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Former UK Information Commissioner Richard Thomas CBE Joins Hunton & Williams

Hunton & Williams is pleased to announce that [Richard Thomas CBE](#), the former UK Information Commissioner, has joined the firm as Global Strategy Adviser.

Richard Thomas was the UK's Information Commissioner from November 2002 until his retirement at the end of June 2009. He was appointed by HM The Queen and held independent status, reporting directly to Parliament, on a range of regulatory, promotional and advisory responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and related laws. He also served as a member of the European Union's Article 29 Working Party on Data Protection. In June 2009, Richard was awarded Commander of the British Empire ("CBE") for public service.

Richard joins Hunton & Williams' Privacy and Information Management practice, one of the world's leading privacy and data protection practices. The practice is consistently ranked highest in the key global rankings, including the annual *Computerworld* survey of corporate privacy leaders of Fortune 1000® companies, where Hunton & Williams has been ranked the No. 1 law firm for the past three consecutive years. Richard will join partner Bridget Treacy, who leads the Global Sourcing and Privacy practices in London, and Christopher Kuner, head

of the practice in Brussels, advising UK and international clients on privacy and information management strategies.

He will work closely with and contribute to Hunton & Williams' Centre for Information Policy Leadership, a leading data privacy and information think-tank. Founded in 2001 by Hunton & Williams and a number of global corporations to develop innovative, pragmatic approaches to privacy and information security issues, the Centre has stimulated international discussion of many key privacy issues, including governance models for international data transfer and privacy legislation in emerging economies. The Centre also pioneered the concept of layered privacy notices. Richard will bring his experience and expertise to develop further the Centre's body of knowledge on new approaches to global data protection strategies and policies across both the public and private sectors. He will, alongside other privacy practitioners worldwide, help to develop new policy perspectives on the management of data risk and privacy protection.

[Lisa Sotto](#), New York-based head of the firm's Privacy & Information Management practice, said, "Richard Thomas's appointment in London is very exciting for us, and we know that he will be an invaluable resource for our clients. His

career at the top levels of government and industry will provide our clients with the crucial regulators' view on the effective management of cross-border data flows, as well as emerging privacy issues such as cloud computing, e-discovery and behavioral advertising."

[Bridget Treacy](#), who leads the Privacy & Global Sourcing practice in London, commented, "Our clients require practical advice on the use of information as an asset, to ensure competitive advantage. They need privacy strategies that will enable, and not hinder, their commercial ambitions, whilst ensuring that individuals' rights are safeguarded. As a regulator, Richard was known for his pragmatism and his creativity. We are delighted that our clients will now benefit from his insights."

According to Brussels-based partner [Christopher Kuner](#), who leads the firm's European Privacy Practice, "Given Richard's key role in working to implement a more efficient framework for approval of binding corporate rules by data protection regulators, his presence at Hunton & Williams will be of tremendous value to our clients seeking to implement BCRs."

Commenting on his arrival, Richard Thomas said, "I am delighted to be joining, without doubt, the leading Privacy and Information Management practice. Advances in technology have generated global data flows on a scale which was unimaginable when most laws were

drafted. The scope for things to go wrong — with damage to individuals and to organizational reputations and prosperity — is still not fully appreciated. The difficulties faced by national laws in coping with the challenges of cross-border activity accelerate the need for new thinking. Privacy and data protection have moved center stage, but many laws have gotten left behind in the last century. I am, however, optimistic that opportunities for meaningful reform are now opening up in Europe, in the United States and among the APEC economies. The Centre for Information Policy Leadership at Hunton & Williams has done some great work in articulating the case for new approaches to privacy. I have long been an admirer of the Centre and I look forward to playing an active part in carrying forward this thought leadership agenda, as well as sharing my views with the firm's clients."

About Richard Thomas CBE

Richard Thomas was the UK's Information Commissioner from November 2002 until his retirement at the end of June 2009. In September 2009, he took over as the part-time Chairman of the UK's Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council ("AJTC"), to which he was appointed by the Lord Chancellor. The AJTC reviews the accessibility, fairness and efficiency of the arrangements for resolving disputes between governmental bodies and individuals. He was also appointed to the Board of Directors of

the International Association of Privacy Professionals ("IAPP"), the world's largest association of privacy professionals.

He previously held various public appointments including membership on the Lord Chancellor's Civil Justice Review Advisory Committee and on the Board of the Financial Ombudsman Service. He currently serves as Deputy Chairman of the UK Consumers Association and has been awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Southampton and is a visiting Professor at the University of Northumbria.

About Hunton & Williams' Privacy and Information Management Practice

Hunton & Williams' [Privacy and Information Management](#) practice group assists organizations in managing privacy and security risks associated with the collection, use and disclosure of consumer and employee personal information. The firm's lawyers counsel clients on new and evolving global legal requirements that affect the use of information and work closely with clients to conduct full-scale privacy assessments. Hunton & Williams' privacy and data protection lawyers understand the global policy issues and business processes that inform the current privacy debate both in the UK and US, as well as overseas, and apply that knowledge in providing legal advice.



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