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Obituary for Spiros Simitis - end of an era On March 18, 2023 Prof. Dr. dr H. c. multi. Spiros Simitis passed away. The conference of the independent data protection supervisory authorities of the federal and state governments (data protection conference) mourns the loss of one of the founders and designers of data protection in Germany and Europe. With him, data protection loses an eloquent advocate and at the same time a sensitive and clever defender who took up new developments with curiosity and adeptness and continued to think constructively. Greek by birth, European by conviction and passionate about data protection. In his person, Spiros Simitis combined the science and practice of data protection. Since 1969, as a professor of labor law, civil law and legal informatics in Frankfurt am Main, he was a pioneer of data protection, especially from a labor law perspective, and supported the development of the world's first data protection law, the Hessian Data Protection Act of 1970. From 1975 to 1991 he was Hessian data protection officer and used his knowledge and persuasiveness to ensure data protection in the application. His winning demeanor made him a sought-after discussion partner and consultant at home and abroad. As part of the Council of Europe and as an advisor to the EU Commission, Spiros Simitis has had a significant influence on the foundation of data protection in Europe. He made a significant contribution to laying the foundations on which data protection law is built today and in the future. Even after his retirement, Spiros Simitis continued to work with great skill and intellectual brilliance to protect the right to informational self-determination. In numerous publications and leading comments, but also in effective political advice, he was constantly involved in the further development of data protection law. With him, an era of the reorganization of data protection law ends with the laying of the foundations; At the latest since the General Data Protection Regulation came into force, data protection has arrived at the core of all digitization and in the middle of society. Part of the legacy of Spiros Simitis is to ensure the freedom of individuals through law under the conditions of dynamically developing information and communication technologies. The data protection conference is committed to this legacy. In the spirit of Spiros Simitis, she will protect, defend and further develop the rights and freedoms and in particular the informational self-determination of citizens. We will miss Spiros Simitis.

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