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RISE, DSCI to host meet on biometrics & security ethics

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By **I4S India**

The meeting will focus on communalities and differences between the EU and India regarding the vital policy issues of security, data protection and privacy.

India and the European Union (EU) 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.

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 does the two regions 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.

On the 24th and 25th of September 2009, the EU-funded initiative RISE (Rising pan-European and International Awareness on Biometrics and Security Ethics) will promote a meeting in New Delhi organized by the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), a self regulatory organization created by Nasscom. The meeting will take place at the Hotel Taj Palace.

Security, data protection and privacy


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. Speakers will include EU and Indian authorities, stakeholders from industries, leading universities and opinion leaders.

India has been one of the best performers in the world economy in recent years and business process outsourcing (BPO) 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 effected 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 UID 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.

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