



10 Years of the Brussels Privacy Hub: A Decade of Data Protection Leadership

By the Brussels Privacy Hub

BRUSSELS PRIVACY HUB

A TRIBUTE TO TEN YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The Brussels Privacy Hub marks a significant milestone in 2025: Our 10th Anniversary! Since opening in 2014, the BPH has grown into a global authority on privacy and data governance, guided by an interdisciplinary lens spanning legal, technological, ethical, economic, and societal concerns. Ten years ago, Professor Paul De Hert and Professor Christopher Kuner laid the groundwork for an entity that would be dedicated exclusively to the study and promotion of privacy and data protection. With the support of Professor Serge Gutwirth, Professor Mireille Hildebrandt, Professor Gloria González Fuster, and other prominent figures at VUB, the BPH formally launched in 2014. During those years, our Directors have played an immense role in preserving our values and carrying out our mission through transformational leadership. Their efforts established the BPH as a high-impact research centre, an influential policy adviser, and expanded our network and team.

Notably, Professor Gianclaudio Malgieri, our Director from 2021, led an organizational growth, reinforcing strategic partnerships, increasing our media and institutional visibility. Under his guidance, the Hub advanced research on data, AI governance, and data ethics as well as the launch of VULNERA, an observatory dedicated to understanding the factors affecting individuals' and groups' vulnerabilities in the digital world. His leadership also helped expand BPH's engagement with policymakers and academia through conferences, workshops, and training programs, which proved not only a success but also reinforced the BPH's influence.

In 2023, Professor Sophie Stalla-Boudillon joined the BPH's leadership team as a Director, building on her extensive background in data protection law, cross-border data flows, and emerging technologies. She has introduced new opportunities for interdisciplinary research and policy innovation, further solidifying the Hub's role as a thought leader in privacy and data governance. Through her efforts, the BPH continues to forge partnerships with diverse stakeholders, refine interdisciplinary approaches, and shape advanced discussions on emerging challenges such as regulation and digital sovereignty, thereby ensuring the Hub's continued impact on critical debates in data protection.

In all those early years, the BPH broadened its research programs and educational outreach. We achieved significant milestones:

Academic Leadership

BPH swiftly became a go-to reference for cutting-edge research on the General Data Protection Regulation, transatlantic data flows, and the interplay between data protection and fundamental rights. Peer-reviewed articles, policy briefs, and stakeholder consultations positioned BPH scholars at the centre of the European and global privacy debate.

Public Engagement and Training

From hosting our annual Summer Academy to co-organizing international conferences, the BPH championed an inclusive approach to education. Workshops welcomed participants from all backgrounds, students, professionals, regulators, and journalists, fostering rich dialogues on emerging data protection challenges.

Policy Impact

Over the years, the BPH team has contributed to consultations, legislative proposals, and guidance documents at both EU and national levels. By offering rigorous research and evidence-based insights, the Hub has helped shape policy frameworks that balance the free flow of information with the imperative of the protection of individual rights and autonomy.

Global Reach

While rooted in Brussels, the BPH has developed robust links with universities and research centres. International collaborations, often involving joint conferences and research projects, have broadened the Hub's influence, turning it into a node in a vast global network of privacy and data protection experts.

Reflections on a Decade of Achievement

Looking back on the last ten years, a number of characteristics stand out as integral to the Hub's success. First, there is the collaborative spirit embedded in its foundation. Second, the Hub's commitment to interdisciplinarity has been critical, in recognizing privacy as both a fundamental right and a social value. Finally, the Hub's strategic position has allowed us to participate directly in the conversations shaping Europe's regulatory landscape.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our founders, directors, researchers as well as students who have passed through the BPH's doors. Thanks to their energy, curiosity, and passion, we can now celebrate our 10th anniversary.

Present Challenges and Future Vision

As we celebrate, we also recognize the challenges ahead. Technology has been advancing at an incredibly fast rate. But as technology advances, so do inequalities in power. At the same time, sustainability issues are becoming more urgent. The intensification of global data flows has triggered new legal and ethical debates around data sovereignty and data as infrastructure, data commons and data intermediation, data spaces, cross-border transfers, and the extraterritorial reach of data protection law.

The BPH is committed to confronting these emerging issues. In the coming years, our mission continues with:

Cutting-Edge Research

Delving deeper into AI governance, algorithmic transparency, and data ethics, while continuing to examine the operational realities of the GDPR and related legal frameworks.

Bridging Regulatory Gaps

Working closely with EU institutions, national supervisory authorities, sectoral regulators and international bodies to ensure robust yet adaptable legal protections in a data-driven world.

Expanding Education and Outreach

Offering trainings, seminars, and resources for both privacy professionals and the general public, because data protection is ultimately about empowering individuals and communities.

Fostering Global Dialogue

Strengthening our partnerships worldwide and creating new opportunities for multinational collaboration on pressing privacy and data protection challenges.

A Decade Behind Us, A Longer Future Ahead

Ten years on, the Brussels Privacy Hub is a reflection of what can be achieved through shared vision, collective expertise, and unwavering commitment to human dignity in the digital age. As we reflect on our history and look toward the next decade, we do so with sincere commitment, knowing that the need for clear-eyed, principled, and collaborative work on data protection has never been greater.

To everyone who has contributed to the Hub's journey—founders, directors, researchers, partners, and friends, we extend our heartfelt

THANKS!

Your dedication has helped build an institution that not only champions privacy and data protection as fundamental rights but also serves as a global platform for dialogue, innovation, and knowledge exchange.

THIS IS WHY WE INVITE YOU TO OUR ANNIVERSARY!

We celebrate our 10th birthday with a special event: [Navigating Tomorrow: A Data Protection Decade and Future Challenges in the Algorithmic Era](#). This celebration is scheduled for February 5, 2025, starting at 14h, and will be held at the VUB Campus, Building I.

In conjunction with the anniversary, BPH is hosting its first Winter Academy, [AI & Law Crossroads](#), on February 6-7, 2025. This two-day academy will explore the EU's digital rulebook for AI, examining intersections between the AI Act, AI Liability Directive, GDPR, and sector-specific impacts. For more information, please visit the [Brussels Privacy Hub's official website](#).

As we step into a new chapter, our hopes are high: to continue shaping the contours of data protection law and policy, to inspire new generations of privacy and data protection scholars, and to ensure that human rights remain at the forefront of an ever-accelerating technological landscape. Together, we look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the next ten years will surely bring.

The Brussels Privacy Hub Team