness of data protection;
- b. awareness in respect of the use of their personal data; and,
- c. trust in how personal data is being handled by public and private sector service providers.

The Survey was made available on the GRA's social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for a period of 3 months and a total of 120 responses were received.

In the following, the Commissioner outlines some of the Survey's findings:

- Nine out of ten individuals show concern about not having control over the information they provide to organisations, which highlights the importance of data protection to individuals.
- The results show that the public recognises the increase in data processing in today's world, but equally show that individuals do care about the information they share with organisations, even when doing so in return for free services. Combined, the results highlight the importance of data protection to the public, particularly in an increasingly digital and data driven world.
- Three quarters of respondents stated that they would be "very concerned" if organisations used information about them for a different purpose than the one it was collected for. The result highlights the importance of ensuring that data is used in a transparent manner and in accordance with the expectations of individuals.
- The results clearly indicate that the public's experience and/or views in relation to the public sector are significantly poorer than that of the private sector.
- Health and medical institutions were identified as the sector that should be of most concern to the GRA in terms of non-compliance with data protection law.

Going forward, the Commissioner will continue to explore the further development of public engagement to learn about the public's concerns and perception in relation to data protection as well as raising awareness.

The full Survey Report is available to download from the GRA's website.