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EU-INDIA: The RISE Consortium hosts a High Level Meeting in New Delhi on Biometrics and Security Ethics

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On the 24th and 25th of September 2009, the EU funded initiative RISE will promote a meeting in New Delhi organized by the Data Security Council of India (DSCI). The meeting will focus on communalities and differences between the EU and India regarding the vital policy issues of security, data protection and privacy. The overall goal of this event is to promote and foster international conversation between India and Europe on these topics.

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They are both a union of states, they both represent an example of ethnic, socio-cultural and religious diversity and they are among the world's largest democracies: they are India and Europe. India and Europe are a unique example of shared values, intercultural dialogue and strong strategic partnership. No wonder why India has become a privileged partner for Europe. Not only the two countries share common political objectives, such as countering terrorism, resolving regional and international conflicts, cooperating in the face of natural disasters, but they have also established a strong economic relationship making the European Union India's top foreign investor and leading trading partner.

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India has been one of the best performers in the world economy in recent years and Business Process Outsourcing has undoubtedly contributed to this rapid development. BPO has seen a tremendous growth in the past years with increasing revenues. In line with the growth of this market, great concerns have been raised on the security and data protection of the transnational flows to outsourcing companies. Western users have put the Indian government under increasing pressure to implement regulations according to European and US data protection standards, for the safeguard of privacy and to create appropriate confidence among foreign investors.

BPO outsourcing however is not the only field affected by data protection issues in India. The recent news of the Indian government initiating the plan to provide each citizen with a biometric-based National Identification Card (UID project) has captured the world's attention. It is the biggest identification project ever put in place that will eventually involve 1.2 billion citizens.

"We have the opportunity to give every Indian citizen, for the first time, a unique identity. We can transform the country", Nandan Nilekani - cabinet minister and head of the project - said. The biometric identity cards will provide an identity also to the millions of people that do not possess any proof of existence and it is hoped that it will help fighting terrorism and criminality. But the huge online database that will retain citizens personal information may represent a threat for privacy and data protection.

The meeting will take place at the TAJ PALACE HOTEL. Speakers will include EU and Indian authorities, stakeholders from industries, leading Universities and opinion leaders.

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 Data Security Council of India - A Nasscom Initiative

About the RISE Project

RISE (Rising pan-European and International Awareness on Biometrics and Security Ethics) is a 36 month EU funded project which aims at setting up an international initiative to monitor ethical and policy issues raised by biometrics and security technologies. RISE aims to deepen, enlarge to Asian actors and ensure continuity to European and international dialogue already instigated by the two linked projects BITE (<http://www.biteproject.org/>) and HIDE (<http://www.hideproject.eu/>), and by the two previous conferences on ethics and biometrics organized by the EC DG Research and the US DHS Privacy Office respectively in 2005 and 2006. The RISE project will involve key European and international actors in an ongoing, policy-related, non-official, dialogue on privacy and ethics of biometrics and security technologies.

For further information, please visit the RISE website: <http://www.riseproject.eu/>

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