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**MONTENEGRO**

**AGENCY FOR PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION AND FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**No.**

**Podgorica,** **30. 5. 2019.**

**JOINT STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE "INITIATIVE 20I7"**

In the spirit of fostering quality and continuous cooperation of regional authorities for the protection of personal data, the "Initiative 20i7", which brings together representatives of independent bodies of the countries of the former Yugoslavia, was formed in 2017. By signing the Declaration on Mutual Cooperation of Personal Data Protection Authorities within the Initiative, regular annual meetings and active exchange of expert opinions, experiences and best practices have been agreed with in order to solve the common challenges we face in protecting personal data, in particular the challenges brought by the General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR.

The aim of the "Initiative 2017" is that the supervisory authorities in the region find common solutions and share their experiences in addressing the dilemmas in this area of human rights.

The third "Initiative 20i7" held on May 26 - 28 2019 was hosted by the Agency for Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information of Montenegro.

The leaders of independent supervisory authorities for personal data protection from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia gathered at the third session of the Initiative 20i7.

The session presented the compliance status of national legislation with the General European Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Participating countries are at different stages of alignment with European regulations, and they face similar problems. Besides Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia, other participants did not adopt regulations for the implementation of the European legal framework (General Regulation and Police Directive). Therefore, the representatives of independent personal data protection supervisory authorities agree that states should strive to adopt laws as soon as possible

. Although only two are EU Member States, harmonized legislation is important for all states in the region for economic development and legal safety of the data controllers and the protection of the rights of individuals. All supervisory authorities warn that laws should be clear (lex certa), effective and compliant with the General Regulation, the police directive and the modernized Convention 108+ of the Council of Europe. Laws must not diminish the accomplished degree of protection of individual rights, and it is very important to clearly define procedures.

Participants of the meeting were acquainted with the Draft Law on Personal Data Protection of Montenegro, which was submitted by the Ministry of Interior to a public hearing, which was the subject of an analysis by representatives of the supervisory bodies of countries of former Yugoslavia. It was jointly noted that supervisory bodies, as the most responsible for law enforcement, must have more active participation in the process of transposing the GDPR into national legislation.