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**DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY  
COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION, COMPUTER AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**Working Party on Information Security and Privacy**

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON AUTHENTICATION FOR ELECTRONIC  
COMMERCE**

**OTTAWA, 7-9 OCTOBER 1998**

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## **FOREWORD**

The Declaration on Authentication for Electronic Commerce was adopted by Ministers at the Ottawa Ministerial Conference held on 7-9 October 1998. At its 934th session, on 19 October 1998, the Council adopted a resolution integrating this Declaration into the instruments of the Organisation.

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**DECLARATION ON AUTHENTICATION FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE**

**made by OECD Ministers  
at the Conference “A Borderless World:  
Realising the Potential of Global Electronic Commerce”  
7-9 October 1998, Ottawa, Canada**

**The Governments of OECD Member countries\* :**

**CONSIDERING:**

the significant social and economic benefits offered by information and communication technologies and electronic commerce;

the leading role of industry in developing information and communication technologies and electronic commerce;

the need for government and industry to foster user confidence to facilitate the growth of global electronic commerce;

the rapid development of authentication technologies and mechanisms, and their importance in the context of global information and communication technologies and electronic commerce; and

the potential impact that diverse national solutions for electronic authentication could have on the development of global electronic commerce.

**RECOGNISING:**

that work is underway at the international level to facilitate transborder electronic transactions and the use of authentication technologies and mechanisms to foster the growth of global electronic commerce;

that transacting parties may select appropriate mechanisms which meet their needs for authentication in conducting electronic commerce, including particular authentication technologies, contractual arrangements and other means of validating electronic transactions, and that they can use judicial and other means of dispute resolution to prove the validity of those transactions;

that governments can play a role in promoting electronic commerce as a user of information and communication technologies, products and services, including electronic authentication mechanisms;

that technology or media specific rules for recording, storing or transmitting information (for example, certain paper-based requirements) could impede the development of electronic commerce and the use of electronic authentication mechanisms;

that, where appropriate, market-driven, rather than government imposed, standards and codes of practice can provide a useful tool for developing user confidence in global electronic commerce; and

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\* including the European Communities.

the continuing dialogue within the OECD -- involving governments, business and industry, and user representatives -- to discuss the technologies and diverse models for authentication to facilitate global electronic commerce which are currently in use or emerging in Member countries, and in particular the ongoing work of the Organisation through its Information, Computer and Communications Policy (ICCP) Committee, to facilitate information exchange by compiling an inventory of approaches to authentication and certification and convening joint OECD-private sector workshops in the year ahead.

**DECLARE THEIR DETERMINATION TO:**

take a non-discriminatory approach to electronic authentication from other countries;

encourage efforts to develop authentication technologies and mechanisms, and facilitate the use of those technologies and mechanisms for electronic commerce;

amend, where appropriate, technology or media specific requirements in current laws or policies that may impede the use of information and communication technologies and electronic authentication mechanisms, giving favourable consideration to the relevant provisions of the Model Law on Electronic Commerce adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in 1996;

proceed with the application of electronic authentication technologies to enhance the delivery of government services and programmes to the public; and

continue work at the international level, together with business, industry and user representatives, concerning authentication technologies and mechanisms to facilitate global electronic commerce.