The Extraordinary General Assembly meeting was split into 4 different sessions: “On-line Mass Surveillance”, “Internet Governance”, “Privacy” and “Intellectual Property Rights”. The Institute for Legal Informatics deals with questions that arise in the field of tension between Privacy, Economy and Security. Therefore, the Privacy session was organised by the IRI. Chair and moderator of the session was Prof. Joe Cannataci.

The first speaker was Dr. Jens Lütcke from SOFORT AG. Sofort is a startup offering payment services for internet. Lütcke identified four keys for development of e-commerce in Europe: Search, Platforms, Social Services and Payment Services. 3 out of those 4 are dominated by US-companies (Google, Amazon, Facebook), only payment services is still a market open for European industry leader. ‘People who see what you pay for are those who know what you are really interested in as you are even willing to pay for it’, he argues. It’s important to develop a European position in this market for this reason. However, US-companies try to enter the market aggressively.

Businesses need common standards, as needing to speak to 28 different authorities is an obstacle for pan-European players. The market does not work on a national level. Lack of technical expertise within data protection authorities is also an issue as lack of knowledge causes lack of confidence. Mistrust in technology is a permanent issue. Data protection and data security law can – in Lütcke’s judgement - be misused to keep new players out of the market – in particular in the payment industry.

His main conclusions are: Rules need to be enforced and enforceable. We have a lot of rules, but many of them are not enforced. The market today is dominated by players not necessarily following the rules. Regulators need better technical understanding. Risk analysis should be standard procedure of regulators. Finally, a global view needs to be found – Europe is not an island.

Extraordinary General Assembly Stakeholder's meeting held in Rome