

**mindtheDATA**

## **Creating a data protection culture among SMEs**

ERASMUS +

Strategic partnership – VET

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### **Methodological framework for the development of business consultants training material towards creating a data protection culture in SMEs**

*Research findings in Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, and Spain*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The current document has been developed in the frame of IO1: TASK4 “Development of methodological framework for the development of ‘Digital training modules for business consultants and online environment” under the project mindtheDATA.

Its main **objective** is to lay down the **methodological framework** for the development of the Digital training modules and online environment for business consultants, with the aim of supporting them in leading successful consulting sessions/support on GDPR compliance for SMEs.

The present methodological guide defines a set of guidelines for the development of the supporting/training material for business advisors/consultants in terms of **outline, suggested topics** and **structure of curriculum**, encompassing instructions for the content development under IO2.

Therefore, the current document provides the matrix upon which the development of the actual material will be based; attends user-friendliness and responds to the preferred ways of presentation of training topics and material on behalf of business consultants; suggests ways to promote the content through certain levels of interaction (e.g. interactive tests, presentation etc.).

According to the methodology framework, a set of digital modules will be developed both content wise as well as technically, to be made available in an online training environment. The proposed structure of the training material (IO2) will consist of **3 core Modules** addressing different topics. The development of the digital modules’ material will be split among partners. This will lead to a diversified approach to cover different work environments, organizational cultures within SMEs and within countries, however allowing for an EU wide approach, which in turn responds to the EU scope of GDPR and the new data protection principles.

In particular, the following are proposed herein:

- Modular flow, namely Modules, units, i.e. proposed curriculum structure and sequencing
- Definition of learning outcomes
- Definition of the main topics to be addressed towards the development of the actual content in IO2 in each module, unit, subunit
- Instructions for the content development under IO2
- Breakdown of tasks per partner

- Recommendations for the use of assessment tools for the users (test modalities to assess knowledge after the completion of modules and/or units).

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Overview of the theoretical background & IO2 objectives

According to the project- mindtheDATA, the main **objective** of the Digital training modules and online environment for business consultants to be developed under IO2 is to provide **advisors** with certain set of tools, guidelines, practices, knowledge drawing directly from the logic of GDPR to support SMEs as parts of the European SME ecosystem to fully integrate the principles of data protection into their organisational culture not only as an obligation, abiding to the regulation, but most importantly as an opportunity to be exploited at organisational level towards competitiveness and innovation as vital parts of GDPR compliance as a business driver. In order to achieve this, the training modules will help **consultants/advisors** to better address mindsets and everyday data protection habitus, competences and skills that **are needed** at the workplace world on the managerial and employee level, as they are mediated by a new data protection regulation.

**The training provision (IO2)** seeks to expand the 'professional profile' and support skills of business consultants and VET trainers in business and management, to be further fertilized in their everyday support provisions to SMEs. This provision will address both sides of the SME organizational, managerial, and everyday course spectrum, that is, that of the role of the consulting actors (in VET and consulting), as well as that of the actors within an SME. Thus the structure of the training provision provides consultants with 'umbrella' plus concrete knowledge and practices that cover general aspects of the new data protection framework for EUs digital economy and society and the world of SMEs (based on the principles of GDPR), specific steps to be assessed/further elaborated by SMEs as parts of an integrated GDPR strategy according to their scope of activities and their GDPR 'readiness', workplace principles of action, management and communication, that eventually will facilitate a data protection culture as a new business driver within a company, focusing on the points where data protection regulations meet data management, privacy, competitive advantages, consumer empowerment and business development.

The training modules to be developed aim to showcase and highlight the importance of GDPR for SMEs as a business differentiator, as well as the 'beyond compliance' multiple benefits for SMEs, which will methodologically transcend the training material as a whole, showcasing drivers and benefits for SMEs throughout GDPR practices.

The methodology framework will draw from the results of the research phase of the project (IO1-TASK2&TASK3), as well as from the expertise of the consortium members in the field of entrepreneurial and professional support.

The **target group** of the Digital training modules and online environment (IO2) consists of **business consultants and organizations** (professional business coaches, institutional bodies supporting labor market and enterprises /Chambers of Commerce etc./, VET trainers/organizations in business management, HR consultants/professionals, management/strategy/operations and marketing consultants).

Therefore, the proposed guidelines have been mainly based on the findings derived from the extensive **desktop** and **field research** that had been carried out in four project countries/Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain/ for the purposes of the development of the project training material, on business consultants' needs in guidance and education on:

- supporting the SMEs to integrate the principles of data protection into their organisational culture and the mindsets of their human capital, not merely as a compliance element, but as a beneficial tool into their organisational culture (e.g. new, innovative ways to use data)
- GDPR as a competitive advantage (e.g. reviewing and development of in-company policies which can lead to more transparency and thus trust for the customer base)
- Supporting SMEs to accept GDPR as a tool for consumer empowerment (i.e. placing consumers and their rights at the center and by empowering them, empowering businesses and SMEs).

Therefore, the training modules (IO2) will be designed on the grounds of a sound **theoretical framework** structured on the basis of:

- **the needs identified at the stage of the application:** these needs have been described in the project application and a short overview is provided in chapter 2.2

- **the needs identified through desktop research** for the purposes of IO2 that refer to both content and methodology ( IO1,TASK2) in chapter 2.3
- **the needs identified through the quantitative and qualitative field research** for the purposes of IO2, a short overview of whom is presented in chapter 2.4( IO1,TASK3)
- **the principles of adult education, constructivism and e-learning** that apply to this specific learning context, presented in chapter 2.6

## 2.2 Needs identified at the stage of application

According to the primary research undertaken for the purposes of drafting of the project proposal, the foreseen subjects of the training modules for the business advisors should deal with the following indicative aspects:

**MODULE 1:** Pivotal, general aspects of the new data protection framework for EUs digital economy and society and the new SMEs environment.

**MODULE 2:** Integrated GDPR strategy according to SME scope and readiness, in particular:

- 1) Data protection in EUs digital society and economy
- 2) Where does my SME stand and what should it do?
- 3) Data protection in everyday workplace

**MODULE 3:** GDPR ‘beyond compliance’ as business driver

## 2.3 Needs identified through the desktop research

The intent of the desktop research was to understand what SMEs in the researched countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Poland), had done and were doing in relation to the GDPR, where they were getting information and support, what challenges they were facing, and what actions from business consultants would be helpful for them.

Based on the gathered secondary information, here are the **conclusions** that could be done:

- SMEs may be aware of the GDPR, but they **are lacking resources** to get them to **adequate level of compliance** -“**awareness**” might be less of a problem than “capacity”. Awareness doesn’t always lead to compliance or implementation – awareness is often seen as a



necessary first step towards GDPR compliance, but often insufficient in the absence of other drivers and influences and the knowledge to put compliance into practice.

- Personal data protection and regulatory framework is not new in the project countries, but it has not worked this good in practice since now.
- As a common problem **during the compliance procedures** among the SMEs from the project countries is the **exact knowledge of what data to collect and process at each stage** of their activities, who and what tools and processes are involved during the processing, **defining and separating their business needs** and the systematic review to meet GDPR requirements at each stage of data processing.
- Overall in the project countries, the Data Protection Authorities are known, but they are not known as a source of knowledge and information.
- The GDPR presents significant opportunities for SMEs, however utilized, that can help to substantially improve the way SME's perform daily business, resulting not just in the formal compliance, but the achievement of positive signage through this process. Consequently, for SME's it is a continuous journey of compliance that can become a business success journey.
- SMEs **need access to inexpensive and easy-to-use solutions for GDPR compliance**, through consultancy support, information and training.

Based on the researched data in the partnership countries, the following recommendations can be formulated:

- Fostering research in the sector of GDPR and the SMEs **pivotal understanding** of it with a special highlight of the role of the business consultants.
- Increase efforts in **dissemination of best practices**: seminars and workshops and co-operation between SMEs' organizations and business consultants networks should be encouraged.
- Availability of **tools and supporting mechanisms** to facilitate the **SMEs GDPR readiness/compliance and the aspect of GDPR** as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator
- Creation of **training methodologies and curricula in the fields** of adult learning and VET, targeting SMEs and business consultants and facilitating SMEs overall understanding of the new data protection principles and the business consulting approach towards GDPR.
- The GDPR is a promising first step toward a **new business culture** that cherishes human privacy, benefit that **may give SMEs a competitive differentiation**.

- **Online accessible tools providing a wide array of information on GDPR pivotal understanding**

Designed to harmonize data privacy laws across Europe, protect and empower all EU data subjects' privacy and reshape the way organizations across the region approach data privacy, the GDPR has introduced multiple changes, becoming the most important change in EU data privacy regulation in the last 20 years.

But for SMEs it can incur to unaffordable costs due to a lack of resources or awareness. It is of vital importance **to bring support to SMEs in the correct adoption of the legislation**, so they can minimize or eliminate the risks for the rights and freedoms of the data subjects, avoiding the risk of important economic fines, which would seriously affect their sustainability. **An appropriate and effective implementation of the GDPR will contribute to strengthening small and medium enterprises competitiveness and economic growth.**

The aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator will help companies adopt advanced protection practices in their data-related procedures and, thus increase client confidence and bringing more economic opportunities.

## 2.4 Needs identified through the quantitative & qualitative field research

An extensive quantitative and qualitative research addressing business consultants and advisors and SMEs was conducted in four project countries, namely Bulgaria, Spain, Greece and Poland with the purpose of gaining detailed understanding on the competences and array of knowledge that business advisors/consultants of SMEs would require in order to effectively support them in the process of becoming GDPR compliant even beyond "the compliant side".

The online surveys /quantitative research/ were implemented with the main objective to obtain concrete measurable data related to the specific needs of business consultants and SMEs in terms of knowledge and training content in order Business Consultants to better consult and support SMEs in GDPR issues. The online surveys were implemented in the period February - April 2020 through the distribution of online questionnaires developed on the survey platform Google Docs in four of the consortium countries. The **online survey for SMEs** and the **one for business consultants** went in parallel.

A total of **69 respondents participated at the online survey for Business Consultants** and a total of **49 respondents participated at the online survey for SMEs.**

In order to gain more in-depth, subtle and rather **qualitative feedback** on current knowledge, skills, background and expertise of business consultants in consulting SMEs in GDPR, **open interviews with business advisors and experts in business consulting** were conducted in the researched countries, based on a pre-developed and approved interview guidelines by the IO leader- Yambol CCI. During the period February- April 2020 project partners in the 4 researched countries implemented a total of **20 interviews and open discussions with members of the main target group**. Most of the interviews were conducted in **by Skype/tel**. All participants in the interviews were renowned business consultants or experts that had long-term experience in supporting and consulting various types of businesses including SMEs.

The research findings from the quantitative and qualitative surveys, serve as the main guidelines for the development of a comprehensive both theoretical and practical framework, according to which the **Digital training modules and online environment (IO2)** will be developed.

Here below is a short synopsis of the research findings highlighting the main axes, on which the methodology and guidelines for the development of the Digital training modules and online environment (IO2) is based:

## **GDPR AND SMEs**

**Two** are the main ways by which the researched companies have prepared for their GDPR compliance up to now:

- **they have either created a data inventory of the data they held and which is subject to GDPR, or**
- **they appointed a data protection officer to deal with the matter.**

A good part of the researched SMEs have conducted **assessment of their ability to comply with the new regulations**.

Despite the fact that most of the companies/organizations have taken measures to meet the new personal data protection requirements, **only 4% of the respondents have indicated that they have allocated budget specifically for the GDPR compliance**.

SMEs representatives in the survey acknowledge the benefits of becoming GDPR compliant, especially regarding:

- **company reputation**
- **loyalty of customers** and collaborators, which in any case are crucial for any SME.

SMEs biggest concern regarding the acquisition of readiness to become GDPR compliant is:

- **Uncertainties about how the EU regulation affects their business (i.e. fines, sanctions, audits, etc)**
- ***the need of having appropriate policies in place, adequate tools to deal with security breaches***
- ***Data security and dealing with breaches***

This means that they still approach GDPR compliance from the punitive side (fines, penalties) rather as an investment priority that should be of active rather than passive character (i.e. to avoid the cost of legal and other penalties). Among all **STAFF TRAINING** is also highly appreciated.

Around 72% of the respondents find the **information and guidance** in the four countries researched to be **good or satisfactory** and 24% think that it is of poor quality. Comparing the data, Greece makes an impression with 4/10 SMEs perceive GDPR relevant information at country level as poor.

In terms of investment – i.e. allocating budget to become GDPR compliant – most respondents see rather **obligation and legal and other liabilities as the main motivators to do so, promoting the punitive aspects of the regulation**. But **improving branding and reduce risk** is also a factor.

**As positive outcomes of GDPR** compliance, the majority of the respondents chose:

- **greater data security globally** as the most relevant,
- **reputation**
- **greater customer loyalty**

With respect to training and consulting initiatives for SMEs to support them in becoming GDPR compliant, there seems to be a wide-spread awareness of the availability at the market level. However, here the difference among the 4 countries are very visible. For Spain and Greece- 90% of the surveyed SMEs were aware of the training support while in Poland- 80% of the surveyed SMEs were not aware for such support.

However, most **SMEs have not yet showed any interest** to participate in them, while at the same time their representatives state that **they are intending to do so**.

The most common issues and challenges encountered by SMEs in achieving GDPR compliance, as long as it concerns training provisions are:

- **Understanding the specific requirements of GDPR and personal data protection**
- **Ensuring staff awareness and training.**

**Provision of sufficient budget and human resources to implement GDPR** is pointed out as the least applicable.

Judging across business sectors to which the participating SMEs belong, **processing of personal data** / either for employees or customers/ and the **means to do so** seem to be a priority.

When it comes to actual training, are the most **preferred tools** are:

- the ***e-learning***
- ***the learning through traditional materials*** (hard copies material and formal education)

The ***blended learning*** is the most preferred delivery **method**.

## **GDPR AND BUSINESS CONSULTANTS/ADVISORS**

Business consultants are the main target group of the project. The survey participants are all operating in Bulgaria, Poland, Spain and Greece and the majority of them do not provide GDPR relevant consulting services.

They state that according to their professional experience, **SMEs are not very well aware** of GDPR importance, which is reflected in the fact that as they state, **SMEs do not have GDPR as a business priority in their agendas.**

**Most business consultants** have stated that for SMEs, **the most challenging issue** while preparing to become GDPR compliant is:

- **establishing a data protection culture**
- **assessment of what is needed to become compliant**
- **prioritization of GDPR** among other business priorities
- **potential fines**
- **costs of compliance**

The **most preferred learning methods/tools** for consultants are **e-learning**, as well as **blended training** programmes and **workshops**. They seem thus to prefer a **mixed distance and face-to-face learning method**, combined with focused workshops. Almost half of the business consultants state that their knowledge and skills level is middle or good now, so eventually they are interested in receiving relevant training

The main sources of acquiring skills and knowledge on the topic of GDPR compliance for the business consultants have been:

- **personal research and interest on the topic**
- **case studies**

The **most appealing form** of improving their competences and skills in the field of GDPR, according the participated business consultants is:

- **e-learning/online learning**
- **blended training programmes**
- **workshops**

They seem thus to prefer a mixed distance and face-to-face learning method, combined with focused workshops.

Although some part of the respondents are already providing GDPR related services to SMEs, most of them have never been trained on how to provide these services to the companies. This means that the development of such a training programme for business consultants will be timely and beneficial for both BCs and SMEs.

The important training subjects are those touching upon:

- ***The Data protection in everyday workplace***
- ***GDPR as a competitive advantage***
- ***GDPR as an opportunity for a business-culture shift for SMEs beyond the compliance-or-penalty' approach***

On the demand side (what SMEs request/need regarding consulting services) the most relevant topics according to the consultants are:

- the **need to understand and getting acquainted with GDPR requirements**
- **appropriate data protection and security policies.**
- ***Staff training, awareness, compliance***
- ***maintaining the necessary documentation in line with the principles of accountability***

**Missing policies and absence of staff training** which often **leads to intra-company breaches by employees** are according to consultants the most common breaches points for SMEs. They are followed by an overall **failure to identify personal data, inappropriate communication** (e.g. emails), as well as **lack of security measures** in general.

Business consultants seem to be in line with SMEs regarding the perceived benefits of becoming GDPR compliant:

- **customer loyalty** and **company reputation**  
***the benefits that entail the establishment of a corporate data protection culture***

The detailed reports of the conducted desktop research and the quantitative and qualitative research under the project, could be found in the Annex section to this document.

## 2.5 Proposed content structure with the core results and needs identified

CONTENT STRUCTURE	NEEDS IDENTIFIED
<b>MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL DATA AND GDPR</b>	<p>The most common issues and challenges encountered by SMEs in achieving GDPR compliance, as long as it concerns training provisions are <b><i>(Quantitative survey among SMEs)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Understanding the specific requirements of GDPR and personal data protection</b></li> <li>• <b>Ensuring staff awareness and training.</b></li> </ul>
<b>UNIT 1: PERSONAL DATA AND DATA PROTECTION</b>	<p>On the demand side (what SMEs request/need regarding consulting services) the most relevant topics according to the consultants are <b><i>(Quantitative survey among Business Consultants)</i></b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <b>need to understand and getting acquainted with GDPR requirements</b></li> </ul>
<b>UNIT 2: KEY DEFINITIONS AND TERMS</b>	<p>As a common problem <b>during the compliance procedures</b> among the SMEs from the project countries is the <b>exact knowledge of what data to collect and process at each stage</b> of their activities, who and what tools and processes are involved during the processing, <b>defining and separating their business needs</b> and the systematic review to meet GDPR requirements at each stage of data processing. <b><i>( Desktop research)</i></b></p>

UNIT 3: GDPR PRINCIPLES	<b>SMEs are not very well aware</b> of GDPR importance, which is reflected in the fact that as they state, <b>SMEs do not have GDPR as a business priority in their agendas ( Quantitative survey among Business Consultants)</b>
UNIT 4: THE GDPR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS	All of the respondents pointed out as important- good knowledge of the framework. Not necessarily all the legal and other specialized aspects, but for sure, to be able to direct SMEs owners to experts with which in collaboration a GDPR compliance plan can be obtained and implemented. Consultants should have a well-informed overview of how GDPR is affecting businesses in general, looking further than the fact of possible obligation to comply or not. Business Consultants on data protection must know all the theoretical elements of the regulation itself without forgetting the most practical part of its implementation( <b>Business Consultante Interviews</b> ).
MODULE 2: GDPR AND MY SME	<b>Most business consultants</b> have stated that for SMEs, <b>the most challenging issue</b> while preparing to become GDPR compliant is ( <b>Quantitative survey among Business Consultants</b> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>establishing a data protection culture</b></li> <li>• <b>assessment of what is needed to become compliant</b></li> <li>• <b>prioritization of GDPR</b> among other business priorities</li> <li>• <b>potential fines</b></li> <li>• <b>costs of compliance</b></li> </ul>
UNIT 1: GDPR IN EU DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ECONOMY	In terms of investment – i.e. allocating budget to become GDPR compliant – most respondents see rather <b>obligation and legal and other liabilities as the main motivators to do so, promoting the punitive aspects of the regulation.( Quantitative survey among SMEs)</b>
UNIT 2: PREPARING FOR GDPR: WHERE DOES MY SME STAND AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?	A good part of the researched SMEs have conducted <b>assessment of their ability to comply with the new regulations. ( Quantitative survey among SMEs)</b>

<p>UNIT 3: GDPR AND DATA PROTECTION IN EVERYDAY WORKPLACE</p>	<p>Judging across business sectors to which the participating SMEs belong, <b>processing of personal data</b> / either for employees or customers/ and the <b>means to do so</b> seem to be a priority (<i>Quantitative survey among Business Consultants</i>).</p>
<p>UNIT 4: DATA PROTECTION 'BY DESIGN' AND 'BY DEFAULT'</p>	<p>In general, business consultants shared the opinion that most SMEs are aware of the existence of the GDPR. However, as GDPR is not a uniform regulation with specific articles that should be transferred uniformly at all national contexts and it has to be adapted in relevant national contexts of legislation condition, the way the market functions, SMEs don't really know what and how is affecting them in terms of GDPR compliance.</p> <p>One more common thing is also that most SMEs are using ready template for their work in the field of GDPR, which usually does not correspond to the specificity of the SMEs work. (<i>Business Consultants Interviews</i>)</p>
<p>MODULE 3: GDPR 'BEYOND COMPLIANCE' AS A BUSINESS DRIVER</p>	<p>The important training subjects are those touching <b>upon</b> (<i>Quantitative survey among Business Consultants</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Data protection in everyday workplace</b></li> <li>• <b>GDPR as a competitive advantage</b></li> <li>• <b>GDPR as an opportunity for a business-culture shift for SMEs beyond the compliance-or-penalty' approach</b></li> </ul>
<p>UNIT 1: GDPR AS BUSINESS AND INNOVATION DRIVER</p>	<p>The GDPR presents significant opportunities for SMEs, that can help to substantially improve the way SME's perform daily business, resulting not just in the formal compliance, but the achievement of positive signage through this process. Consequently, for SME's it is a continuous journey of compliance that can become a business success journey. (<i>Desktop research</i>)</p>
<p>UNIT 2: GDPR AS A BUSINESS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE</p>	<p>The GDPR is a promising first step toward a <b>new business culture</b> that cherishes human privacy, benefit that <b>may give SMEs a competitive differentiation</b>. (<i>Desktop research</i>)</p>

UNIT 3: GDPR AS CUSTOMER  
EMPOWERMENT TOOL

Business consultants seem to be in line with SMEs regarding the perceived benefits of becoming GDPR compliant (**Quantitative survey among Business Consultants**):

- **customer loyalty** and **company reputation, the benefits that entail the establishment of a corporate data protection culture**

## 2.6 Adult learning principles & constructivism theory

The training methodology has been chosen in order to meet the demand for highly motivating content and mode of presentation. In addition, the characteristics of the learners (age, limited time, diverse learning styles, varying levels of knowledge and experience) call for training methods that promote problem-solving and self-reflection, while at the same time providing opportunities for authentic learning and case analysis. To this purpose, principles of adult education and the constructivist learning theory have been adopted. Application of e-learning principles follows the methodological approach.

### 2.6.1 Adult education principles

**Experience as a resource of learning.** All adults are engaged in learning disposing a valuable pool of experience and prior knowledge. Training should build on existing experiences and encourage the learner to actively participate for the creation of new experiences (experiential learning).

**Motivation.** Internal motivation in adult education is crucial. For adults to be motivated, learning needs to be **relevant** and **meaningful**, in other words it has to respond to their needs, interests and real-life problems. Relevance of learning is the key-factor to motivating the adult learner.

**Autonomy and self-directed learning.** Adult learners need control over the learning process. On one hand this requires more responsibility and initiative of them. On the other hand, it allows them to select, manage, and evaluate their own learning activities.

**Appropriate learning environment. The Training Modules (IO2)** to be created *will* strike a balance between attractive design and clearly structured material that ensures effective acquisition of knowledge.

**Different learning styles.** Every individual has his/her own learning style depending on the preferred perception channel – visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. There are also different personal learning styles referring to order, analysis level, abstraction and type of information presented and

processed, that may be influenced either by the individual's personality and cognitive characteristics or by the educational system, cultural factors and professional specialization.

## 2.6.2 Constructivism

In the constructivist paradigm the learner is in the center of the learning process as an **active creator / constructor of his/her own knowledge**. **Active learning methods** that give learner significant **autonomy and control over the learning process** shall be used. A central assumption of constructivism is **subjectivity**, meaning that learners' knowledge is grounded in their perception of the physical and social experiences as reproduced by their minds. Principles of constructivism have a lot in common with adult learning principles.

The main implications of constructivism for training adopted in this training are:

- 1) Preexisting conceptions and knowledge of learners are very important
- 2) Reflection and critical thinking
- 3) Collaborative learning
- 4) Each learner constructs his/her own reality. Due to its subjectivity nature, constructivism allows for multiple interpretations and expressions of learning.

## 2.6.3 E-learning principles

A very useful tool to motivate e-learners is to **personalize** information. This will be achieved in the **Training Modules (IO2)** through:

- User friendly language – active voice
- Directly addressing the user ("you")
- Interactive tools that detect knowledge gaps and lead to corresponding material
- Segmenting of information: The learning material should be **easy-to-read, concise, in learning "bites"**. The level of segmenting required is directly connected to the learners' characteristics and the type of content. Segmenting plays an important role for understanding, readability and user-friendliness. Some principles are:
  - Highly segmented content is easier to process
  - Difficult material should be segmented
  - The deeper the analysis the more the segmenting required
  - The degree to which information is new affects the need for segmenting

- Self-study calls for higher segmenting

Therefore, a high level of segmentation will be adopted in the development of the Training Modules.

## 3. TRAINING MODULES STRUCTURE

### 3.1 General recommendations

According to the principles and findings laid down in Chapter 2 **the content** to be developed should:

- focus on practical approaches and theoretical ones
- directly address the user ("you")
- be:
  - Easy to read
  - Short and modular, highly segmented
  - Interesting and dynamic
  - Qualitative yet simple (which implies a high level of segmentation)
  - Practical & user-friendly
- promote self-reflection
- attend user-friendliness and respond to the preferred ways of presentation of training topics and material on behalf of business consultants
- strike a balance between text and other content formats (e.g. graphics, images etc.)

The expected **learning outcomes** per module should be also put forward at the beginning of each module (for example: "After completing this module, you should be able to..."). All learning outcomes should be precise, concise, observable and measurable.

As regards the structure, the **modules, units and subunit** are presented in detail in chapter 3.2. **Basic readings, resources, documents** specifications can be found in chapter 3.3.

### 3.2 Structure, Learning Outcomes and Instructions for content development

In the table below the Training Modules structure, modular flow (units, subunits) and sequence, topics to be addressed per unit, learning outcomes per module and sort of skills to be developed per unit are set out in detail.

<b>MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL DATA AND GDPR</b>	
<b>Short description</b>	This introductory module aims at intriguing business consultants to get into the dynamics of the GDPR, understand the challenge, significance and particularities of the Directive and develop a deeper understanding why GDPR compliance is crucial/ important and at the same time challenging for the EU digital economy and society.
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	After completing this <b>Module 1</b> , the user should have developed a deeper understanding of the EU data protection framework and its importance and implications for the SMEs environment.
<b>Coordinating Partner</b>	<b>ICT-Spain</b>  <i>Module leader monitors the process of content development, uniformity of language, balance between text and images or checklists and other non-text elements, takes care of final proof-read version.</i>
<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>PERSONAL DATA AND DATA PROTECTION</b>
Description	This topic provides an overview of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)  <i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i>
<b>SUBUNIT 1.1</b>	<b>WHAT IS PERSONAL DATA?</b>

Instructions for content development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal data: Analysis of the definition and types of personal data</li> <li>- Data Protection: Introduction to the Basic principles of data protection like Privacy, confidentiality and "The Right of be let alone" as well as a short reflection on the political and social drivers (opportunities and risks of personal data treatments) motivating the changes in data protection regulations (technological evolution, personal data misuse, data privacy violations, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>SUBUNIT 1.2</b>	<b>WHAT IS GDPR: AN INTRODUCTION</b>
Instructions for content development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Origins: How data protection right has evolved from the early 70's until today. Legal and administrative texts developed at several levels (international, EU and national) and the managing bodies will be just mentioned as a way to focus on the really important, that is, to analyse the reasons motivating the changes in the regulations (changes), main characteristics and basic principles covered.</li> <li>- GDPR in brief: What is old, what is new, what is revised.</li> </ul>
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>KEY DEFINITIONS AND TERMS</b>
Description	This topic should provide elaborated information of the key definitions associated and used with the GDPR
Instructions for content development	<p>Main terms and definitions (in GDPR) complemented by examples which are preferably relevant to SMEs. (Most probably more than 20 terms and definitions will be identified. All terms should be formal terms from valid sources which should be mentioned, including the ones in national languages).</p> <p>Elaborated the definitions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal data</li> <li>• processing data</li> <li>• data controller</li> <li>• data processor</li> <li>• data consent</li> <li>• data subject</li> <li>• third party</li> <li>• personal data breach</li> <li>• other...</li> </ul>

	<p>This Unit would require mainly graphical elements to present definitions and terms.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>GDPR PRINCIPLES</b>
Description	<p>This topic should provide elaborated information on the key regulatory points of the GDPR.</p>
Instructions for content development	<p>There are seven protection and accountability principles outlined in GDPR. They should be presented with simple, understandable language, highlighting their importance, followed by examples that violate, as well as follow the principle (again, examples that are SME relevant).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawfulness, fairness and transparency</li> <li>• Purpose limitation</li> <li>• Data minimization</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Storage limitation</li> <li>• Integrity and confidentiality</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul> <p>This Unit would require mainly graphical elements to present the principles (content development should adjust to this way of presentation, that is, avoiding prose and promoting points, key quotes, elliptical sentences).</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>THE GDPR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS</b>
Description	<p>The GDPR individual rights are standard. They should be presented with simple, understandable language, highlighting their importance, followed by examples.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
Instructions for content development	<p>The GDPR provides the following rights for individuals, which shall be explained, presented, elaborated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The right to be informed</li> <li>2. The right of access</li> <li>3. The right to rectification</li> <li>4. The right to erasure</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. The right to restrict processing</li> <li>6. The right to data portability</li> <li>7. The right to object</li> <li>8. Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.</li> </ol> <p>This Unit would require mainly graphical elements to present the rights. Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</p>
<b>UNIT 5</b>	<b>BASIC READINGS, RESOURCES, DOCUMENTS (EN, BG, EL, ES, PL)</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>Creation of a non-exhausting but rich 'library' of readings, resources, documents, links, presentations, youtube videos (with subtitles in English and preferably in project countries language) about GDPR. The library should have sections according to topic (e.g. basic official documents, general aspects, special or country-specific aspects, sector-specific aspects etc.). The sections should have short introductions about what is included in terms of sources. The sources and readings topics should be in line with the aim of the training for business consultants, which is to support them to consult SMEs regarding GDPR and GDPR compliance. They should thus provide knowledge and information about the topic (GDPR), but also address consulting issues, approaches that they can use to enrich the understanding of SMEs owners, managers and even staff about GDPR (which is the subject of Module 1)</p>
<b>MODULE 2: GDPR AND MY SME</b>	
<b>Short description</b>	<p>This <b>Module 2</b> aims at enabling end users (business consultants) to execute a successful initial consultation with the SMEs with the aim of preparing the ground for an effective, efficient, smooth and timely process of GDPR compliance, tailored to the specific goals, vision and mission of the SMEs.</p>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p>The user should learn how to check out the SMEs status-quo on GDPR compliance and guide them through the process of GDPR compliance.</p>
<b>Coordinating Partner</b>	<b>PAIZ-Poland</b>

	<p><b>Module</b> leader monitors the process of content development, uniformity of language, balance between text and images or checklists and other non-text elements, takes care of final proof-read version.</p>
<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>GDPR IN EU DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ECONOMY</b>
Description	<p>Basic knowledge regarding the new framework of data protection, including its importance for EU's digital society, the safeguarding of fundamental rights of the citizens, and the business environment of the EU.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>SUBUNIT 1.1</b>	<b>PERSONAL DATA AND ITS PRIVACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE</b>
Instructions for content development	Data protection in the <b>EU digital era</b> - why it is needed- the handling of personal data in a globally connected world.
<b>SUBUNIT 1.2</b>	<b>CHALLENGES FOR SMES</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>Since the GDPR has become effective, compliance with its requirements has become a part of the daily routine for companies. To be sure, implementing the GDPR has been difficult for small businesses. At first, they adopted the GDPR as a set of rules to abide by. But GDPR challenges are considered to have more influence on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).</p> <p>Description of the most common challenges for GDPR compliance among SMEs</p>
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>PREPARING FOR GDPR: WHERE DOES MY SME STAND AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?</b>

Description	<p>Enabling business consultants to undertake an analysis to identify and evaluate the GDPR compliance status-quo of SMEs for a more sound GDPR compliance strategy and planning.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>SUBUNIT 2.1</b>	<b>THE GDPR LAWFUL BASES OF PROCESSING</b>
Instructions for content development	Explaining the bases and their importance, how an SME should check which of them apply to their business by using for example a checklist etc.
<b>SUBUNIT 2.2</b>	<b>GDPR READINESS ASSESSMENT</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>GDPR selfie: Creation of a GDPR assessment tool and checklist</p> <p>Elaborate checklist in order to be used by the business consultants when starting the consulting with the SMEs, in order to identify where the SME stands.</p>
<b>SUBUNIT 2.3</b>	<b>STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>Steps to be taken according to assessment results including data mapping, existing measures and practices, needed measures and interventions, involved persons and infrastructure in implementing GDPR in SME activities</p> <p>For example:</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Know the key concepts and articles regarding GDPR</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> What to do for GDPR compliance now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data mapping</li> <li>- Privacy Policy</li> <li>- Training</li> </ul> <p>Step 3: Website adjustments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opt-In Forms</li> <li>- Cookie Consent</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4:</b> Communicate With Partners and Third Parties</p>

	<p><b>Step 5:</b> Establish procedures to detect, report and investigate a personal data breach</p> <p><b>Step 6:</b> Appoint a Data Protection Office (DPO)</p> <p><b>Step 7:</b> Implement Privacy Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans</p> <p><b>Step 8:</b> Revise and repeat</p>
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>GDPR AND DATA PROTECTION IN EVERYDAY WORKPLACE</b>
Description	<p>Staff charged with handling data should have an in-depth understanding of The GDPR and how it relates to their role and wider industry.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>SUBUNIT 3.1</b>	<b>THE PHYSICAL SPACE</b>
Instructions for content development	The role of the SME physical space in GDPR
<b>SUBUNIT 3.2</b>	<b>THE ACTORS</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>A GDPR skilled team.</p> <p>Training suggestions.</p> <p>Monitoring and maintaining SME GDPR mindset and business culture.</p>
<b>SUBUNIT 3.3</b>	<b>THE DATA</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>Preparing and responding to personal data breaches by providing examples, checklists, guidelines).</p> <p>Data protection impact assessment.</p>
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>DATA PROTECTION 'BY DESIGN' AND 'BY DEFAULT'</b>
Instructions for content development	<p>Companies/organisations are encouraged to implement technical and organisational measures, at the earliest stages of the design of the processing operations, in such a way that safeguards privacy and data protection principles right from the start ('data protection by design').</p> <p>By default, companies/organisations should ensure that personal data is processed with the highest privacy protection (for example only the data necessary should be processed, short storage period, limited accessibility) so that by default personal data isn't made accessible to an indefinite number of persons ('data protection by default').</p>

	<i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i>
<b>SUBUNIT 4.1</b>	<b>WHAT IS GDPR 'BY DESIGN' AND 'BY DEFAULT'</b>
Instructions for content development	Explanation of the relevant GDPR article
<b>SUBUNIT 4.2</b>	<b>THE IMPACT OF GDPR FOR FUTURE PROJECT/SERVICES PLANNING</b>
Instructions for content development	Elaborating with tangible examples and case studies
<b>UNIT 5</b>	<b>BASIC READINGS, RESOURCES, DOCUMENTS (EN, BG, EL, ES, PL)</b>
Instructions for content development	<p><i>Introduction (How to use the sources)</i></p> <p><i>Content:</i></p> <p>Creation of a non-exhausting but rich 'library' of readings, resources, documents, links, presentations, youtube videos (with subtitles in English and preferably in project countries language) about GDPR. The library should have sections according to topic. The sections should have short introductions about what is included in terms of sources. The sources and readings topics should be in line with the aim of the training for business consultants, which is to support them to consult SMEs regarding GDPR and GDPR compliance. They should thus provide knowledge and information about the topic of the Module, but also address consulting issues, approaches that they can use to enrich the understanding of SMEs owners, managers and even staff about GDPR (according to subject of Module 2)</p>
<b>MODULE 3: GDPR 'BEYOND COMPLIANCE' AS A BUSINESS DRIVER</b>	
<b>Short description</b>	This <b>Module 3</b> is to be transversal applied by consultants within the subjects of Module 1 and 2, focusing on the GDPR benefits for SMEs. It will provide material for consultants on how SMEs move beyond the 'compliance-or-penalty' notion, towards GDPR compliance as a competitive advantage.
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	The user should learn how to consult/work with the SMEs in order of changing their perspective of thinking about GDPR as a burden, to a perspective of thinking of it as business driver/competitive advantage.

<b>Coordinating Partner</b>	<b>Militos- Greece</b>  <i>Module leader monitors the process of content development, uniformity of language, balance between text and images or checklists and other non-text elements, takes care of final proof-read version.</i>
<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>GDPR AS BUSINESS AND INNOVATION DRIVER</b>
Description	<p>This unit should review and go through in-company policies which can lead to more transparency and thus trust for the customer base.</p> <p>Here should be explored ways for enhanced data protection which can be a competitive advantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- treating privacy as one of the key drivers to enhance brand and reputation</li> <li>- Improved data analytics</li> <li>- enhancing the business culture</li> <li>- GDPR brings operational benefits</li> </ul> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>SUBUNIT 1.1</b>	<b>HOW CAN GDPR BECOME A BUSINESS DRIVER</b>
Instructions for content development	Examples, case studies, suggestions for different kinds of SMEs (sectors)
<b>SUBUNIT 1.2</b>	<b>INNOVATIVE WAYS TO USE DATA</b>
Instructions for content development	Examples, case studies, suggestions for different kinds of SMEs (sectors)
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>GDPR AS A BUSINESS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE</b>
Description	Taking measures to comply with GDPR is extremely important and should be considered as a best practice minimum. Going one step further, however, is

	<p>to embrace the cultural shift towards data privacy that GDPR embodies, and there are a number of advantages by doing it.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>SUBUNIT 2.1</b>	<b>GDPR AS OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE</b>
Instructions for content development	Examples, case studies, suggestions for different kinds of SMEs (sectors)
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>GDPR AS CUSTOMER EMPOWERMENT TOOL</b>
Description	<p>GDPR gives EU-based consumers the ability to access and control the personal information an organization has on them (regardless of where the company is located), choose to have their information removed, and/or allocate how that information is leveraged. While meeting these requirements can take a toll on brands' resources, organizations should start to see the positive impact customer empowerment can have on engagement.</p> <p><i>Multiple choice test at the end of the Unit.</i></p>
<b>SUBUNIT 3.1</b>	<b>HOW TO TURN GDPR COMPLIANCE INTO CUSTOMER EMPOWERMENT</b>
Instructions for content development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transparency = trust (Transparency about how data is being used)</li> <li>- Treat privacy as a brand pillar</li> <li>- Engagement comes from meeting expectations</li> </ul>
<b>SUBUNIT 3.2</b>	<b>BUILDING TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE BASIS OF GDPR COMPLIANCE</b>
Instructions for content development	GDPR is not a burden, but rather an opportunity to create more transparent and accountable data relationships. Those companies that accept and propel that philosophy are the companies that will gain trust and prosper in the age of growing interconnectedness.
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>BASIC READINGS, RESOURCES, DOCUMENTS (EN, BG, EL, ES, PL)</b>

Instructions for content development	<p><i>Introduction (How to use the sources)</i></p> <p><i>Content:</i></p> <p>Creation of a non-exhausting but rich 'library' of readings, resources, documents, links, presentations, youtube videos (with subtitles in English and preferably in project countries language) about GDPR. The library should have sections according to topic.</p> <p>The sections should have short introductions about what is included in terms of sources. The sources and readings topics should be in line with the aim of the training for business consultants, which is to support them to consult SMEs regarding GDPR and GDPR compliance. They should thus provide knowledge and information about the topic of the Module, but also address consulting issues, approaches that they can use to enrich the understanding of SMEs owners, managers and even staff about GDPR (according to subject of <b>Module 3</b>)</p>
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## 3.3 HORIZONTAL ACTIVITIES

### 3.3.1 Basic readings, resources, documents

Those materials refer to the side material that is proposed to be collected by the partners with the purpose of facilitating and enriching the training procedure, making it more vivid, effective and attractive and allowing an in-depth study of the topics addressed in each unit/ subunit. The side material should be provided at Module level.

Side material encompasses further reading/references, external resources demonstrated valuable and useful in this respect, *case studies, best practices, images, graphs, etc.* to be collected by partners in charge according to the master table in chapter 3.1 and delivered in the form of text and/ or audiovisual material.

## ANNEX I: Secondary Research Data (Desktop research)

## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROJECT AND THE NATIONAL REPORTS

### 1.1 THE MINDTHEDATA PROJECT

**The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** regulates the processing of personal data related to individuals in the European Union; either by a company, an organisation or an individual. It will replace the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC of 1995 and aims to "... harmonize data privacy laws across Europe, to protect and empower all EU citizens data privacy and to reshape the way organizations across the region approach data privacy" (European Commission, 2017). This should offer a simpler regulatory environment in the EU for data processing, subsequently going from 28 national markets to one single market in the digital world (European Commission, n.d.). Since the GDPR introduces new legal requirements for processing personal data, most companies are assessing and restructuring their approach to this, in order to comply. It took effect in May 2018, six and a half years after the European Commission's original first draft was published following an unprecedented period of debate, negotiation and lobbying. The changes, which were ushered in by the GDPR on 25 May 2018 for the European member states, were both substantial and ambitious. The Regulation is one of the most wide-ranging pieces of legislation passed by the EU. With the GDPR, Europe is signalling its firm stance on data privacy and security at a time when more people are entrusting their personal data with cloud services and breaches are a daily occurrence. Designed to address concerns over the security and use of personal data, GDPR will apply to data processing activities regarding personal data within Europe as well as data transfers within the EU and between the EU and non-EU countries, and it looks likely to become the global benchmark for protecting personal data.

At the heart of GDPR are personal data. Broadly, this is information that allows a living person to be directly, or indirectly, identified from data that is available. This can be something obvious, such as a person's name, location data, or a clear online username, or it can be something that may be less instantly apparent: IP addresses and cookie identifiers can be considered as personal data. Under GDPR there are also a few special categories of sensitive personal data which are furthermore protected. These personal data include information about ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, membership of trade unions, genetic and biometric data, health information and data around a person's sex life or orientation.

Thus, GDPR expects broadly private sector SMEs to comply with the regulation. On the other hand, the GDPR framework doesn't want to put an extra bureaucratic burden to SMEs where it is not

appropriate, bogging businesses and simply putting them on the defensive with imminent fines and non-compliance penalties.

Along this vein, considering the new SME and business environment in the EU, it is of great importance to highlight how GDPR compliance for SMEs can function as a business differentiator for SMEs. Moving beyond the 'compliance-or-penalty' notion, GDPR can thus be exploited by SMEs as an **innovation** (e.g. new, innovative ways to use data), a **competitive advantage** (e.g. reviewing and development of in-company policies, which can lead to more transparency and thus trust for the customer base), **a tool for consumer empowerment** (i.e. placing consumers and their rights at the centre and by empowering them, empowering businesses and SMEs), an opportunity to create a culture shift in how to do business, by going 'beyond the compliance' aspect, to changing the perspective of thinking about GDPR as a burden, to a perspective of thinking of it as business driver.

The overall aim of the project **mindtheDATA** is to underline the crucial role of business consultants, SME/business consulting companies and organisations, trainers/coaches in business and entrepreneurship, HR consultants/professionals, management/strategy/operations and marketing consultants and to make an intervention by the means of a set of tools, guidelines, practices to be used by business consultants to continuously support SMEs as parts of the European SME ecosystem to fully integrate the principles of data protection into their organisational culture and the mindsets of their human capital, not merely as a compliance element, but as a beneficial tool into their organisational culture.

To this goal, the proposed project will in particular develop a modular set of online training material **for consultants** to cover indicatively: (available in EN, BG, EL, ES, and PL):

- Pivotal, general aspects of the new data protection framework for EUs digital economy and society and the new SMEs environment;
- Integrated GDPR strategy according to their scope of activities and their GDPR 'readiness' in the following indicative thematic parts

*1: Data protection in EUs digital society and economy*

*2: Where does my SME stand and what should it do?*

*3: Data protection in everyday workplace world*

- Hands-on training material for consultants to display the importance of GDPR for SMEs as a business differentiator, as well as the 'beyond compliance' multiple benefits for SMEs.

The consortium of the **mindtheDATA** project is consisted from seven partners from five different EU countries. The expertise mix of the partnership (SME consulting, VET, standardization and quality assurance, SME) account for a high-quality, cross-fertilising approach and training interventions for SMEs drawing from diverse contexts both at national as well as intracompany, organisational level.

## 1.2 THIS STUDY

This report is part of the project IO1, TASK2: " Identification of the support and training intervention scope with respect to the aspects of pivotal understanding of SMEs of the new data protection principles, the GDPR readiness and strategy of SMEs, and the aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator", in particular presents the aggregate report of TASK2: Final integrated Study (with ANNEX: specific country reports for Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain) and translation of executive summary from EN into BG,EL, PL and ES. The study aims is to highlight the most purposeful pedagogical/educational pathways and methodologies towards optimal usability for consultants and impact on SMEs in consortium partner countries and at EU level.

According to what is stated in the METHODOLOGY for IO1, TASK2, this report follows the **structure** proposed:

### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROJECT AND THIS STUDY

### 2. DESK RESEARCH: NATIONAL CONTEXTS

2.1 Summary of general overview of GDPR application in the partner countries. Awareness of General Data Protection Regulation obligation in the partner countries? What has changed since the GDPR requirements were applied?

2.2 Overview of Existing legal frameworks, policies and general overview on DATA PROTECTION in the country beside GDPR.

2.3 Overview of the main issues experienced by organisations in complying with the GDPR in the partnering countries? Stage of compliance of SMES with the Regulation?

2.4 Overview of the awareness of rights guaranteed by GDR for the SMEs? Awareness of national public authorities in charge of data protection? Experience with Data Protection Authorities

2.5 Summary of the Raising-awareness mechanisms in the partner countries on national level-awareness campaigns, events (conferences, seminars, etc.), specialized trainings for SMEs, publication of GDPR guides and instructions for SMEs, etc.

2.6 Overview of the provided service and offers of business consultants in the partnering countries, supporting the SMEs to comply with the GDPR.

3. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5. REFERENCE LIST

### ***Participating countries***

The following target countries participated in the desk research, conducted in the frame of TASK2: Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain.

### ***Research Methodology***

The desk research undertaken in the frames of this TASK was structured as follows:

1. Desk research was carried out by partners in related project countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain). Specific country-reports were allocated to the partner by the Task leader as defined in the project proposal.
2. In the second phase, partners sent all the findings to the Task Leader (i.e. YCCI) and the Task Leader drafted the present report based on them. When the draft report was completed, it was distributed among the partners for feedback and recommendations in order to safeguard its quality.
3. The last phase of TASK2, the finalising of the report, including executive summary translated in Bulgarian, Greek, Spanish and Polish languages. The final report and executive summaries will be uploaded in the project website, facebook page and circulated among interested parties.

### ***Research sources***

The project partners used a large variety of sources in order to collect data, which are mostly dispersed. The partners used available surveys on the theme of GDPR or general information about GDPR practices in the specific countries.

Research criteria:

- Overall objectives of the *mindtheDATA* project;
- Target groups, i.e. primary target group: business SME consultants and organizations, professional business coaches, institutional bodies supporting labor market and enterprises (Chambers of Commerce etc.), VET, trainers/organisations in business management, HR consultants/professionals, management/strategy/operations and marketing consultants; secondary target group: SMEs and their key persons (owners, decision-makers, managers, IT experts, employees in SMEs); SME representative bodies; standardization consultants and companies;
- Search terms and key words, such as GDPR compliance, GDPR training, consulting during SME GDPR compliance etc., which represent the aims and focus of this research.

The sources used for the collection of data included:

- the reports of previous surveys in the field of GDPR compliance and the role of the business consultants;
- state websites (e.g. Ministries, National Statistic Institutes, Official Industry Reports);
- labor market and enterprises, organizations (Chambers of Commerce etc.), providing information on SMEs work with GDPR (associations providing SMEs support and consultation)

All partners used a specific template in order to produce consistent findings. The template is part of the methodological guidelines prepared by YCCI.

## 2. DESK RESEARCH: NATIONAL CONTEXTS

### 2.1 SUMMARY OF GENERAL OVERVIEW OF GDPR APPLICATION IN THE PARTNER COUNTRIES. AWARENESS OF GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION OBLIGATION IN THE PARTNER COUNTRIES. WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE GDPR REQUIREMENTS WERE APPLIED?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulates the processing of personal data related to individuals in the European Union; either by a company, an organisation or an individual. It will replace the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC of 1995 and aims to "... harmonize data privacy laws across Europe, to protect and empower all EU citizens data privacy and to reshape the way organizations across the region approach data privacy" (European Commission, 2017). It took effect in May 2018, six and a half years after the European Commission's original first draft was published following an unprecedented period of debate, negotiation and lobbying. The changes, which were ushered in by the GDPR on 25 May 2018 for the European member states, were both substantial and ambitious. The Regulation is one of the most wide-ranging pieces of legislation

passed by the EU. With the GDPR, Europe is signalling its firm stance on data privacy and security at a time when more people are entrusting their personal data with cloud services and breaches are a daily occurrence. Designed to address concerns over the security and use of personal data, GDPR apply to data processing activities regarding personal data within Europe as well as data transfers within the EU and between the EU and non-EU countries, and it looks likely to become the global benchmark for protecting personal data. Created by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, GDPR strengthens and unifies data protection for all residents of the EU. Ultimately, it gives consumers more control of their personal data.

In essence, it is difficult to think of a business that GDPR does not apply to, because in order to do business, most organisations need to collect personal data. GDPR applies to any individual or organisation that processes personal data. The GDPR does not just apply to large companies but also individuals, SMEs, not-for-profit organisations and community groups. There is little difference in the application of the GDPR whether you are a large company, a SME or an individual.

For most organisations, GDPR requires significant changes in many parts of the organisation; unfortunately, many small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not have resources or knowledge to manage this by themselves (Hashim 2015; Schulze 2018). SMEs typically have simple planning and control systems with informal rules and procedures. They also tend to have less standardisation of work processes, which is a problem since GDPR demands full control of every process that contains personal data (Supyuenyong et al. 2009). In Europe more than 99% of all businesses are SMEs (defined as an enterprise with less than 250 employees (Harris et al. 2012; The European Commission 2018). If an organisation does not comply with GDPR it might face heavy fines and penalties, while the chances of discovery are high, since anyone can file a complaint. In the first 8 months of GDPR around 60,000 complaints were received, resulting in fines up to \$57,000,000 (Olenick 2019).

For SMEs with limited resources and information management systems, this means a great deal of work, so there is a need for a structured approach to make sure they do not miss anything (Hashim 2015; Supyuenyong et al. 2009). Although most SMEs are aware of and concerned about GDPR, only 30% of business have identified the steps needed to be GDPR compliant (ISMEs 2018).

We have reviewed the available information for the situation with GDPR awareness for the four researched countries / Bulgaria, Poland, Greece and Spain/ and the comparative data is structured below, which do not differ a lot from one another:

When it comes to the number of citizens, who have heard about GDPR, **Poland** is in the third place in Europe (86%), behind Sweden (90%) and the Netherlands (87%). 56% of Polish people are aware of what GDPR is and 30% has heard about it, but does not know what it is. 73% of Polish people has heard at least about one right guaranteed by the GDPR. The highest level of awareness was observed in relation to the law to access personal data (69% of Polish people has heard about this right)(Kuras, 2019). According to a research done by EY/ Earnest and Young/ 44% of companies reported employees' high awareness of GDPR obligations. In 7% of organizations, it is very high, in 26% low, in 12% very low, 11% had no opinion. (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019). 89% organizations reported that GDPR resulted in important changes in the organization – for 47% the changes were very important and for 42% they were of medium importance. The obligation to comply with GDPR had its effect mostly on customer service and recruitment processes (70% of organizations reported high effect), HR (67%) and marketing processes (47%). It has less affected accounting (25%) and sales (35%). (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019).

A broad overview of the results of the Special Eurobarometer report 487a on the General Data Protection Regulation published in June 2019 – fieldwork conducted on March 2019, lets us extract three significant findings that can shed light on the level of awareness of GDPR in **Spain**:

- Almost two-thirds of Spanish respondents to the survey have at least heard of the GDPR (EU28: 67%).
- Overall almost three quarters (56%) have heard of at least one right guaranteed by GDPR (EU28: 73%).
- 37% have not heard of any of the rights guaranteed by GDPR (EU28: 27%).
- Almost four in ten have heard of a national authority protecting their data (against two out of ten that have heard about the national authority in Spain in 2015, an increase of almost 20 percentage points), meaning that respondents in Spain are amongst the least likely across the EU to have at least heard of such an authority as the EU28 average is 57%.

At the national level, the **Spanish** Centre for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas - CIS) performed research on May 2018 on personal data. The results of the survey highlight some data that seem to be in contradiction, since while the protection of personal data and the use of personal information by third parties worries "a lot" or "quite" three out of four respondents (76.1%), only 15% of the respondents would appeal to the Spanish supervisory authority in case of experiencing any issue related to personal data – such as being used without consent – and more than 85% rarely or never reads privacy statements.

One can conclude that the general awareness of GDPR in the country and the related rights and obligations have increased from the application of the GDPR, but is still underdeveloped in comparison with the average figures of the EU member states. Furthermore, the general awareness on the importance and risk attached to personal data is high but people do not still have a knowledge deep enough – including channels, tools and responsible public bodies - to properly exercise their rights.

In comparison, according to recent research, citizens in **Greece** are interested in the protection of their personal data. However, 35% of Greeks say that they have heard and know what the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is, 32% have heard about it, but do not know exactly what it is, while 32% have never heard of it. Regarding the attributes of the participants, students, freelancers and business executives are more informed about the new set of rules.

However, in Greece, concrete legislation/law which will regulate important aspects of the GDPR is still missing. The general GDPR regulation leaves it to the legislature of each country to legislate the final details and make some choices. This failure to transpose the new regulation into the national law of Greece creates difficulties at the level of protection of civil rights and freedoms, makes it difficult to exchange data between Greece and the other Member States which have already transposed the new directive into their national law, and makes it even harder for SME's to make the appropriate changes required.

As a result, the Commission initiated an infringement procedure by sending a formal notice to Greek national authorities concerned in July 2018 and the corresponding reasoned opinions in January 2019. Greece by failing to adopt all the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with the new Directive, by not communicating those provisions to the Commission, has failed to fulfil its obligations under the above Directive.

**In Bulgaria**, for the past year and a half, the state Commission for Personal Data Protection (CPDP) has made significant efforts to clarify the new rules for business and citizens. Earlier in 2019, amendments to the Personal Data Protection Act came into force, which further introduced guarantees for the processing of personal data of children, data on employment relationships and data of deceased Bulgarian citizens. On the other hand, the Commission is widely recognized as an independent state body that is able to protect the rights of Bulgarian citizens in the processing of their personal data by businesses and public authorities.

The European Commission Eurobarometer survey from June 2019 shows more than 62% recognition of CPDP /Commission for Personal Data Protection/ by Bulgarian citizens compared

to 2015, when it was 15%. This is a good benchmark for the work of the Bulgarian Data Protection Authority.

The results of the Special Eurobarometer report 487a on the General Data Protection Regulation published in June 2019, put Bulgaria at the last place, among the project countries with the following statistics: 19% of the Bulgarianc are aware of what GDPR is and 42% has heard about it but does not know what it is, on the contrary 62% of Bulgarian people has heard at least about one right guaranteed by the GDPR.

The Bulgarian Commission for Personal Data Protection is an independent public authority, which undertakes the protection of individuals in processing their personal data and in providing access to these data, as well as control on compliance with the Law for Protection of Personal Data. It is an independent, jointly governed authority. The Commission for Personal Data Protection was established by decision of the Parliament dated 23 May 2002.

Its mission is to guarantee the fundamental civil right to protection of natural persons' rights with regard to processing of their personal data. The Bulgarian CPDP seeks to build and develop a public environment, in which the integrity of the individual and citizens' privacy are guaranteed through a system of prevention, accountability and control measures against the wrongful processing of personal data.

As long as it concerns **Greece**, there have been numerous governmental institutions publishing articles, guides and informational material the past 3 years that aim at raising awareness about the obligatory compliance to GDPR, both for public and private sector.

A related guide published by the European Commission, states in detail that companies are required to check the personal data they collect, the purposes and legal basis of their activities. In doing so, they need to inform employees, customers and anyone involved in this activity, safe-keep the personal data only as needed, secure the personal data being processed, keep a record of the activities involved, make sure that subcontractors abide by the rules and check if necessary to appoint a data protection officer or make impact assessment regarding data protection.

On the other hand, **in Spain**, several changes have been detected since the GDPR requirements were applied, most of them related to the increase of the data protection-related activity in the country. According to the annual report drawn up by the Spanish supervisory authority on its activities, covering the period 2018, those changes can be summarised as follows:

- The number of claims submitted to the Spanish supervisory authority has been increased by 33%, from 10,657 in 2017 to 14,146 in 2018.

- More than 34,000 Data Protection Delegates (DPDs from now on) have been certified (29,908 in the private sector and 4,285 in the public). This figure has favourably resolved 2,079 claims.
- Among the claims presented to the supervisory authority in the period of study, 863 have been resolved favourably by DPDs, meaning that this new figure speeds up the process, going from the average 200 days prior to the entry into force of the GDPR to current 100 days to resolve the claim.
- In 2018, 907 sanctions were issued (434 with an economic sanction, 96 with a resolution of infringement of Public Administrations and 377 warnings). In 2017, 852 sanctioning resolutions were quantified.
- Another notable aspect is the increase in the number of queries received by this organization,

More than 4,000 consultations processed in Canal Informa\_RGPD, a special communication channel created in 2018 to attend the queries raised by those responsible and in charge of the treatment, by their representative organizations and associations and by their data protection delegates.

In view of the level of the reports mentioned above on the awareness of GDPR in **Spain** and the changes detected since the GDPR requirements were applied, it is to say that the period elapsed from the implementation of the GDPR, has been marked by the regulatory change and the increase in the activity related to data processing and general awareness raising on GDPR, which has meant a turning point in data protection in our country as well as a huge challenge at several levels, including the adaptation of SMEs to the new framework.

For **Poland**, 89% organizations reported that GDPR resulted in important changes in the organization – for 47% the changes were very important and for 42% they were of medium importance. The obligation to comply with GDPR had its effect mostly on customer service and recruitment processes (70% of organizations reported high effect), HR (67%) and marketing processes (47%). It has less affected accounting (25%) and sales (35%). (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019). As of January 2019, since GDPR came into force 9 companies/institutions were penalised for personal data breaches.

## 2.2 OVERVIEW OF EXISTING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, POLICIES AND GENERAL OVERVIEW ON DATA PROTECTION IN THE COUNTRY BESIDE GDPR.

The need for personal data protection and a clear regulatory framework is not new in the EU or the project countries.

As early as 1995, the European legislature introduced significant obligations to Member States, ensuring the protection of individuals against the processing of personal data (that is, respect for privacy) and securing free distribution of such data as means of achieving economic and social progress. Since then, crucial parameters made it necessary to reform the existing regulatory framework, one of them, and probably the most significant, the rapid technological developments and the asymmetry of the implementation of the Directive by Member States.

Within just a few years, the rapid technological developments (internet, mobile telephony, big data, A.I. etc.) have led to an increase, both in scope and intensity, of collection, exchange and processing of personal data by private companies and public authorities, almost in a geometrical progress.

The GDPR repealed Directive 95/46 / EC which was in force as the basic legal framework for the protection of persons against the processing of their personal data in Europe.

Article 51.1 of the GDPR establishes that each Member State shall provide for one or more independent public authorities to be responsible for monitoring the application of the Data Protection Regulation.

**In Greece** there is Law 2472/1997 for the Protection of individuals regarding the processing of their personal data and Law 3471/2006 for the protection of personal data and privacy in the electronic telecommunications sector and amendment of law 2472/1997. The Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDPa) is a constitutionally consolidated independent Authority. It was established with Law 2472/97, which incorporates into the Greek law European Directive 95/46/EC. This Directive sets new rules for the protection of personal data in the Member States of the European Union. In addition, the Hellenic Data Protection Authority implements Law 3471/2006 with respect to the electronic communications sector, which is incorporated into the Greek law European Directive 58/2002.

The DPA is a constitutionally regulated independent Authority and has as its mission the supervision of the personal data and the privacy of individuals in Greece, in accordance with the provisions of Law 2472/97 and 3471/2006 and other regulations regarding the protection of individuals from the processing of their personal data. Since its operation, the Authority has

established itself in the consciousness of Greek citizens as a true body for protecting their personal data. The DPA is competent to handle complaints and investigate, if deemed necessary in cooperation with supervisory authorities of other EU member states, cases of alleged violations of data protection law.

The first development of the constitutional provision, in the **Spanish legislation**, was conducted by means of the Organic Law 5/1992, from October 29, for the regulation of the automated processing of personal data (LORTAD) which established the necessity to regulate, in a statutory form, the requirements and conditions, which automated filing systems and the individuals who intervene in the process of dealing with personal data should have.

The LORTAD was replaced in 1999 by the Organic Law 15/1999, from December 13, by personal data protection, also known as LOPD. Its main purpose was to transpose the Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, from October 24, 1995, concerning the protection of natural persons regarding the processing of personal data and to the national legislation free circulation of that data.

As mentioned above, the Organic Law 3/2018, from December 5, of Protection of Personal Data and guarantee of digital rights (LOPD-GDD or RGPD) is currently the main regulation in the country on data protection.

The Spanish independent supervisory authority is the Agencia Española de Protección de Datos (AEPD from now on), which since its creation in 1992, acts with complete independence from Public Administrations in exercising its powers and in performing its tasks, among those we can find:

- monitor and enforce the application of this Regulation;
- promote public awareness and understanding of the risks, rules, safeguards and rights in relation to processing. Activities addressed specifically to children shall receive specific attention;
- advise, in accordance with Member State law, the national parliament, the government, and other institutions and bodies on legislative and administrative measures relating to the protection of natural persons' rights and freedoms about processing;
- promote the awareness of controllers and processors of their obligations under this Regulation
- encourage the establishment of data protection certification mechanisms and of data protection seals and marks and approve the criteria of certification.

**For Poland**, for two decades the act of 29 August 1997 on the Protection of Personal Data regulated the processing and protection of personal data. The problem was that, although financial penalties were foreseen in the act, they were not implemented in practice.

Currently 4 acts regulate the protection of personal data:

- Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997
- The Act of 10 May 2018 on the Protection of Personal Data
- The Act of 21st February 2019 on the change of certain acts in relation to assurance of application of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27th April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)
- The Act of 14 December 2018 on Personal Data Protection processed in relation to the prevention and combating of crime

The Act of 10 May 2018 brings Polish law into conformity with the General Data Protection Regulation. It specifies:

- when the administrative fines can be used;
- the President of the Office for the Protection of Personal Data - a new authority for the protection of personal data;
- which public entities are obliged to appoint a Data Protection Officer;
- the administrative procedure to be implemented in case of a personal data breach;
- rules for the inspection of personal data protection law compliance;
- civil and criminal liability for personal data breaches;

The act also brings changes to some of the sectoral laws, such as the Labour Code. (Czyżewscy kancelaria adwokacka, 2018)

The Act of 21st February 2019 brings changes to labor law, consumer rights, insurance activities, banking, patient's rights and administrative procedure (Kudelska, 2019)

**For Bulgaria**, The Commission for Personal Data Protection /CPDP/ is the independent public authority, which undertakes the protection of individuals in processing their personal data and in

providing access to these data, as well as control on compliance with the Law for Protection of Personal Data. The significant change in the legal framework in the field of personal data protection and the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of their personal data after 25 May 2018 affected and impeded significantly the implementation of the goals and priorities set for 2018 regarding the control activities of the CPDP. Regardless of the direct applicability of Regulation (EU) 2016/679, an up-to-date and comprehensive national legal framework was not yet available in 2018 and internal CPDP instruments regulating control activities were not in place. Nevertheless, by prioritising certain tasks and competencies of the CPDP under the new European legislation, a 'Methodology for the actions to be taken by the CPDP in cases of receiving notifications of personal data breaches in accordance with Article 33 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679' was developed during the reporting period.

In 2017, the CPDP /Commission for Personal Data Protection/ developed and adopted a Strategy for Development in the Field of Personal Data Protection (Horizon 2022). The Strategy is in line with the new EU legal framework for personal data protection (Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Directive (EU) 2016/680 and Directive (EU) 2016/681), as well as with fundamental initiatives at national level – National Reform Programme 'Bulgaria 2020' and Strategy for the Development of the Public Administration (2014–2020).

The strategic goals of the CPDP for the 2017–2022 period include:

- system implemented for the prevention and containment of the unlawful forms of personal data processing and violations of natural persons' rights;
- supervision mechanism effectively applied;
- comprehensive system in place for training in personal data protection, public awareness raising events and initiatives;
- sustainable administrative services provided to citizens and data controllers;
- proactive approach applied to international cooperation;
- system of initiatives in place for upgrading the professional qualification of the CPDP and its administration;
- advanced openness and transparency processes.

## 2.3 OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY ORGANISATIONS IN COMPLYING WITH THE GDPR IN THE PARTNERING COUNTRIES? STAGE OF COMPLIANCE OF SMES WITH THE REGULATION?

According to ENISA's (The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity) published guidelines for SMEs on the security of personal data processing (2016), small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are dominating the international business landscape and constitute the backbone of the EU economy, promoting competitiveness and investments of the Digital Single Market. In order to meet their objectives, SMEs are increasingly depending on Information Technology (IT) networks, systems and applications, while many have an online presence, offering digital services to their customers.

It is in many cases difficult for SMEs to comprehend the specificities of the risks associated with personal data processing, as well as to assess and manage these risks following a formal methodology. This can put on harm's way the personal data processed by SMEs, hindering at the same time compliance of SMEs with the GDPR legal obligations.

For small and medium businesses, the necessity for compliance with GDPR is even more pressing. High and disproportionate compliance costs / fines as well as the incomplete information framework and market ignorance make them more vulnerable than larger businesses.

As announced by the European Union's data protection supervisors, as of summer 2019, penalties for violations of the GDPR have begun to increase. While all indicators show that the implementation of the Regulation will be delayed due to the complexity of investigations into compliance measures and personal data breaches, these expectations have been contradicted in recent months.

From the results of an online survey (ICAP, 2019) it appears that although there is a good level of understanding of the regulation in the companies involved, 80% do not have an integrated framework and plan that will ensure compliance with the regulation. Despite the awareness that a lot of work is required to comply, most research participants show a significant degree of uncertainty about their preparedness or compliance plans. Furthermore, there is a blur picture regarding the role of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and hers/his necessity, as well as the reporting obligations of data breaches preparedness or compliance plans.

According to a survey from the **Greek** Ministry of Development & Investments , the most important difficulties that SME's face during the compliance procedures are the exact knowledge of what data to collect and process at each stage of their activities, who and what tools and

processes are involved during the processing, defining and separating their business needs and the systematic review to meet GDPR requirements at each stage of data processing. All the above require specialized consultation, financial resources and personnel training.

On the basis of publication in July 2018 of the Report on the degree of preparation of **Spanish** companies before the general regulation of data protection, below are some of the most important conclusions reached:

In terms of the type of data processed, the results of the report shows that the data processing that SMEs perform most frequently are related to those belonging to customers, suppliers and employees, which are treated by almost all companies (from 97% to 92%) and, to a lesser extent, those related to video surveillance (38%) and forms on the Internet (17%). When observing such files, SMEs were the data processors in more than 90% of the cases and 75% of them referred to treatments of low risk data.

As to the actions carried out by SMEs related to management in data protection to be prepared for compliance with GDPR, is worth to highlight that:

- a) more than 80% of the SMEs surveyed:
  - Received specialized consulting services and support on the protection of personal data or planned to hire it in the short term
  - Have proceeded to notify their records of processing activities to the AEPD/ The Spanish supervisory authority/
  - Have prepared security logs
- b) most companies have, in rates below 70%:
  - Included information clauses in their forms to collect personal data (69%)
  - Developed contracts including data protection clauses (58%)
- c) Finally, regarding actions with a minority execution, less than 40% of the SMEs:
  - Have foreseen or attended requests to exercise the rights of people (39%)
  - Used the AEPD website (24%)

About the awareness of GDPR, 63% of Spanish SMEs were aware of the new GDPR. This means, however, that a significant percentage, almost four out of ten companies, were not yet aware of this regulation. The above can be complemented by the following affirmations:

- d) The new responsibilities of the controller are unknown by 41% of SMEs.
- e) The obligation to maintain a record of data processing activities is not known by 40% of SMEs.

The report also highlights the lack of resources of many SMEs to meet the obligations of data protection regulations, although it also expresses the positive attitude of these companies to fulfil their obligations in this area.

Although adaptation to the new regulations can be an effort for SMEs, they value the Regulation positively. Thus, almost 9 out of 10 SMEs consider that the GDPR is better than the previous regulations and 8 out of 10 perceive it as positive.

Some insights on evolution of the awareness of the **Spanish** SMEs about GDPR, can be obtained from the report issued in 2019 by the private firm Pridatect on the perception of data in companies. The study was implemented in May 2019 and involved to 244 employees of SMEs.

Some important conclusions can be extracted:

- f) Almost 23% of the respondents did not perceive any increase in the awareness about personal data in their SMEs
- g) Only 69% of those surveyed have received information or training on GDPR from their companies.
- h) 53% of these employees stated that they did disown the figure of the Data Protection Officer (DPO).
- i) The procedure to process personal information within the company is not known by 37% of employees.
- j) 50% of respondents stated that they ignore the sanctions for non-compliance with GDPR.

Altogether, in view of the results , we can conclude that the small size of these organizations entails the risk of deteriorating the perception on the importance of data protection due to the inconveniences that compliance may entail, namely costs, resources and, as a result, excessive interference within the economic activity.

Direct consequence of the above is the lack of information and training of employees about GDPR and the processing of data that are being managed in the company. Therefore, SMEs - consciously or unconsciously - face the risk to penalties for non-compliance. Such risk is not balanced by the assessment made by SMEs on the data as an important asset, although this concept is becoming increasingly prominent with digitalization, but which, in the field of active data protection management, has not yet hit hard.

In **Poland**, according to the report published by EY (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019) for the majority (67%) of small enterprises the changes that GDPR resulted in were of medium importance while for 54% of medium enterprises they were very important. 48% of small and 47% of medium enterprises reported that they are very well prepared for a potential audit of GDPR compliance. (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019)

The most common ways of implementing GDPR in SMEs are: assuring the rights to access, edit, erase and transfer personal data (82% of small and 88% of medium enterprises), changes in the documentation (79% of small and 75% of medium enterprises), maintaining a data processing registry (80% of small and 82% of medium enterprises), compliance with the notification obligation (65% of small and 76% of medium enterprises). 64% of small and 74% of medium enterprises reported getting rid of a part of personal data they kept or stopping the activity of processing them. 66% of small and 74% of medium claim to have improved IT security. 49% of small and 66% of medium enterprises implemented the procedure of being forgotten and 51% of small and 61% of medium enterprises - the procedure of breaches reporting. 50% of small and 56% of medium enterprises decided to put additional security measures to sensitive data. 39% of small and 53% of medium enterprises implemented risk analysis. While in 40% of medium enterprises a data protection officer was appointed this number is much smaller for small enterprises – only 11%. 21% of small and 27% of medium enterprises has set rules for profiling. (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019)

Members of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises SMEUnited have identified the following problems while implementing GDPR (Trudności we wdrażaniu regulacji RODO w MŚP, 2019):

1. determining while establishing new business relations which organisation is the personal data administrator and which is the processor,
2. determining when the personal data processing is done on a mass scale and what this term actually means,

3. maintaining documentation to keep the record of personal data processing activities
4. appointing a data protection officer,
5. defining the diluteness rule.

Also the lack of technologies allowing a secure data processing is a big challenge for SMEs. Most of them do not use advanced IT systems or security procedures. (Wedziuk, 2019).

According to the members of SMEUnited the main challenge for SMEs is that GDPR contains very complicated provisions and there is a lack of their interpretation. Published guidelines do not show how to implement the law in everyday work. The report published by EY (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019) confirms this observation as 76% of small and 68% of medium enterprises reported that the provisions of GDPR are not clear to them.

According to a survey, conducted by **Bulgarian** Chamber of Commerce, about half of the interviewed **Bulgarian SMEs** (51%) report being partly aware of the requirements. Only one in ten are well aware of their company's obligations under the regulation. At the other pole are 16% of companies that for the first time understand that there is such a regulation or do not even know what their future obligations are.

It is worrying that only 14% of companies have their personal data processing systems ready for the regulation and the remaining 86% are unprepared. The companies that are ready for the new requirements are mainly small and medium-sized companies and there is not a single big company.

About 71% think it will be very difficult for them to bring their personal data processing systems in line with the rules of the regulation. Most companies - 59% express their fears that they will not be able to do everything necessary, which will result from the new requirements for personal data protection, in due course.

Were the SMES able to prepare themselves during these two years to comply with the Regulation?

About half of SMEs (51%) report being partly aware of the requirements. Only one in ten are aware of their company's obligations under the regulation. At the other pole are 16% of companies that for the first time understand that there is such a regulation or do not even know what their future obligations are.

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requirements are mainly small and medium-sized companies and there is not a single big company.

About 71% think it will be very difficult for them to bring their personal data processing systems in line with the rules of the regulation. Most companies - 59% express their fears that they will not be able to do everything necessary, which will result from the new requirements for personal data protection, in due course.

Main issues experienced by Bulgarian organizations in complying with the GDPR, based on the experience of business consultants, could be stated as?

### *1. The regulation does not apply to me*

Since the country has been in the GDPR for a relatively short time, the problems and concerns that companies face regarding compliance with personal data protection rules are prevalent. Some companies are active enough to dig deep, engage with cybersecurity and data protection experts, as well as seek special GDPR preparedness services. Most, however, choose to wait and watch, citing lack of clarity as a major deterrent to compliance with the new provisions. The incorrect and uncertain approach that many companies have taken to GDPR means that they have not dug deep and have not grasped the true essence of the Regulation. This does not exclude the times, when companies make mistakes when implementing security measures and technical solutions.

### *2. Lack of information*

Giving consent, the right to be forgotten, and the need for a Data Protection Officer (DPO) are some of the most discussed GDPR requirements among Bulgarian SMEs. These are actually the core of the Regulation. Bulgarian businesses, however, mistakenly believe that this is all they need to do. The problem is that there are very few credible sources of information that give a complete picture of the Regulation. The result - companies identify only the aspects that are most relevant and most important to them.

### *3. Difficulties in determining which information constitutes "personal data"*

A major change is the definition of personal identification. European regulations on personal information are very strict and are the backbone of the law. Without knowing what information is "personal", companies cannot hope to protect it adequately.

### *4. Errors in the evidence creation*

Companies must consider the "principle of purpose limitation" of the Regulation. The principle is that any data the company collects from a customer should only be used for the purpose, for which it was collected. Therefore, companies must be prepared to prove this to the regulatory authority. This can only be done by tracking all data use cases, from collection to use. This problem extends to almost every aspect of GDPR and is one of the most controversial issues for Bulgarian businesses too.

## *5. Inability to delete personal data*

The "right to be forgotten", an important point in the Regulation, requires companies to be able to completely erase all essential customer data. This is clearly different from traditional data backup strategies adopted by businesses. This creates major challenges for Bulgarian companies, some of which are not even able to understand the true consequences of this obligation. So Bulgarian businesses need to build methods to bind the master data records and keep evidence of everything they do to erase the information.

## **2.4 OVERVIEW OF THE AWARENESS OF RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY GDR FOR THE SMES? AWARENESS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES IN CHARGE OF DATA PROTECTION? EXPERIENCE WITH DATA PROTECTION AUTHORITIES**

Although "compliance" with the GDPR seems to involve high costs and heavy procedures for SME's, specialists and business consultants of the field insist that companies that will apply a culture of respect and protection for personal data at the core of their daily business routines will automatically gain a "competitive advantage" against competitors.

The effectiveness of the General Regulation, however, depends on its proper implementation and effective approach by the 'responsible' and 'executors' of data processing not as a compulsory 'burden' but as an opportunity to change culture in order to boost public confidence.

**For Greece**, according to HDPAs (Hellenic Data Protection Authority) 2018 Annual Report, 43% of business owners do not know what GDPR is, 33% are not sure and only 24% know what GDPR is. Whereas 80% of business owners have answered that they have not performed any regulatory actions concerning GDPR and only 15% that they have. Furthermore, from the same report we can see that during the first year of the GDPR implementation 953 questions about compliance were answered, 65 decisions were fined, 1132 decisions were processed and 80 cases of violations were reported.

The initial conclusions drawn as a result of this initiative highlight, in general, the lack of compliance with the legislation on cookies and relevant technologies in almost all the controllers.

Additionally, there seems to be a lack of information on the processing operations and the recipients of the data at around 40% of the controllers. It is worth noting that the public sector lags in compliance, mainly with regard to transparency, in almost all of the organizations that were investigated.

On the contrary, at a high percentage of more than 80% of data controllers, a satisfactory level of security was observed. Furthermore, a sufficient degree, more than 70%, of Data Protection Officers' designation was noted in the private sector.

**SMEs in Poland** are (on some conditions) exempt from implementing GDPR in full. They are not obliged to (Katarzyna, 2019):

- inform their clients about their rights of access to personal data, its rectification, erasure or restriction (but they should do it if they are asked to by the data subject)
- maintain records of processing activities
- appoint a Data Protection Inspector

The level of SMEs awareness of these exemptions is increasing but no concrete data can be found. No data on the awareness of national public authorities in charge of data protection and SMEs' Experience with Data Protection Authorities is available.

The situation with scarce data is similar in Spain and Bulgaria.

The question "Awareness of national public authorities in charge of data protection" has been partly answered for the **Spanish SMEs**, with the report from AEPD / Agencia Española de Protección de Datos/ also deals with some aspects related to the awareness and experience of SMEs of national public authorities in charge of data protection.

In this sense, it is worth pointing out that:

- only 24% of the SMEs surveyed used the AEPD website (24%);
- almost 53% ignore the guidelines produced by the AEPD aimed at helping SMEs to get adapted to GDPR;

Therefore, even considering the increase in the number of measures of the Strategic Plan and the raising awareness actions performed the awareness of Spanish SMEs on national public authorities in charge of data protection can be considered as medium-low, meaning that there still is a long way to walk in this sense since the promotion of tools and guidelines that facilitate adaptation to

the new framework by those responsible for and in charge of treatment, the sizing of the implementation tools and the implementation actions according to the resources to be managed and the size of the companies, as well as the growth of the perception of data as a source of value, are conditions that will undoubtedly favour the success of GDPR amongst SMEs.

As to the “Experience with Data Protection Authorities” in Spain:

- 60% of SMEs is open to managing their data protection obligations with own means and the support of the tools and guides of the AEPD;
- the AEPD resources obtained an average rating of 7, on a scale of 0 to 10 (in aspects such as the density of content within the web, relevance and clarity and adaptation to the needs and characteristics of SMEs.)

The above can be interpreted as follows: a clear majority of the SMEs who were aware of AEPD and the supporting materials value them positively to the extreme of being motivated and confident to use the resources provided and their own means for GDPR adaptation and compliance.

**For Bulgaria**, as part of the supervisory remit in the area of personal data protection, the CPDP has the power to examine complaints lodged by natural persons against personal data controllers (PDCs) over alleged violations of their rights laid down in the PDP Act. Complaints or requests for protection of violated rights can be lodged within one year after the applicant obtains knowledge of the violation, but not more than five years after the occurrence of the violation. Missing these deadlines results in an inability of the CPDP to exercise its powers and makes the complaints inadmissible. In 2018 the CPDP received over 784 complaints filed by individuals who claim that their rights have been infringed when their personal data were processed. For comparison, it should be noted that for the entire 2017 the complaints received were no more than 480.

While undoubtedly advantageous in many ways for citizens and organisations, a reality with the GDPR is that organisations are having severe difficulties in understanding what compliance mechanism is in this new environment and how to implement it.

Thus, SMEs need support dealing with the regulation through a systematic approach with practical tasks for the companies. Proposed models that are supposed to prepare companies for the GDPR often cover only parts of the regulation, come from a legal perspective, are either very complex or superficial and therefore not practical for SMEs. The lack of support for companies in implementing the GDPR could be one important factor for the insufficient number of companies that have done so.

The first step towards GDPR compliance consists in being aware of the Regulation, regarding not only its existence but its content as well, including requirements and obligations. Even though this seems obvious, there are some surveys that show that there are a lot of organizations that were not realizing the relevance of GDPR and complying with it, lacking awareness about the European Regulation.

GDPR awareness is very important because the sooner organizations start the preparation for GDPR, the better prepared they will be to achieve compliance, minimizing risks and reducing the likelihood of being fined. Organizations must get acquainted with the Regulation as soon as possible in order to improve the probability to be among the adopters in the market, which will drive them to be in a better position than competitors to gain customers' trust (Lopes and Oliveira, 2018; Garber, 2018). Therefore, the starting point of implementing GDPR is to acquire knowledge about the Regulation in order to understand its requirements and obligations, so that these are taken into account when developing strategies to achieve compliance (Tikkinen-Piri et al., 2018). This can be done internally, by studying the Regulation, or by hiring experts who understand GDPR and are already trained in planning, implementing, and maintaining compliance (Boban, 2018).

To increase the organization's familiarity to GDPR, training sessions should be carried to ensure that everyone follows the internally determined rules and pose no risk to the client's data (Magnusson and Iqbal, 2017). Therefore, data protection training awareness, whether through online courses or face-to-face, is a must for all staff to sustain the right levels of compliance (Perry, 2019).

## **2.5 SUMMARY OF THE RAISING-AWARENESS MECHANISMS IN THE PARTNER COUNTRIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL- AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS, EVENTS (CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, ETC.), SPECIALIZED TRAININGS FOR SMES, PUBLICATION OF GDPR GUIDES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR SMES, ETC.**

The adoption, and the implementation of the General Regulation, has increased the awareness of the protection of personal data and has given organizations and businesses the opportunity to reorganize and adopt good practices. The General Data Protection Regulation changes the way

in which data controllers and processors across the European Union, as well as all organisations that process personal data of European citizens work. It introduces stricter rules for the processing of personal data and further develops the rights of citizens. The new rules affect seriously different types of controllers. For SME's it is a continuous journey of compliance that can become a business success journey.

It is noteworthy that the Eurobarometer of March 2019 states that 67% of business owners in **Greece** were aware of the existence of the General Regulation, although some percent did not have any specific knowledge. This is the EU average. The Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDPa) is a constitutionally consolidated independent Authority, it also measures for implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of persons with regard to the processing of personal data.

The Greek authority, despite the lack of adequate resources and staff, has prepared intensively for the implementation of the General Regulation and performed the necessary adjustments to its operation. However, it takes particular care to continuously enrich its web site with detailed instructions to update and support data subjects and processors. In addition, the EU has designed a series of detailed guidelines and articles with the purpose to help small and medium sized companies that do not manage personal data as a core business activity and mainly manage the personal data of their employees or have lists of customers and buyers.

According to the Hellenic Institute for small and medium enterprises, the need to create a friendly framework for small businesses in order to adapt to the new Regulation has been highlighted, in regard to the problems that will potentially arise from the application of the new Regulation to small businesses due to the rigid but at the same time unclear framework and the high costs of compliance.

Furthermore, according to the Hellenic Business and Industry Association (SEV) the GDPR presents significant opportunities, however utilized, that can help to substantially improve the way SME's perform daily business, resulting not just in the formal compliance, but the achievement of positive signage through this process.

As long as it concerns the **Polish companies** of all size, it is important to mention that, according to the report published by EY (Talasiewicz, Zakrzewska, 2019), for most of the enterprises the main source of information about GDPR provisions were trainings organized by private companies. Government publications were in the second place with 68% and trainings organized by the government had the smallest number of responses (12%). For 61% of companies the source of information were online articles.

4 months before GDPR came into force The Ministry of Development has published a guidebook for SMEs, which includes information about entrepreneurs' responsibilities connected with GDPR, the changes it brings to the protection of personal data and guides on how to prepare the company for new law implementation. It was prepared by an external expert, not by the Ministry itself (Ministry of Development, 2018) It includes FAQ section and practical examples on how to implement GDPR in everyday practice. However, the guidebook is currently not available on the Ministry's website. The Ministry of Digital Affairs has also published a guidebook dedicated to companies of all size. The Personal Data Protection Office provides trainings on personal data protection and GDPR, mainly for Personal Data Inspectors. Based on the information from the Office's website it is hard to determine whether there were any trainings only for SMEs.

Polish Agency for Enterprise Development has provided a course for SMEs on personal data protection in the light of GDPR. There were many conferences on GDPR organized for enterprises, including some events dedicated especially to SMEs. Trainings and conferences on GDPR have been organized mainly by private training and consulting companies, NGOs, associations (including SMEs associations). The number of trainings offered by private companies and consultants is very high.

**For Bulgaria and Spain, no targeted initiatives have been identified to raise the awareness of the SMEs. The campaigns that run were targeting the general public, not specifically targeting the companies.**

**The Bulgarian** national data protection supervisor, the CPDP, has a responsibility imposed by the General Data Protection Regulation to explain to society in an accessible way the fundamental aspects of the EU personal data reform and the new legal framework created by the Regulation. At the same time, as a supervisory authority the CPDP seeks to promote public awareness and understanding of the risks, rules, safeguards and rights associated with the processing of personal data in all spheres of public life by various controllers.

At the beginning of 2018, the CPDP initiated a large-scale information and awareness campaign, in order to respond to the public interest in awareness events involving immediate contact (meetings, seminars, conferences, etc.). The events aimed at achieving broad public awareness on all issues related to EU personal data reform and the new legal framework. They were targeted at the public, PDCs from all spheres of public life and the economy and all stakeholders. The objective of the CPDP was to present the main points in the new legal framework and the practical steps that the PDCs need to take in order to implement in their activity the newly adopted standards for protection and processing of personal data.

Due to the increased interest of PDCs in the updated legal framework for personal data protection, in May 2018 the CPDP decided to expand its information and awareness campaign. The objective was to provide further clarifications on the philosophy of the General Data Protection Regulation, its basic concepts, the new responsibilities of data controllers, the rights of data subjects, the functions of data protection officers and the requirements they need to satisfy, and to respond of questions that were raised during the initial stage of the CPDP's awareness campaign. Because of its limited human and financial resources, the Commission focused its efforts in the awareness campaign on the sectoral representative organisations of PDCs to achieve a multiplier effect.

The CPDP also prepared two information brochures aimed at clarifying key issues to support the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation.

To raise public awareness of key issues of the General Data Protection Regulation, a special section devoted to the Regulation was created on the institution's website. Explanatory materials and recommendations on the implementation of the Regulation were published there: guidelines of the CPDP, of the European Commission, of the Working Party under Article 29 of Directive 95/46 (whose successor is the European Data Protection Board established by said Regulation). In order to facilitate the fulfilment of the obligation of personal data controllers (PDCs) and data processors (DPs) to designate a data protection officer (DPO), the CPDP published on its website instructions on the manner and form of notification of designated DPOs to the CPDP. There were also organised specialized training seminars for Data Protection Officers in the public sector in four Bulgarian cities in 2019.

The application of the GDPR was followed by intense awareness-raising campaign across **the Spanish population**.

In correspondence with the functions attributed to the AEPD by the GDPR for the promotion and awareness among those in charge and responsible for the process and management of personal data - mainly SMEs - the Agency has intensified the volume and scope of these actions since the entry into force of GDPR.

In general terms, the number of such actions carried out by this institution (institutional and work meetings, events and conferences, etc.) experienced an increase of more than 17% compared to 2017. These actions can be sorted into three main groups depending on the type of action: awareness-raising actions (numerous conferences, seminars, round tables, courses and informative talks to expand the culture of data protection among citizens and organizations); cooperation with other entities (several collaboration agreements with associations of SMEs and/or professionals, aiming at publicizing and disseminating among their members

(professionals and SMEs, respectively) the tools, methods, provisions and any other material of the Agency that are of interest for compliance with data protection regulations, participation in training sessions and conferences); publication of GDPR guides and instructions for SMEs.

## **2.6 OVERVIEW OF THE PROVIDED SERVICE AND OFFERS OF BUSINESS CONSULTANTS IN THE PARTNERING COUNTRIES, SUPPORTING THE SMES TO COMPLY WITH THE GDPR.**

There is enough business consultants / organizations offering customized solutions in the analysed countries, by utilizing and improving existing technology tools for businesses mainly in the broad sector of information security. Specialized private consultants, mostly security engineers and lawyers, assist companies and provide all the necessary services for the compliance with GDPR requirements.

With the use of structured questionnaires tailored to SME's needs, conducting on-site audits, these consulting companies verify and confirm compliance procedures with GDPR. Most consultants provide their specialized services along the lines of Discovery, Management, Protection and Reporting. Firstly, analysing the company/organization and its requirements, recognizing, and mapping all personal data, then managing the data developing necessary procedures & security policies. Following employee awareness, procedures & policies are implemented and lastly a report is drafted to evaluate successful implementation of procedures & policies.

**For Greece,** The Hellenic Association of Data Protection & Privacy is a non-profit group of professionals with a passion to exchange, analyse, communicate, and educate on the ongoing issues of data protection, privacy and security. By assisting the spread of the data protection knowledge and through the creation of a public dialogue, the Association encourages interested persons/organizations/companies to participate in the shaping of an ideological, but at the same time also practically feasible, proposal platform for the overall management of the protection of private life and data security.

In **Spain,** there is a vast offer of consulting services to support SMEs in the adaptation and compliance to GDPR. Most of these external services are offered by business consultants as complementary services to those that are inherent part of their main activity - i.e. fiscal, accountant, labour and legal services – but there are also some independent professionals and

companies offering specialised services exclusively on GDPR compliance for private companies, mainly SMEs, which profile is typically lawyers and legal consultants.

The services addressing SMEs on GDPR compliance are typically offered in the form of closed packages. These packages can be offered by several means, that are, both fully online and face-to-face or a blended version, using the most convenient channel depending on the customer's specific needs or on the specific task or stage of the process.

On the other hand, training provision is also offered to SMEs as part of the GDPR compliance services. These services are mainly offered by specialised providers of GDPR compliance services or medium/ big-sized business consultancy companies. The target learners of these courses are (1) human resources staff, (2) managers and middle managers of HR, Purchasing, Commercial, etc. (3) personnel in charge of management information systems and processing personal data. Training courses can also be found as e-Learning, face-to-face or blended learning.

It deserves to be mentioned that the AEPD issued in July 2019 a press release informing about the recurrent appearance of GDPR compliance services offered to SMEs and freelancers at low rates but based on generic documents not taking into account the specific characteristics of the activity, wrongly informing on the need to designate a data protection delegate or offering unnecessary services for the treatments performed, considering these services as a fraud and alerting on their risks.

**In Poland**, there are also many private consulting companies, which offer consulting in implementing GDPR compliance. Business consultants rather work for those companies than offer consulting on their own. These consultants are lawyers, economists, IT specialists. Also, many consultants are lawyers working for law firms offering consulting on GDPR. Most of those companies and consultants offer consulting and trainings for companies of all size but there is a part of them who have a special offer for SMEs. They support SMEs by providing trainings (usually in-class open and trainings) and consulting (which includes many services among which there is also training). The number of trainings for SMEs in this matter seems to be bigger than the number of consulting services offered.

There are also numerous advisory services in **Bulgaria** to assist law enforcement and GDPR rules. In essence, they have a different character - legal, economic, and mixed. They have specially designed GDPR teams, which, through a thorough understanding, help SMEs comply and introduce the minimum and sufficient measures needed to meet the GDPR requirements.

Consulting teams also offer advice on the need for special conditions for storing available documents containing personal data. Existing specifics in healthcare facilities and the wider application of personal data and in the field of health data are subject to further consultation and recommendations.

Training of the teams in the respective company for the application of GDPR and document management, their turnover and protection is also provided, especially in view of the prepared instruction for application of the developed GDPR documents in the company's activity.

The services offered are for a fee depending on the scale of the company.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS.**

In Europe more than 99% of all businesses are SMEs (defined as an enterprise with less than 250 employees (Harris et al. 2012; The European Commission 2018). If an organisation does not comply with GDPR it may be expensive, and the chances of discovery are significant since anyone can file a complaint. In the first 8 months of GDPR around 60,000 complaints were received, resulting in fines up to \$57,000,000 (Olenick 2019). For SMEs with limited resources and information management system, this means a great deal of work, so there is a need for a structured approach to make sure they do not miss anything. For most organisations, GDPR requires significant changes in many parts of the organisation; unfortunately, many SMEs do not have resources or knowledge to manage this by themselves.

The researched data in the project countries shows that, although most SMEs are aware of and concerned about GDPR, very few of them have identified the steps needed to be GDPR compliant.

But while the awareness of the GDPR among SMEs was a need identified by the project partners, across the research, awareness of the basic existence of the GDPR among SMEs seemed to be relatively high. The distinction between SME awareness of the existence of the GDPR and SME awareness of the requirements of the GDPR, however, appeared to be significant.

This means that while awareness of the GDPR appeared to have grown, that awareness does not translate to an equivalent awareness and/or understanding of specific GDPR provisions. Furthermore, the SMEs that remain unaware of the GDPRs existence are unlikely to approach for advice or consultation regarding the GDPR.

The needs of SMEs as identified can be separated into two general areas: (1) methodological barriers to understanding and implementing the GDPR requirements; and (2) GDPR content specific issues.

Furthermore, companies should now move from a pure compliance and ‘tick in the box’ approach to privacy to a more purposeful one. From the ‘I have to (comply)’ to the ‘I want to (give my customers control of their data)’. As customers are more privacy conscious, many companies are starting to realize that privacy and the user experience around privacy, even become a competitive advantage, and they would invest in creating tools that can help customers manage their data easily.

The GDPR provision goes beyond the mere adoption of specific security measures, supporting the establishment of a thorough information security management system for the protection of confidentiality, integrity, availability, and resilience of personal data. In However SMEs are not fully acquaint to the perception of risk from the personal data perspective and **they could benefit from a more guided approach that will bridge the gap between the legal provisions and their understanding and perception of risk.**

The intent of the this desktop research was to understand what SMEs in the researched countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Poland), had done and were doing in relation to the GDPR, where they were getting information and support, what challenges they were facing, and what actions from business consultants would be helpful for them.

Based on the gathered secondary information, here are the **conclusions** that could be done:

- SMEs may be aware of the GDPR, but they are lacking resources to get them to adequate level of compliance - “awareness” might be less of a problem than “capacity”. Awareness does not always lead to compliance or implementation – awareness is often seen as a necessary first step towards GDPR compliance, but often insufficient in the absence of other drivers and influences and the knowledge to put compliance into practice
- Personal data protection and regulatory framework is not new in the project countries, but it has not worked this good in practice since now.
- Ac a common problem during the compliance procedures among the SMEs from the project countries is the exact knowledge of what data to collect and process at each stage of their activities, who and what tools and processes are involved during the processing, defining and separating their business needs and the systematic review to meet GDPR requirements at each stage of data processing.
- Overall, in the project countries, the Data Protection Authorities are known, but they are not known as a source of knowledge and information.
- The GDPR presents significant opportunities for SMEs, however utilized, that can help to substantially improve the way SME’s perform daily business, resulting not just in the formal

compliance, but the achievement of positive signage through this process. Consequently, for SME's it is a continuous journey of compliance that can become a business success journey.

- There is enough business consultants / organizations offering customized solutions by utilizing and improving existing technology tools for businesses mainly in the broad sector of information security.
- SMEs need access to inexpensive and easy-to-use solutions for GDPR compliance, through consultancy support, information, and training.

Based on the research data in the partnership countries, the following recommendations can be formulated:

- Fostering research in the sector of GDPR and the SMEs pivotal understanding of it with a special highlight of the role of the business consultants.
- Increase efforts in dissemination of best practices: seminars and workshops and co-operation between SMEs' organizations and business consultants networks should be encouraged.
- Availability of tools and supporting mechanisms to facilitate the SMEs GDPR readiness/compliance and the aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator
- Creation of training methodologies and curricula in the fields of adult learning and VET, targeting SMEs and business consultants and facilitating SMEs overall understanding of the new data protection principles and the business consulting approach towards GDPR.
- The GDPR is a promising first step toward a new business culture that cherishes human privacy, benefit that may give SMEs a competitive differentiation.
- Online accessible tools providing a wide array of information on GDPR pivotal understanding

Being GDPR compliant will support the growth of the business in helping SMEs create a more trusting relationship with customers and potential customers as well. Gathering consents to use data subjects' data, taking the necessary safeguards to protect data and using the data to create a more tailored experience for the audience will ensure stronger relationships. As individuals become more and more aware about how their data is handled, highlighting SMEs stance on transparency may be a differentiating factor to competitors.

We see that the GDPR is something to be embedded into the culture by companies large and small, as the need to ensure data privacy continues, companies must also keep up with requirements and make necessary adaptations. Not only should the GDPR be seen as a push to

further data transparency, but it should be seen as a push to encourage a data privacy culture in the workplace.

Designed to harmonize data privacy laws across Europe, protect and empower all EU data subjects's privacy and reshape the way organizations across the region approach data privacy, the GDPR has introduced multiple changes, becoming the most important change in EU data privacy regulation in the last 20 years.

Although the GDPR represents a solid step forward in the protection of the personal data of the EU data subjects, it may impose a non-negligible cost to public and private organizations of any kind and size in order to adapt their data management processes and privacy policies to the new regulation.

For SMEs it can incur to unaffordable costs due to a lack of resources or awareness. It is of vital importance to bring support to SMEs in the correct adoption of the legislation, so they can minimize or eliminate the risks for the rights and freedoms of the data subjects, avoiding the risk of important economic fines which would seriously affect their sustainability. An appropriate and effective implementation of the GDPR will contribute to strengthening small and medium enterprises competitiveness and economic growth.

The aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator will help companies adopt advanced protection practices in their data-related procedures and, thus increase client confidence and bringing more economic opportunities.

## 4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Overall Report on " *Identification of the support and training intervention scope with respect to the aspects of pivotal understanding of SMEs of the data protection principles, the GDPR readiness, and the aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiation* " is produced on the basis of the elaborated country reports for each consortium country (Bulgaria, Poland, Greece and Spain). The gathered information bellowed is structured in a way to compare the state of SMEs awareness and business consultants possible support in the four countries as regards the turning points in the SMEs overall understanding of the data protection principles.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the latest version of Europe's cornerstone data protection law. It took effect in May 2018, six and a half years after the European Commission's original first draft was published following an unprecedented period of debate, negotiation and lobbying. The changes, which were ushered in by the GDPR on 25 May 2018 for the European member states, were both substantial and ambitious. The Regulation is one of the most wide-ranging pieces of legislation passed by the EU. With the GDPR, Europe is signalling its firm stance on data privacy and security at a time when more people are entrusting their personal data with cloud services and breaches are a daily occurrence.

For most organisations, GDPR requires significant changes in many parts of the organisation; unfortunately, many small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not have resources or knowledge to manage this by themselves (Hashim 2015; Schulze 2018). SMEs typically have simple planning and control systems with informal rules and procedures. They also tend to have less standardisation of work processes, which is a problem since GDPR demands full control of every process that contains personal data (Supyuenyong et al. 2009). In Europe more than 99% of all businesses are SMEs (defined as an enterprise with less than 250 employees (Harris et al. 2012; The European Commission 2018). If an organisation does not comply with GDPR it may be expensive, and the chances of discovery are significant, since anyone can file a complaint. In the first 8 months of GDPR around 60,000 complaints were received, resulting in fines up to \$57,000,000 (Olenick 2019).

Nevertheless, although almost 2 years have passed, the compliance gap is not down to any single issue, evident in the desktop research, with SMEs struggling even to understand and implement a whole range of areas covered by the regulation.

Taking the necessary steps to ensure a much more data privacy oriented work ethic is vital for SMEs. Businesses should be aware of the responsibility they have that has been set out in the GDPR. The perception of the GDPR being another safeguard/obstacle that the company should get over with should be changed. Instead, the GDPR could be seen as a key influence on corporate identity and a helpful push to becoming more conscious of data protection and privacy. Numerous benefits on business growth has been shown for businesses that consciously invest into their efforts of complying with the regulation. In fact, research has shown that businesses who show a significant amount of transparency to consumers get a significant amount of trust in return, hence business growth.

Based on the desktop research, the **SMEs in Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain** do not know The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but there is urgent need of a plan for

implementing organizational and/or technological procedures to ensure compliance with new requirements of Personal Data Protection. All organizations must comply with the new Regulation, not only to avoid heavy fines but also to supply services as compliant companies as that guarantees their sustainability and survival in an increasingly global world, which implies that there must be found solutions that will allow SMEs to comply faster with the Regulation.

Considering that the human resources staff is not in sufficient number to comply with the obligations this Regulation imposes and that, in some cases, there are huge budget limitations, it is crucial to find efficient and effective solutions. Moreover, many organizations would be conscious of reputational damage caused should a company be found non-compliant. There is a common challenge that SME from the project countries, face and that is that they do not have the access to advice and resources to dedicate to compliance compared to larger organizations.

**Based on the research data in the partnership countries**, there have been taken the following recommendations that could be considered for the development of the project training instruments further:

- Fostering research in the sector of GDPR and the SMEs pivotal understanding of it with a special highlight of the role of the business consultants.
- Increase efforts in dissemination of best practices: seminars and workshops and co-operation between SMEs' organizations and business consultants networks should be encouraged.
- Availability of tools and supporting mechanisms to facilitate the SMEs GDPR readiness/compliance and the aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator
- Creation of training methodologies and curricula in the fields of adult learning and VET, targeting SMEs and business consultants and facilitating SMEs overall understanding of the new data protection principles and the business consulting approach towards GDPR.
- The GDPR is a promising first step toward a new business culture that cherishes human privacy, benefit that may give SMEs a competitive differentiation.
- Online accessible tools providing a wide array of information on GDPR pivotal understanding

Being GDPR compliant will support the growth of the business in helping SMEs create a more trusting relationship with customers and potential customers as well. Gathering consents to use data subjects' data, taking the necessary safeguards to protect data and using the data to create

a more tailored experience for the audience will ensure stronger relationships. As individuals become more and more aware about how their data is handled, highlighting SMEs stance on transparency may be a differentiating factor to competitors.

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## **ANNEX II: Primary Research Data (quantitative and qualitative research)**

### **1. Chapter I**

## 1.1 Introduction

**The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** is the latest version of Europe's cornerstone data protection law. It took effect in May 2018, six and a half years after the European Commission's original first draft was published following an unprecedented period of debate, negotiation, and lobbying. The changes, which were ushered in by the GDPR on 25 May 2018 for the European member states, were both substantial and ambitious. The Regulation is one of the most wide-ranging pieces of legislation passed by the EU. With the GDPR, Europe is signalling its firm stance on data privacy and security at a time when more people are entrusting their personal data with cloud services and breaches are a daily occurrence. Designed to address concerns over the security and use of personal data, GDPR will apply to data processing activities regarding personal data within Europe as well as data transfers within the EU and between the EU and non-EU countries, and it looks likely to become the global benchmark for protecting personal data.

Along this vein, considering the new SME and business environment in the EU, it is of great importance to highlight how **GDPR compliance for SMEs** can function as a **business differentiator for SMEs**. Moving beyond the 'compliance-or-penalty' notion, GDPR can thus be exploited by SMEs as an innovation (e.g. new, innovative ways to use data), a competitive advantage (e.g. reviewing and development of in-company policies, which can lead to more transparency and thus trust for the customer base), a tool for consumer empowerment (i.e. placing consumers and their rights at the centre and by empowering them, empowering businesses and SMEs), an opportunity to create a culture shift in how to do business, by going 'beyond the compliance' aspect, changing the perspective of thinking about GDPR as a burden, to a perspective of thinking of it as business driver.

**The overall aim of the project mindtheDATA** is to underline the crucial role of business consultants, SME/business consulting companies and organisations, trainers/coaches in business and entrepreneurship, HR consultants/professionals, management/strategy/operations and marketing consultants and to make an intervention by the means of a set of tools, guidelines, practices to be used by business consultants to continuously support SMEs as parts of the European SME ecosystem **to fully integrate the principles of data protection into their organisational culture** and the mindsets of their human capital, not merely as a compliance element, but as a beneficial tool into their organisational culture. To this goal, the proposed project will in particular develop a modular set of online training material for consultants (available in EN, BG, EL, ES, and PL).

**The project and the research itself were co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Commission.**

The main objective of the this report is to gain more detailed understanding on the fields of knowledge and skills that **SMEs** as well as **business advisors and consultants of SMEs** in the researched countries /Bulgaria, Spain, Greece and Poland/ need to acquire and further develop in order for the latter to effectively support and consult SMEs in the process of becoming fully GDPR compliant, while for the former to become GDPR compliant according to identified understanding of the regulation, needs to be addressed and ways to respond to those needs. The present overall report has been produced as a result of a two-fold research (quantitative and qualitative) that was carried out in the frame of project **mindtheDATA** - Creating a data protection culture among SME (2019-1-BG01-KA202-062297).

The extensive research work was conducted in the project countries - **Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, and Spain**. The main objective of the report was to gain more detailed understanding on the fields of knowledge and skills those business advisors and consultants of SMEs need to acquire and further develop in order to effectively support and consult SMEs in the process of becoming fully GDPR compliant. In addition, the research findings will serve as the main guidelines for the development of a comprehensive methodology, according to which a modular set of educational material and guidelines for business consultants, available in an online learning space (platform), will be developed because of the project implementation "**IO2- Digital training modules for business consultants and online environment**".

**The research phase of the project** was conducted in the frame of Intellectual Output 1; TASK2: Identification of the support and training intervention scope with respect to the aspects of pivotal understanding of SMEs of the new data protection principles, the GDPR readiness and strategy of SMEs, and the aspect of GDPR as development opportunity, business driver and differentiator/ DESKTOP RESEARCH/ and TASK 3: Quantitative and qualitative primary research accounting for targeted primary data by involving business consultants as well as SMEs. Both TASKs were coordinated by LP: Yambol Chamber of Commerce and industry, Bulgaria with the participation of the rest of the partnership.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives of the report

The present Report summarizes the research work that was implemented through the quantitative (Online surveys) and qualitative (Open interviews/discussions) research with representatives of the main target group – business advisors and consultants and SMEs. The results of the present report will be utilized in three different aspects.

In general, the main objective of the report is to analyze the environment in the partner countries (Bulgaria, Poland, Greece and Spain) with respect to the needs and deficiencies in terms of knowledge and competences that business advisors and consultants need to acquire and further develop in order to effectively support and consult SMEs in GDPR issues. After the research was finalized, the partners produced **National reports**- presenting and analyzing the data for the concrete country. The main objective of the national reports is to identify both weak and strong points in the level of awareness and knowledge of SMEs and business consultants in the researched countries / Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Poland/ on the GDPR regulations, the conceptions about the importance of introducing data protection culture within organizations to get ready for European digital society and the degree of understanding of GDPR as a business differentiator.

Furthermore, the research aimed to assess the current level of expertise, awareness and preparedness of business advisors/consultants for providing adequate support to SMEs in the process of planning and/or managing a GDPR compliance. In this aspect, awareness and utilization of available support in consortium countries in the field of GDPR issues were further analyzed in the process of the research.

The comparison of the findings extracted from the National reports (BG, EL, ES and PL) lead to the identification of the main data protection challenges for SMEs as well as training gaps and priorities of business advisors, essential information for the definition of relevant learning outcomes for the training provision to be developed in IO2, in order to cover the specific needs detected.

Last but not least, research findings will be utilized by project partners in the process of developing targeted to the needs, methodological/pedagogical layout and tools, which will assist business advisors in further enhancing their consulting competences in GDPR issues. In this regards the findings of the research will feed into IO2 that will produce a comprehensive training modules and environment for business advisors with regard to consulting SMEs on GDPR.

## 1.3 General information

The research process in all partner countries was based on common *Methodological Guidelines* (IO1, TASK1) that were developed by Yambol Chamber of Commerce and Industry- Bulgaria.

According to the approved work plan and project application form, the research process in consortium countries was implemented as follows:

- In Bulgaria: Yambol Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Business Support Center for SMEs- RUSE.
- In Poland: PAIZ Konsulting Sp. z o.o.
- In Greece: Militos S.A. and EQA Hellas Certification & Inspection Body SA.
- In Spain: Innovation Training Center, S.L.

Yambol Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the IO1 Leader.

Following the Methodological guidelines, the research process, in partner countries, was implemented through the following stages:

### **Stage 1: Development of survey methodology, guidelines, and tools**

The IO leader- Yambol Chamber of Commerce and Industry, developed the overall research methodology and tools (quantitative online survey questionnaires and qualitative open interview guidelines), as well as reporting guidelines needed for proper implementation of the tasks according the project requirements and achievement of the prospected results. Following an extensive period of discussion, approval and adaptation of the tools which actively involved all project partners they were agreed and finalized. A significant contribution to the development of the tools, based on their rich experience on the topic was provided by all partners.

### **Stage 2: Translation/adaptation and digitalization of research tools**

Project partners translated and adapted the quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interview/open discussion guideline to consortium languages. The ready online questionnaire content was provided to Project partner: R&DO Limited – Cyprus for digitalization and uploading onto the survey platform Google Docs for online distribution. Each partner tested the online questionnaire and provided feedback on both content and survey logic in their own language. Following the translation, adaption and digitalization of research tools, each partner received a link to the online survey. Dissemination of online survey links and invitations among pre-selected members of the main target groups was responsibility of each partner. In countries where more than one partner operated, the LP was responsible for defining and distributing deliverables and roles in relation to both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research (e.g. dissemination

methods, minimum number of respondents and interviewed members of the target groups, reporting guidelines, etc.).

### Stage 3: Online surveys for Business Consultants and SMEs

The online surveys were implemented with the main objective to obtain concrete measurable data related to the specific needs of business consultants and SMEs in terms of knowledge and training content in order Business Consultants to better consult and support SMEs in GDPR issues. The online surveys were implemented in the period **February - April 2020** through the distribution of online questionnaires developed on the survey platform Google Docs in four of the consortium countries. The online survey for SMEs and the one for business consultants went in parallel. Each partner distributed the survey links along with a brief disclaimer and an invitation for participation to a pre-developed database of business consultants, consulting companies, regional development agencies, business support organizations, economic and trade chambers, as well as other organizations that provide assistance and support to SMEs and SMEs as well. In addition, announcements for participation at the survey were published on the project website and Facebook page of the project.

A total of **69 respondents participated at the online survey for Business Consultants** as the initial goal, according to the application form, was **60-80 participants**.

A total of **49 respondents participated at the online survey for SMEs** as the initial goal, according to the application form, was **40 participants**.

### Stage 4: Interviews

In order to gain more in-depth, subtle and rather qualitative feedback on current knowledge, skills, background and expertise of business consultants in consulting SMEs in GDPR, open interviews with business advisors and experts in business consulting were conducted in the researched countries, based on a pre-developed and approved interview guidelines by the IO leader- Yambol CCI.

In most countries, open interviews began before online survey due to the delay in the translation and digitalization of research tools. During the period February- April 2020 project partners in the 4 researched countries implemented a total of **20 interviews and open discussions with members of the main target group**. Most of the interviews were conducted in **by Skype/tel**. All

participants in the interviews were renowned business consultants or experts that had long-term experience in supporting and consulting various types of businesses including SMEs.

## 2. Chapter II

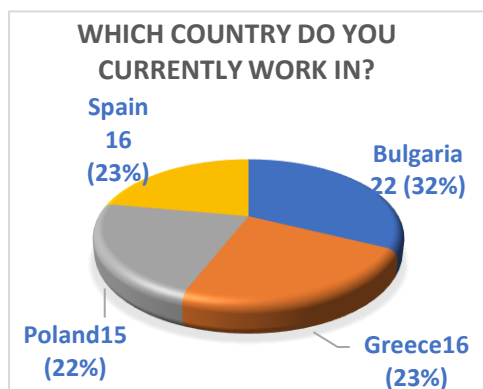
The present chapter presents the results of both the **quantitative survey of business consultants and the qualitative interviews** conducted with individual consultants and business experts. For the quantitative survey, there are graphic charts of results, accompanied by comments, highlighting interesting data on attitudes and opinion of business consultants on various aspects of GDPR and SMEs in each country. For the interviews, results are provided as a summary that follows the questions included in the interview template that was used by project partners during the research process.

The overall summary and conclusions of research results are presented in Chapter IV (General Summary and Conclusions) of the present report. The research tools – online questionnaires and interview guidelines are provided as annexes to the present report (Chapter V).

### 2.1 Online Survey

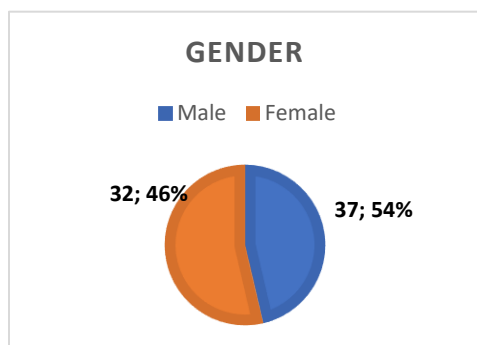
The online survey of **business consultants** in the four researched countries was implemented in the period February -April 2020 with the joint efforts of the project partners from Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain. A total of **69 respondents participated** at the online survey. Below is provided a summary of the results based on the structure of the online questionnaire and the questions that were asked. The results are provided in % as each question is accompanied by a brief summary that highlights both individual (country based) and general findings

#### 1.1. In which country do you currently work in?



A total of 69 respondents of the four researched partner countries / Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain/ participated at the online survey as the initial goal, according to the application form, was set to the range of 60-80 participants.

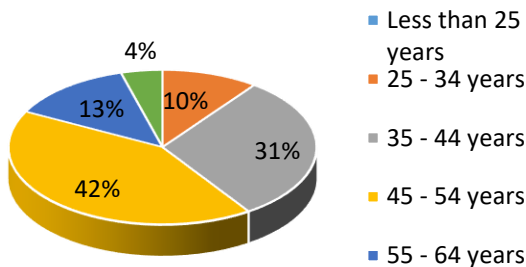
## 1.2. Gender



Most of the respondents were female. Only in Bulgaria there were more women business advisors that have participated in the online survey. In the other 3 countries, the participants were mostly male.

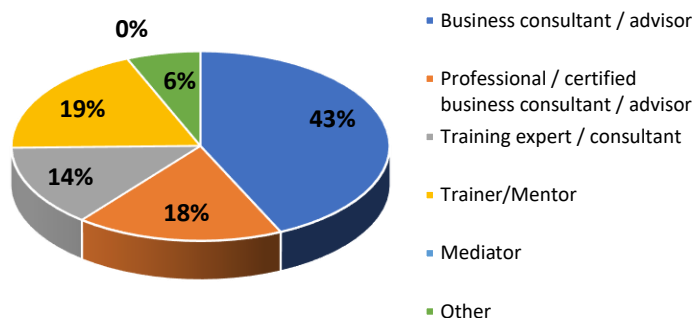
## 1.3. What is your age?

AGE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS



When data are demarcated by age, it can be seen that most of the respondents (**73%**) were **in the age between 35 and 54 years**. The age group of **35-44 years** was mostly represented in the survey. Therefore, this group should be of interest to the project, as most of the business consultants have already gained their knowledge and experience in working with businesses. Less than 14% of the respondents were under 34 years. None of the participants in the survey were less than 25 years of age.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT ROLE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?



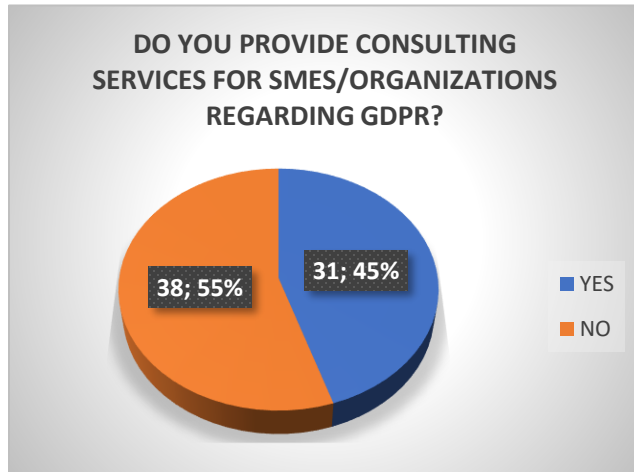
## 1.4 What is your present role in your organization?

The majority of respondents were business consultants / advisors. However only **19 %** of the survey participants declared that they were **"Professional or certified business consultants"**. Only **18% of the respondents** qualified themselves as a mentor or mediator. Some **6% of respondents** qualified themselves as

"Other or none of the provided profiles". By analyzing the profile of organizations that were involved in the online survey it is most probable that those respondents fall in the category "Experts" that were either supporting or informing businesses on various topics of interest. Among the additional occupations reported in this survey, there are a programme officer, a lawyer, and a manager.

It should be noted that some of the respondents have chosen more than one category in this question.

## 2.1 Do you provide consulting services for SMEs/organizations regarding GDPR?

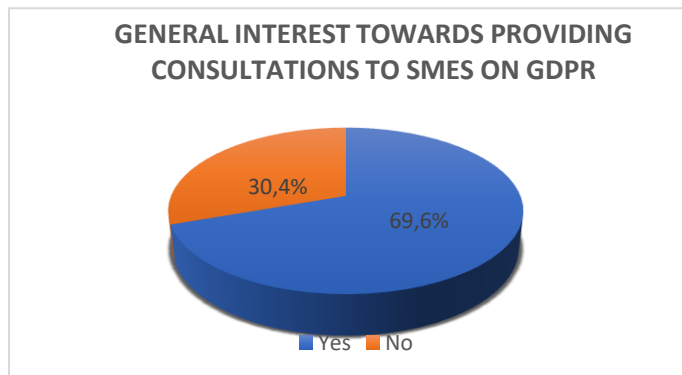


The second part of the questionnaire aimed at gaining more insights on the specific experience of business consultants in providing consultations to SMEs and organization, in regards GDPR. The majority of participants (55%) stated that currently they are not providing consulting services to SMEs on the GDPR.

In Greece, all respondents indicated that they were not working with SMEs on GDPR. In the other countries, the number of consultants providing services to SMEs on GDPR is just a

bit higher than those not providing such services while in Poland, the numbers are equal.

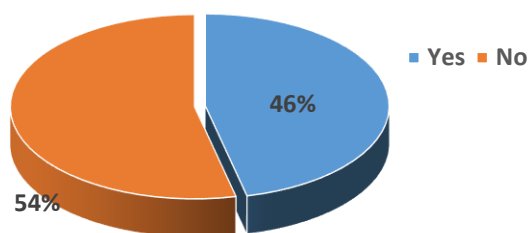
## 2.2 If you do not provide any consulting to GDPR, would you be interested in providing such services in the future?



According to survey data more than half of the respondents provided an answer to the question that the business consultants that were not currently providing consulting services to SMEs on GDPR, would be very much interested in counseling this target group in the future. This positive tendency was observed in all participating countries.

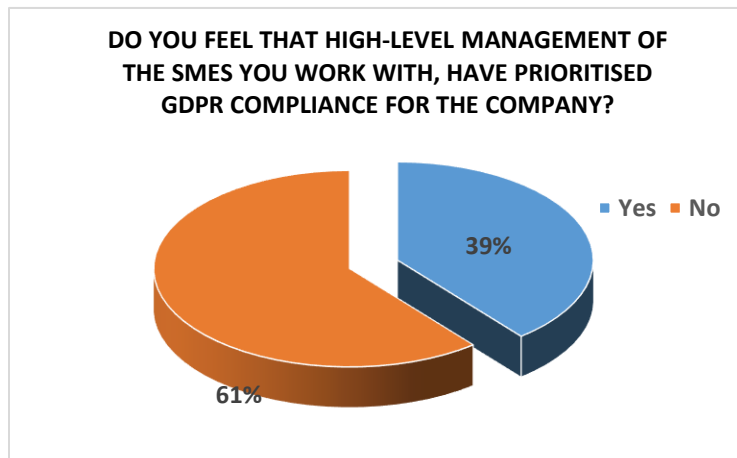
## 2.3 Based on your experience, do you think that SMEs are aware of their obligations as it concerns GDPR?

## GENERAL AWARENESS AMONG SMES TOWARDS THEIR OBLIGATIONS, IN REGARDS GDPR



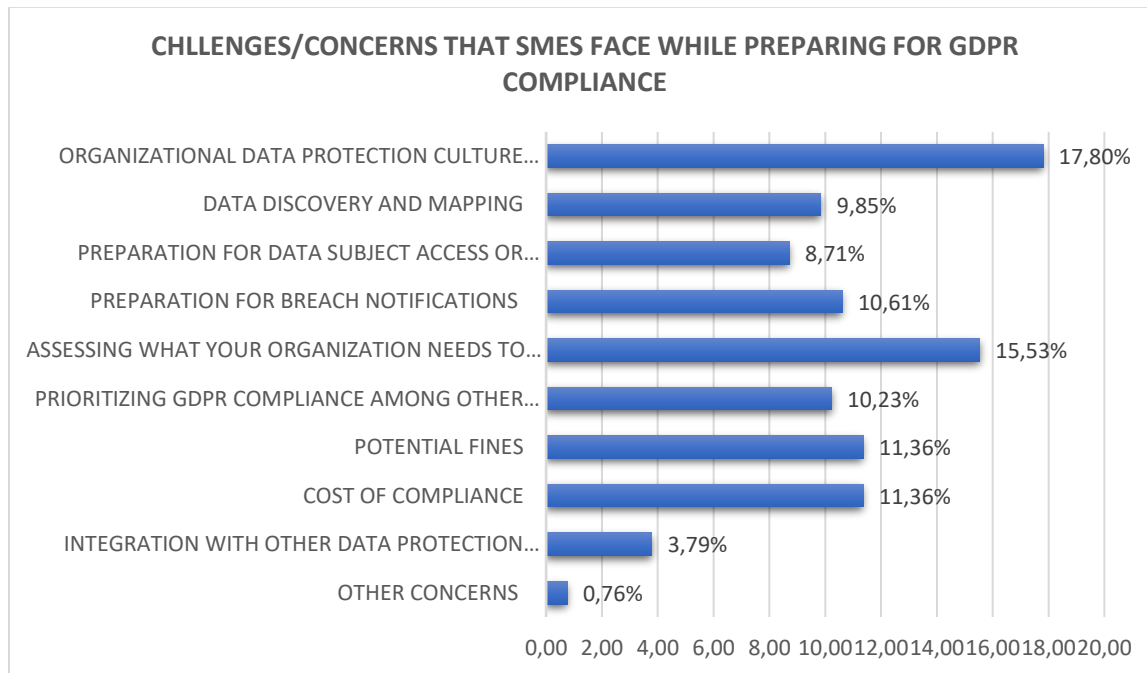
A clear majority of those surveyed (37, 54%) think that SMEs are not aware of their obligations as it concerns GDPR.

## 2.4 Do you feel that the owners and/or corporate officers within the SMEs you worked with, have made becoming GDPR compliant a business priority?



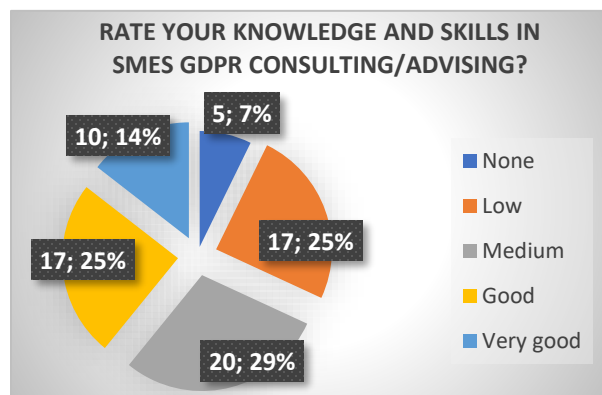
In a similar way as above, business consultants do not feel that the owners and/or corporate officers within the SMEs they worked with, have made becoming GDPR compliant a business priority.

## 2.5 Which of the following challenges/concerns the SMEs that you have consulted are facing while preparing for GDPR compliance?



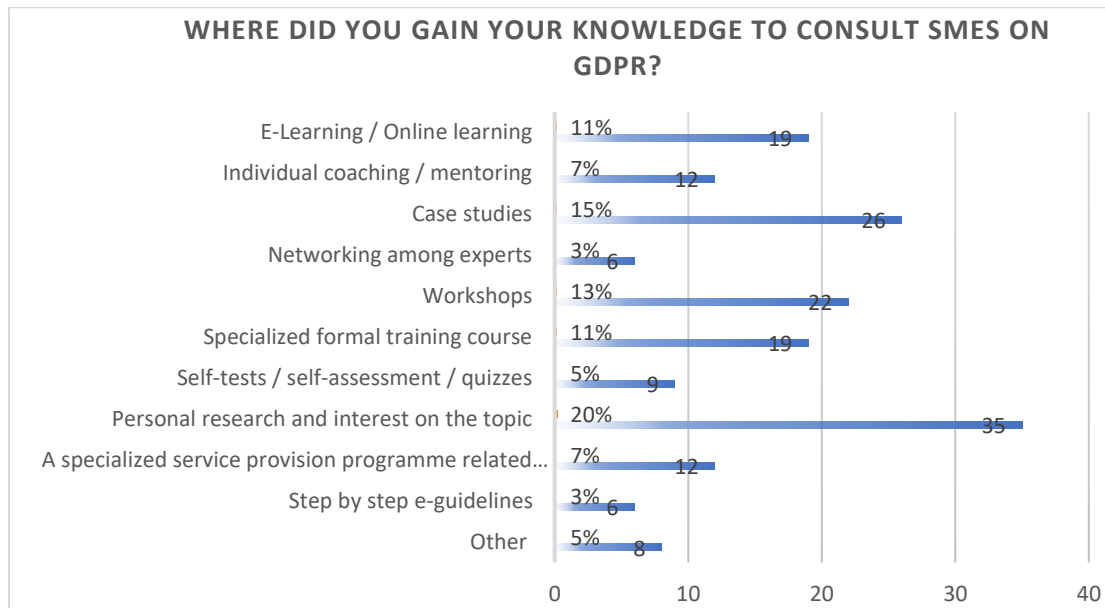
**Most business consultants** have stated that for SMEs, **establishing a data protection culture is the most challenging issue** while preparing to become GDPR compliant. Furthermore, the consultants stressed **assessment of what is needed to become compliant, prioritization of GDPR** among other business priorities, as well as **potential fines** and **costs of compliance** as the next important challenges.

### 3.1 How would you rate your knowledge and skills in SMEs GDPR consulting/advising?



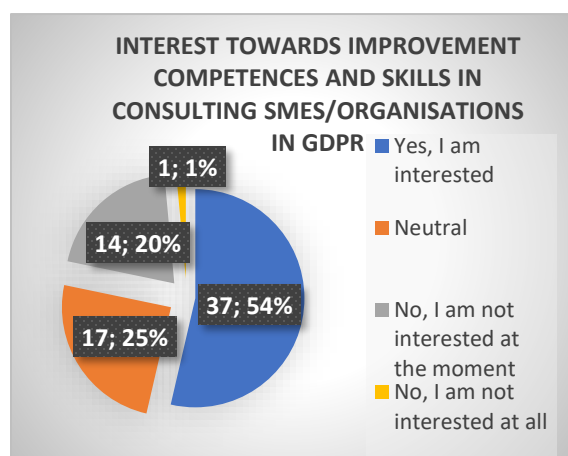
Most of the BCs in this survey are assessing their knowledge and skill in the field of GDPR as **medium (29%) or good (25%)** with only **14%** of them rating their skills as **very good** and **25% of them as low**.

### 3.2 If you possess knowledge and skills in CONSULTING SMEs in compliance to GDPR, where did you gain this knowledge?



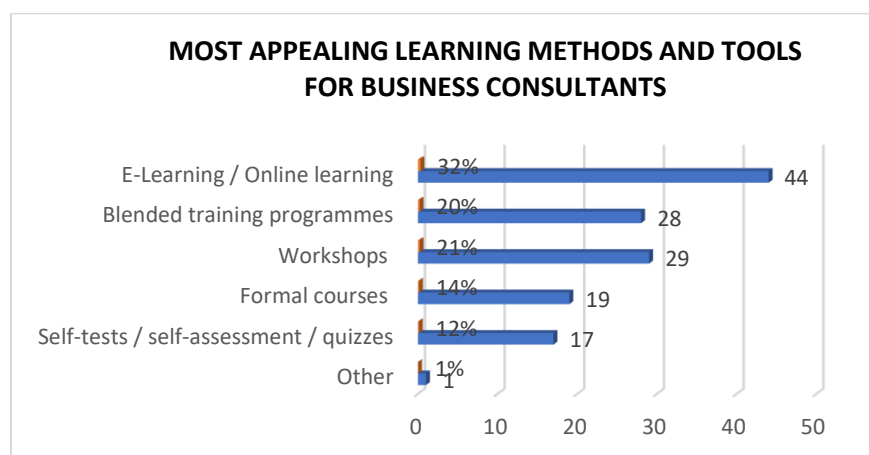
The main sources of acquiring skills and knowledge on the topic of GDPR compliance for the business consultants have been the personal research and interest on the topic (20%), as well as case studies (15%). 24% of them have attended specialized workshops or training courses. Some of the respondents indicated Other sources (5%) stating other like: seminars , certified Information Systems Auditor and Informatics Engineering education.

### 3.3 Would you be interested in participating in a training programme or to receive specialized support and tools that will improve your competences and skills in consulting SMEs/organizations on GDPR?



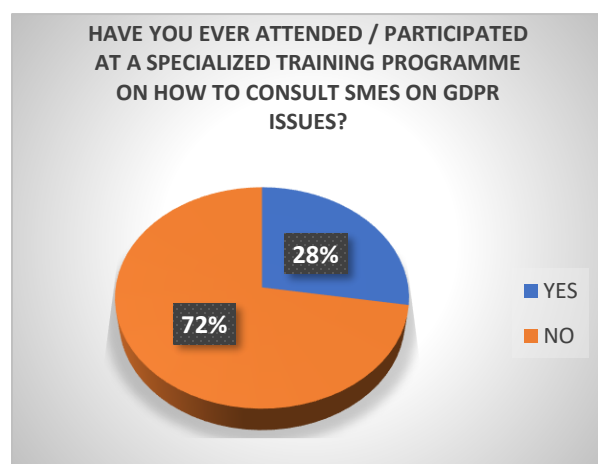
The prevailing number of consultants would be interested in participating in a training programme or to receive specialized support and tools that will improve their competences and skills in consulting SMEs/organizations on GDPR.

### 3.4 Which of the following learning methods and tools seem appealing to you?



The e-learning and online learning are undoubtedly the most appealing form of improving their competences and skills in the field of GDPR, according the respondent business consultants. 32% of them have indicated this option but the blended training programmes and the workshops are a preferred method too. They seem thus to prefer a mixed distance and face-to-face learning method, combined with focused workshops.

### 3.5 Have you ever attended / participated at a specialized training programme on how to consult SMEs on GDPR related issues?



The majority of the consultants has never attended a specialised training programme in GDPR. This means that the development of such a training programme for business consultants will be timely and beneficial for both BCs and SMEs.

### 3.6 The Mindthedata training provision, for business consultants, will be developed across the topics below. Please rate the importance of each topic according to your opinion. This will allow the training material to match your interests.

	VERY HIGH IMPORTANCE	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE
	%	%	%	%
GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE NEW DATA PROTECTION FRAMEWORK FOR EUS DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY	19,35	24,84	25,19	5,93
THE NATURE OF PERSONAL DATA AND THEIR DIVERSE FORMATS	20,60	32,07	17,81	4,80
THE RESPONSIBILITIES ATTACHED TO FORMS OF COLLECTION, STORAGE AND USE OF DATA	22,68	26,96	13,01	<b>12,63</b>

ASSESSING GDPR COMPLIANCE STATUS-QUO	23,47	24,64	17,98	9,15
<b>DATA PROTECTION IN EVERYDAY WORKPLACE</b>	<b>31,73</b>	38,83	19,98	9,48
<b>GDPR AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE (IN-COMPANY POLICIES WHICH CAN LEAD TO MORE TRANSPARENCY AND THUS TRUST FOR THE CUSTOMER BASE)</b>	<b>27,20</b>	33,05	30,58	9,15
<b>GDPR AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A CULTURE SHIFT IN HOW TO DO BUSINESS, BY GOING 'BEYOND THE COMPLIANCE' ASPECT</b>	<b>26,40</b>	34,53	29,53	9,58

The results show that all the above topics called to be potentially included in the MindtheDATA training provision reached an average rating of *Medium importance*. The **Data protection in everyday workplace** and **GDPR as competitive advantage** are the most valued. **GDPR as opportunity for a business-culture shift SMEs** beyond the 'beyond compliance' follows closely.

#### 4.1 Based on your experience please specify the consulting services that SMEs usually request/need in the field of GDPR?

	%	N
<b>GETTING ACQUAINTED TO AND UNDERSTANDING THE NEW REQUIREMENTS OF THE GDPR</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>HAVING APPROPRIATE DATA PROTECTION AND SECURITY POLICIES IN PLACE</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>61%</b>
CONSULTING ON THE RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR DIRECT MARKETING ACTIVITY / OBTAINING CONSENTS TO DIRECT MARKETING ACTIVITY	30	43%
<b>STAFF TRAINING, AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>57%</b>
DEALING WITH SUBJECT ACCESS REQUESTS	30	43%
DATA SECURITY AND DEALING WITH BREACHES (I.E. THE LOSS OR THEFT OF PERSONAL DATA)	30	43%
UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT HOW THE FORTHCOMING EU REGULATION WILL AFFECT THEIR BUSINESS	31	45%

DATA MAPPING AND GAP ANALYSIS/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION	22	32%
ASSESSING THE DATA PROTECTION RISKS AND CHOOSING APPROPRIATE SECURITY MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA	32	46%
DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE LEGAL GROUND FOR PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA (CONSENT, CONTRACT, LEGAL OBLIGATION, LEGITIMATE INTEREST, ETC.)	37	54%
<b>MAINTAINING THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>57%</b>

Based on their experience in business consulting on GDPR topics, BCs have indicated **Getting acquainted to and understanding the new requirements of the GDPR** to be the most requested topic of their specialized service (64%), followed by **Having appropriate data protection and security policies in place**. Moreover, after analyzing the average rates, it is safe to assert that the need for the listed consulting services that SMEs usually request in the field of GDPR is highly recurrent as 7 out of 11 have been selected by at least 40% of respondents.

**Maintaining the necessary documentation in line** with the principle of accountability, as well as **staff training and information on the legal background** for processing personal data are highlighted as well.

#### 4.2 Based on your experience, which are the most common (or prospect) breaches of data protection law for the SMEs?

	%	N
<b>FAILURE TO HAVE REQUIRED POLICIES /CONTRACTS IN PLACE</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>FAILURE TO IDENTIFY PERSONAL DATA</b>	29	<b>42%</b>
COMPUTER OR TELEPHONE HACKING	23	33%
<b>LACK OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>52%</b>
EMPLOYEE BREACHES (EITHER DUE TO LACK OF AWARENESS, ACCIDENTAL OR DELIBERATE BREACH)	31	45%
EMAILS SENT IN ERROR	27	39%
LOST DOCUMENT	18	26%
FAILURE TO ENCRYPT DATA	22	32%
LOST/STOLEN DEVICES (E.G. LAPTOPS, MOBILE PHONES, HARD DRIVES)	10	14%
<b>INADEQUATE SECURITY MEASURES</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>51%</b>
UNSOLICITED EMAILS/NUISANCE CALLS	32	46%

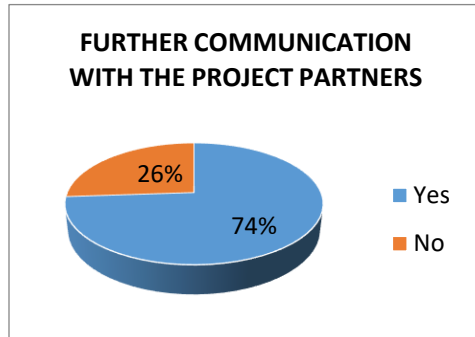
**Missing policies and absence of staff training** which often **leads to intra-company breaches by employees** are according to consultants the most common breaches points for SMEs. They are followed by overall **failure to identify personal data, inappropriate communication** (e.g. emails), as well as **lack of security measures** in general.

#### 4.3 Based on your experience, which could be the GDPR “beyond compliance” benefits for the SMEs when adopting GDPR?

	%	N
<b>IMPROVED BUSINESS REPUTATION</b>	39	<b>57%</b>
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE EU	21	30%
IMPROVED BUSINESS REVENUE	1	1%
<b>GREATER CUSTOMER LOYALTY</b>	49	<b>71%</b>
<b>MORE ACCURATE DATA FOR ANALYSIS AND INSIGHT</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>A TOOL FOR CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT( PLACING CONSUMERS AND THEIR RIGHTS AT THE CENTER)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>MARRYING DATA SECURITY BEST PRACTICES WITH CORPORATE CULTURE</b>	44	<b>64%</b>
OTHER POSITIVE OUTCOME ANTICIPATED	3	4%

Among prospect benefits for SMEs, **customer loyalty is by far the most positive outcome of GDPR compliance** for SMEs. it is followed by **coupling data security with the overall corporate culture. Business reputation, consumer empowerment** (placing consumer and client rights at the centre), as well as **availability of data for further customer analysis** are also stressed as important beyond the compliance/punitive dimensions of GDPR for SMEs.

#### FURTHER COOPERATION



The closing section of the questionnaire aimed to gain more information from respondents on their particular interest in the activities of the project. According to the results, most respondents (74%) would like to receive more information about the results of the project.

## 2.2 Interviews

A total of 20 interviews were conducted by the project partners in the researched countries (Bulgaria, Poland, Greece and Spain) in the period February-April 2020. Most of the interviews were conducted by Skype/telephone following a preliminary agreement between the interviewer and the business consultant. All participants in the interviews were pre-selected business consultants with various expertise and experience. The interview followed an example template for open discussion that was utilized by all project partners in the research process.

The general professional background of participants included general business consultants working as private consultants representing consulting companies, as well as experts in organizations as Chamber of commerce, regional development agencies and business support organizations.

For the most part, during the interviews, participants were eager to provide their names, company names, business positions and contact details. However, there were some participants that preferred to be kept anonymous, especially in Poland.

### ***A. Respondent background and experience in consulting/supporting SMEs FOR GDPR***

The introductory part of the interviews aimed to gain more information on the professional background of respondents with regards to SME consulting in general and GDPR consulting.

*1. Professional background with regards to business consulting/advising of SMEs/entrepreneurs as regards data protection and GDPR?*

Most of respondents were business consultants and business advisors that had at least 5 years of experience in the field of providing consultations and various business related services to businesses. Most of them have consulted SMEs on GDPR as a part of other business oriented services not as especially dedicated GDPR consultation. The professional expertise of interviewees included consulting, strategic planning, business analysis, financial management, IT&GDPR and project management.

## *2. Place the SMEs today with regards to GDPR compliance.*

In general, business consultants shared the opinion that most SMEs are aware of the existence of the GDPR. However, as GDPR is not a uniform regulation with specific articles that should be transferred uniformly at all national contexts and it has to be adapted in relevant national contexts of legislation condition, the way the market functions, SMEs don't really know what and how is affecting them in terms of GDPR compliance.

One more common thing is also that most SMEs are using ready template for their work in the field of GDPR, which usually does not correspond to the specificity of the SMEs work.

On the other hand, all of them agree that the panorama differs when analyzing companies processing special categories of personal data ('sensitive data'). They do have deeper knowledge and understanding of the regulations and, usually have searched for external institutions that could manage their GDPR adaptation and compliance process. The public sector, banks and large corporations processing data have a much clearer understanding. If we say that most SMEs do not, this is surely affecting their sustainability if they would like to establish collaborations with larger organisations and the public sector (as sub-contractors for example) which in turn make the obliged to compliance implicitly.

## *3. SMEs awareness of the importance to comply with the data protection regulation and its importance for the EU digital society since the entrance of GDPR (May 2018).*

In general, respondents believe that SMEs today are not more aware of the importance to comply with the data protection regulation and its importance for the EU digital society. The majority of SMEs were not aware of the benefits of complying with GDPR but they are simply aware of its existence. They are aware to some extent, but they do not have the means, either material or human related, to respond. There was a lot of media attention across Europe when the directive was adopted but then the actions were not consecutive. There was an initial avalanche of data protection consultations motivated by such alarm and fear of sanctions.

The SMEs with an EU or international profile, looking into establishing or maintaining international collaborations are better positioned.

*4. Existing training / support courses / programs in each country that provide training and support for preparing business consultants in supporting SMEs in GDPR related issues?*

Bulgarian and Polish interviewees shared that they were not aware of any existing trainings or courses that exist for preparing business consultants in supporting SMEs in GDPR related issues.

On the other hand, for Greece and Spain, it was stated that It is actually a big market in SME support regarding GDPR. But it was underlined that it is not very mature for Greece, since in Spain, the respondents said that they all have attended such training initiatives which come in various options. Even one of the Spanish interviewed, his entity has designed, developed and provided short face-to-face courses, seminars and specific training for companies' staff on data protection, GDPR adaptation and compliance.

*5. Level of interest of SMEs to engage in advice and consulting related to GDPR "beyond compliance". "GDPR compliance" as a business differentiator? Level of GDPR becoming an integral element of the organizational level of a company?*

Greater part of the respondents stated that this aspect is not normally considered as a business differentiator. If the owners or managers are more aware of this aspect or apply continuous improvement policies to their businesses and processes, data protection is considered, but these cases are usually the exception. In short, the GDPR is becoming an integral element at the organizational level of SMEs but as one more regulatory aspect to be met, not as a business or policy differentiator that generates added value at the organizational level.

Overall, SMEs are not generally aware that a commitment to these policies can be a differentiating factor in the market before the wide audience that increasingly values data protection and transparency as a business value. SMEs are not interested in this approach as they are interested in avoiding penalties and perceive that approach as additional costs with no benefits, largely due to the lack of knowledge on this subject.

## ***B. Specific support and training needs of business consultants.***

This part of the discussions with business advisors aimed to gain more details on the specific support and training needs that SMEs business consultants need in order to provide better services/support to SMEs in the process of GDPR compliance.

### *1. Most preferable learning tool that will aid Business Consultants in further developing and brooding skills and competences when it comes to consulting SMEs on GDPR.*

Answers to these questions reveal that preferable learning tools of business consultants aimed at further developing and brooding their skills and competences on GDPR and data protection compliance with specialised training courses.

As to the format of the courses, all respondents would choose e-learning or blended learning courses. As to the methodological approach, considering the specific subject matter, they all would opt for a combination of short theoretical lessons with practical exercises to apply and assess or self-assess the knowledge acquired, with a special focus on the latter aspect.

For more refined issues (e.g. how to transform knowledge in GDPR to actual consulting material for diverse SMEs), case studies worked together with some GDPR experts could be of great help. Group-learning is also important. To have business consultants in the same room for example. Something like a workshop or a series of workshops focusing on selected GDPR topics or sectors, or even SMEs with respect to their size.

### *2. Level of interest in participating in a training programme or specialized support and tools that will improve business consultants' competences and skills in consulting SMEs/organizations on GDPR*

All of the Business consultants confirm its interest, as long as this training is aimed at providing knowledge on the subject and is not too time demanding.

They are always interested in having more knowledge and tools available to provide high-quality professional services.

## ***C. The knowledge/ skills needed by business consultant to sustain and grow their role of business consultants in the process of GDPR SMEs compliance.***

This part of the opened interviews analysed the most crucial and valuable knowledge and competences that a business consultant should possess in order to effectively consult and advice SMEs on GDPR.

### *1. Most important competences/knowledge a business consultant should have in order to effectively support SMEs in the process of GDPR compliance.*

All of the respondents pointed out as important- good knowledge of the framework. Not necessarily all the legal and other specialized aspects, but for sure, to be able to direct SMEs owners to experts with which in collaboration a GDPR compliance plan can be obtained and implemented. Consultants should have a well-informed overview of how GDPR is affecting businesses in general, looking further than the fact of possible obligation to comply or not. Business Consultants on data protection must know all the theoretical elements of the regulation itself without forgetting the most practical part of its implementation. In addition, the consultant must be aware of the benefits of “beyond compliance” approach and having the ability to transmit it to the company as an improvement rather than as just another administrative burden.

*Topics that were mentioned:*

- *The nature of personal data, the responsibilities attached to collection, storage and use of personal data*
- *Theoretical knowledge, legal aspects.*
- *Concrete examples: best practices, case studies, biggest fails, from different countries and industries, would be most useful*
- *Knowledge of the specifics of SMEs and constraints they face*
- *The ability to point at hypothetical problems and know the solutions*

## *2. Current level of knowledge and competences?*

Most of the respondents rated their knowledge on GDPR as medium/low.

One Business Consultant from Spain splits the knowledge about data protection on two differentiated segments: technical and legal. He recognizes to have good general knowledge on both segments but, in order to provide top-quality services, it is needed a working team with experts on both segments.

## *3. Sources of knowledge and skills (e.g. formal education, vocational training, networking, mentoring, practical experience, etc.)*

The Bulgarian and Spanish respondents stated that they acquired their knowledge mainly through practice throughout their professional career as a business consultants.

The Greek respondents stated that they have not acquired any specific knowledge.

Spanish respondents stated formal education (specialized training courses and seminars), self-study, practical experience and networking, as the most common ways used to acquire GDPR related knowledge.

## **3. Chapter III**

The present chapter presents the results of the quantitative survey among SMEs. For the quantitative survey there are graphic charts of results, accompanied by comments, highlighting interesting data on attitudes and opinions of business owners/representatives on various aspects of GDPR in each country.

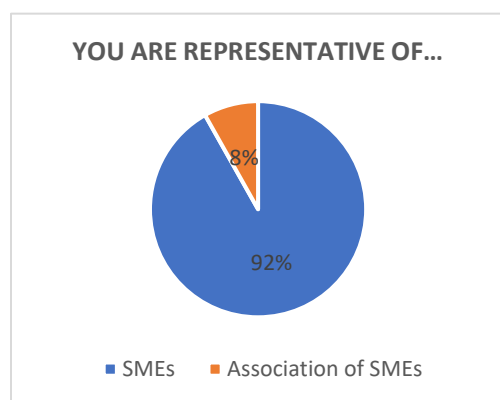
The overall summary and conclusions of research results are presented in Chapter IV (General Summary and Conclusions) of the present report. The research tool– online questionnaire is provided as annexes to the present report- Chapter V.

### **3.1 Online Survey**

The online survey of SMEs was implemented in the period February– April 2020 with the joint efforts for four project partners. A total of 49 respondents participated at the online survey. Below is provided a summary of the results based on the structure of the online questionnaire and the

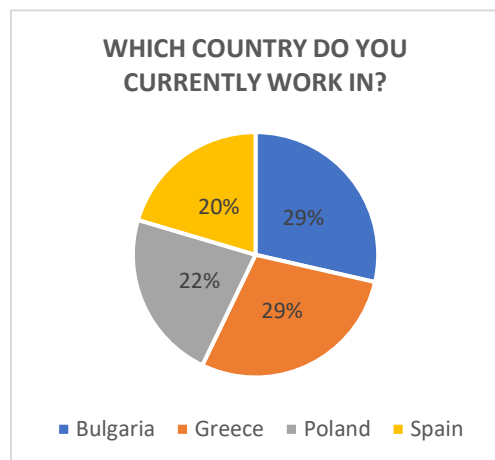
questions that were asked. The results are provided in % as each question is accompanied by a brief summary that highlights both individual (country based) and general findings.

## 1.1. YOU ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF...



**Most of the respondents (92%) that have taken part in the online survey are small and medium enterprises but also there are 4 associations of SMEs that have participated in the survey.**

## 1.2. WHICH COUNTRY DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK IN?

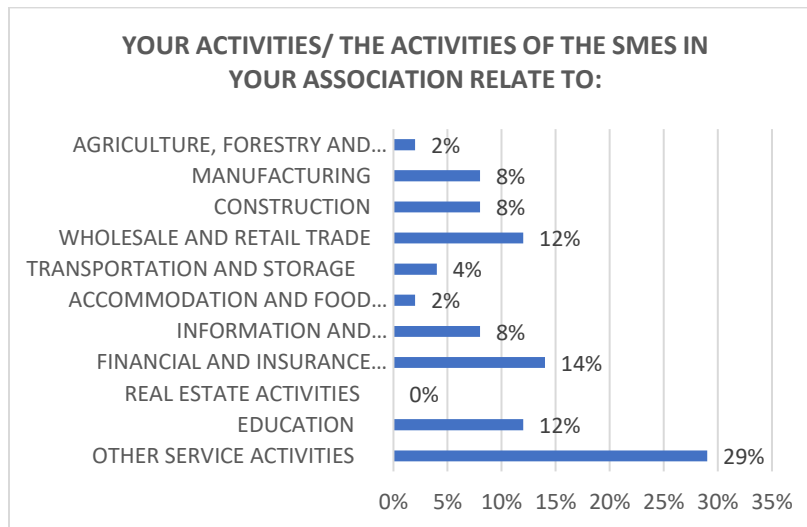


**The graph represents the distribution of respondents between participating countries. The majority of respondents were from Bulgaria and Greece (14 participants per country). The higher number of participants in the survey indicates that many SMEs are becoming more aware of the GDPR matters, especially in countries like Bulgaria and Greece, where GDPR compliance is an issue which is yet to emerge on most businesses' agenda.**

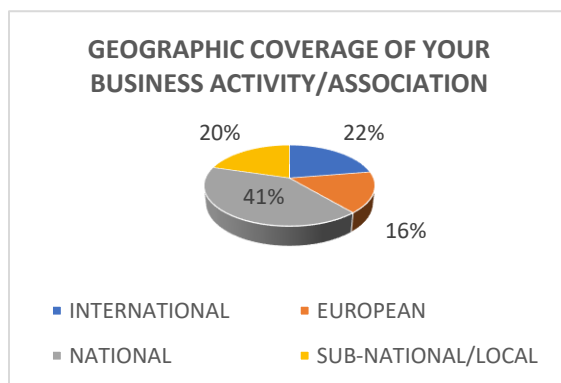
## 1.3. YOUR ACTIVITIES/ THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SMES IN YOUR ASSOCIATION RELATE TO

**Most of the respondents identified themselves as representatives of enterprises from other sectors than the suggested ones. There was, however, no question asking which sectors do**

they work in. As for the options provided, most of the responding enterprises' activities relate to financial and insurance activities, wholesale and retail trade and education.

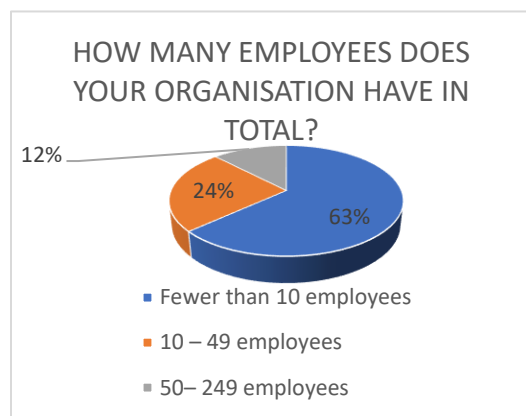


## 1.4 SPECIFY THE GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF YOUR BUSINESS ACTIVITY/ASSOCIATION



The geographic coverage of most of the SMEs' business activities is **national** but there are also two large groups that work **on local and international level**.

## 1.5 HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DOES YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE IN TOTAL?



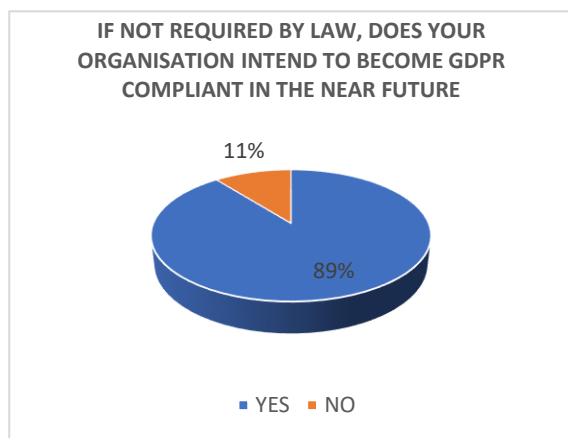
63% of the respondents SMEs are micro-enterprises (less than 10 employees).

## 2.1 TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IS YOUR ORGANIZATION REQUIRED BY LAW TO BECOME GDPR COMPLIANT?



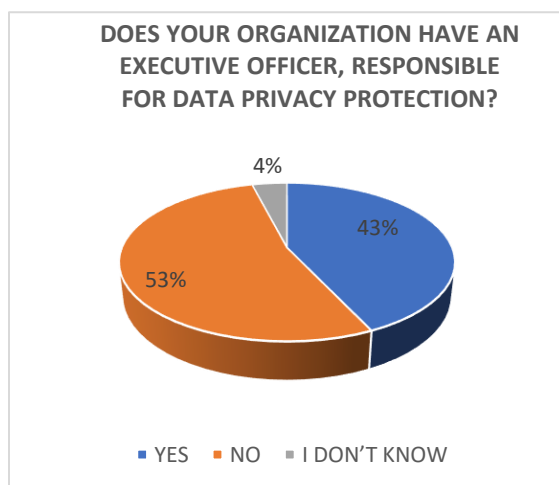
In the opinion of the majority of the SMEs representatives their companies are required by law to become GDPR compliant. Less than 16% does not know if there is such requirement.

## 2.2 IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS NOT REQUIRED BY LAW TO BECOME GDPR COMPLIANT, DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION INTEND TO BECOME GDPR COMPLIANT IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



Despite the obligation to comply to GDPR regulation, almost all participating SMEs state that they intend to become GDPR compliant in the near future. This means that even those SMEs which stated that they don't know if it is required from them to become GDPR compliant are willing to follow GDPR regulations.

## 2.3 DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE AN EXECUTIVE OFFICER, RESPONSIBLE FOR DATA PRIVACY PROTECTION? (E.G. A DATA PROTECTION OFFICER)



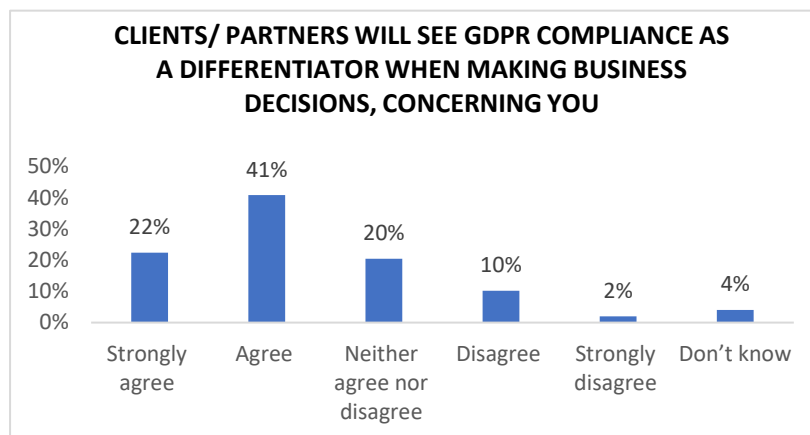
Most SMEs don't have an appointed data protection officer in place. A data officer is however required in certain organisations and enterprises and not across all companies.

## 2.4 HOW DID YOUR COMPANY PREPARE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH GDPR?

According to this survey, two are the main ways by which the companies have prepared for their GDPR compliance – they have either created a data inventory of the data they held and which is subject to GDPR (22%), or they appointed a data protection officer to deal with the matter (22%). A good part of them have conducted assessment of their ability to comply with the new regulations. Despite the fact that most of the companies/organizations have taken measures to meet the new personal data protection requirements, only 4% of the respondents have indicated that they have allocated budget specifically for the GDPR compliance.

	%	N
<b>APPOINTED A DATA PROTECTION OFFICER UNDER GDPR</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22</b>
INVESTED IN NEW TECHNOLOGIES OR SERVICES TO PREPARE FOR THE NEW REQUIREMENTS	14%	13
<b>CREATED A DATA INVENTORY OF THE DATA WE HELD THAT WAS SUBJECT TO GDPR</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22</b>
CREATED A DATA MAP SHOWING DATA FLOW AND PROCESSES OF PERSONAL DATA UNDER GDPR	9%	8
ALLOCATED BUDGET SPECIFICALLY FOR COMPLIANCE WITH GDPR	4%	4
<b>CONDUCTED AN ASSESSMENT OF OUR ABILITY TO COMPLY WITH THE REGULATIONS</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16</b>
OTHER	7%	6

## 2.5 DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT CLIENTS/ PARTNERS WILL SEE GDPR COMPLIANCE AS A DIFFERENTIATOR WHEN MAKING BUSINESS DECISIONS, CONCERNING YOU?



Nobody doubts that GDPR is a business differentiator, although 20% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement and 4% cannot answer. Most of the respondents either strongly agree (22%) or agree (41%) that GDPR compliance is a differentiator for clients and partners in making business decision regarding the company/organization.

## 2.6 INDICATE WHICH ARE THE BIGGEST DATA PROTECTION CONCERNS OF THE SMES

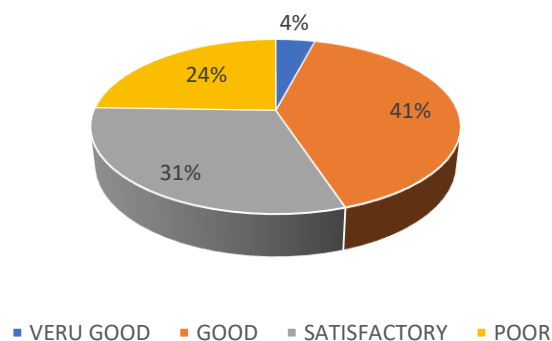
According to the participants, the biggest concern for SMEs regarding GDPR is UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT HOW THE EU REGULATION WILL AFFECT THEIR BUSINESS (I.E. FINES, SANCTIONS, AUDITS, ETC.). It is followed by the need of having appropriate policies in place, adequate tools to deal with security breaches, as well as DATA SECURITY AND DEALING WITH BREACHES. Among all STAFF TRAINING is also highly appreciated.

	%	N
<b>HAVING APPROPRIATE DATA PROTECTION AND SECURITY POLICIES IN PLACE</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>23</b>
RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR DIRECT MARKETING ACTIVITY / OBTAINING CONSENTS TO DIRECT MARKETING ACTIVITY	12%	15
<b>STAFF TRAINING, AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>20</b>
DEALING WITH SUBJECT ACCESS REQUESTS	13%	16

DATA SECURITY AND DEALING WITH BREACHES (I.E. THE LOSS OR THEFT OF PERSONAL DATA)	19%	23
UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT HOW THE EU REGULATION WILL AFFECT THEIR BUSINESS(I.E. FINES, SANCTIONS, AUDITS, ETC.)	21%	26
OTHER	19%	23

## 2.7 HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE QUALITY OF DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE IN YOUR COUNTRY?

ASSESS THE QUALITY OF DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE IN YOUR COUNTRY..



According to the present mindtheDATA survey, around 72% of the respondents find the information and guidance in the four countries to be **good or satisfactory** and 24% think that it is of **poor quality**. Very small percentage think that it is **very good**.

Comparing the data, Greece makes an impression with 4/10 SMEs perceive GDPR relevant information at country level as poor.

## 2.8 INVESTING IN GDPR COMPLIANCE, COULD BE MOTIVATED BY SOME OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS

	%	N
REQUIREMENT OF COMPLYING TO THE SPECIFIC PRIVACY REGULATIONS	28%	29
AVOID LEGAL & CONTRACTUAL LIABILITIES, FINES AND PENALTIES	34%	35
USING PRIVACY TO IMPROVE BRANDING, AND REDUCE RISK	16%	17
PRIVACY COMPLAINTS AND SENSITIVITY TOWARDS POLICIES AND CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATIONS	11%	11
SCALE UP BUSINESS IN EU MARKET AND BEYOND	9%	9
INCONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIVACY PRACTICES AMONG INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS	3%	3
OTHER	0%	0

In terms of investment – i.e. allocating budget to become GDPR compliant – most respondents see rather **obligation and legal and other liabilities as the main motivators to do so, promoting the punitive aspects of the regulation**. But also **improving branding and reduce risk** is also a factor.

*There could be sum up that :*

1. *Surveyed businesses do not consider the requirements of GDPR compliance obligatory enough;*
2. *Surveyed businesses are not fully aware of their GDPR compliance obligations;*
3. *Surveyed businesses do not have enough financial and human resources to invest in additional activities.*

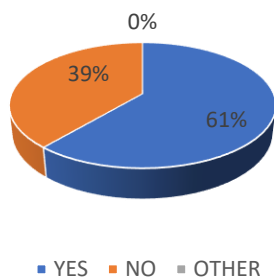
## 2.9 WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED POSITIVE OUTCOMES YOU EXPECT TO SEE FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION'S GDPR COMPLIANCE?

When asked about the perceived **positive outcomes of GDPR** compliance, the majority of the respondents chose **greater data security globally** as the most relevant, followed by **reputation** and then **greater customer loyalty**, which is closely associated with the former. Surprisingly or not, increasing the revenue of companies is not among the GDPR compliance positive outcomes anticipated.

	%	N
<b>IMPROVED BUSINESS REPUTATION</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22</b>
MORE ENGAGED CUSTOMERS	5%	6
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE EU	8%	10
IMPROVED BUSINESS REVENUE	2%	2
<b>GREATER CUSTOMER LOYALTY</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>21</b>
MORE ACCURATE DATA FOR ANALYSIS AND INSIGHT	12%	14
<b>GREATER DATA SECURITY GLOBAL</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>24</b>
STRONGER COLLABORATION ACROSS BUSINESS UNITS	3%	3
MARRYING DATA SECURITY BEST PRACTICES WITH CORPORATE CULTURE	13%	16
OTHER POSITIVE OUTCOME ANTICIPATED	1%	1

### 3.1 ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY FIRMS / INSTITUTIONS IN YOUR REGION THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND SPECIALIZED CONSULTING TARGETED TO SMES GDPR COMPLIANCE?

AWARENESS OF FIRMS / INSTITUTIONS IN YOUR REGION THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND SPECIALIZED CONSULTING TARGETED TO SMES GDPR COMPLIANCE?

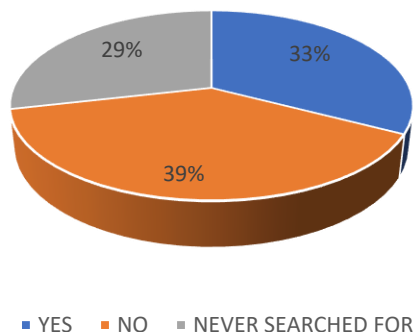


Most SMEs are aware of the training and support offers that are available at national level.

However, here the difference among the 4 countries are very visible. For Spain and Greece- 90% of the surveyed SMEs were aware of the training support while in Poland- 80% of the SMEs were not aware for such support.

### 3.2 HAVE YOU RECEIVED SUPPORT ALREADY?

HAVE YOU RECEIVED SUPPORT ALREADY?



With 39% of SMEs taken part in the present survey not being aware of any institutions/companies providing support on GDPR compliance, it is not surprising that **only 33% of the SMEs have already received such a support**. 39% of SMEs have not received such a specialized support and even similar number of SMEs have never searched for such (29%).

For this question, the country specific results are also very contrasting. For Spain, the great majority of respondents (80%) received GDPR compliance support already. For Greece the majority of the Greek respondents ( 85%) have not received any relevant training. And for Poland the majority of Polish SMEs (82%) has never searched for any support.

### 3.3 ARE YOU INTERESTED IN RECEIVING SUPPORT AND CONSULTANCY REGARDING GDPR COMPLIANCE?



More than half of the respondents has indicated that they would like to receive support and consultancy regarding GDPR compliance (61%).

However, here could be noted big differences from country to country.

For Spain- the same number of respondents (50%) is interested in receiving support and consultancy regarding GDPR compliance comparing with those who are not.

While in Poland- There was 1 SME representative more who are not interested in receiving support

and consultancy regarding GDPR compliance compared to those who are interested.

### 3.4 WHICH IN YOUR VIEW ARE THE MOST COMMON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY SMES IN ACHIEVING GDPR COMPLIANCE ON THE SCALE FROM 1 (LEAST APPLICABLE) TO 4

	1	2	3	4
	%	%	%	%
<b>GETTING ACQUAINTED TO AND UNDERSTANDING THE NEW REQUIREMENTS OF THE GDPR</b>	0,425	13,475	51,175	<b>34,925</b>
PERFORMING DATA MAPPING AND GAP ANALYSIS/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION	12,05	17,9	49,85	19,95
ASSESSING THE DATA PROTECTION RISKS AND CHOOSING APPROPRIATE SECURITY MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF	5,35	18,25	56,625	19,775
<b>ENSURING STAFF AWARENESS AND TRAINING</b>	3,575	22,55	47,1	<b>26,775</b>
<b>PROVISION OF SUFFICIENT BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT GDPR</b>	<b>18,95</b>	18,225	39,475	23,325

DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE LEGAL GROUND FOR PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA (CONSENT, CONTRACT, LEGAL OBLIGATION, LEGITIMATE INTEREST, ETC.)	4,975	24,1	53,4	16,2
MAINTAINING THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY	5,35	26,1	45,775	22,775
OTHER				

According to the average rating obtained, almost all the issues/challenges listed above are **Very applicable** and thus have been very commonly encountered by the SMEs represented in this study in achieving GDPR compliance.

However, ***Getting acquainted with and understanding the new requirements of the GDPR*** stands out from the rest as the most applicable and ***ensuring staff awareness and training*** and ***Provision of sufficient budget and human resources to implement GDPR*** as the **least applicable**.

### 3.5 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES ARE OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE IN THE SPECIFIC INDUSTRY SECTOR IN WHICH YOUR ORGANIZATION/ ASSOCIATION OPERATES WITH REGARD TO GDPR REQUIREMENTS ON THE SCALE FROM 1 (LEAST APPLICABLE) TO 4.

**Processing personal and sensitive data**, as well as the **organisational and technical means/measures** to do so (including **cookies and websites**) are the most important issues within the GDPR framework and regulation, considering the specific industries the smes are operating (i.e. services, education, wholesale/retail predominantly).

	1	2	3	4
	%	%	%	%
<b>PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA OF EMPLOYEES</b>	12,1	13,86	41,83	<b>32,23</b>
<b>PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA OF CUSTOMERS, INCLUDING FOR DIRECT MARKETING</b>	2,78	10	48,9	<b>38,33</b>
NEED TO CARRY OUT DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT	13,95	12,18	53,88	20,1

APPOINTMENT OF A DATA PROTECTION OFFICER	23,5	24,8	34,425	17,23
HOW TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS BY DATA SUBJECTS TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS (E.G. RIGHT TO ACCESS, RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN, RIGHT TO OBJECTION, DATA PORTABILITY RIGHT, ETC.)	2,2	20,25	54,83	21,3
IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROPRIATE TECHNICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES TO ENSURE SECURITY OF PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA (E.G. PSEUDONYMISATION, ENCRYPTION, ETC.)	9,4	9,48	54,78	24,85
<b>COOKIES AND WEBSITES</b>	7,625	17,95	48,25	<b>26</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS OF PERSONAL DATA</b>	<b>26,55</b>	21,8	35,35	16,18
NOTIFICATION OF PERSONAL DATA BREACHES	8,75	21,8	50	17,95
<b>PROCESSING OF SENSITIVE DATA</b>	10,13	15,95	44,2	<b>29,68</b>
OTHER	12,55	4,975	11,7	9,425

### 3.6 PREFERABLE TRAINING AND SUPPORT TOOLS IN MAKING YOUR SME GDPR COMPLIANT?

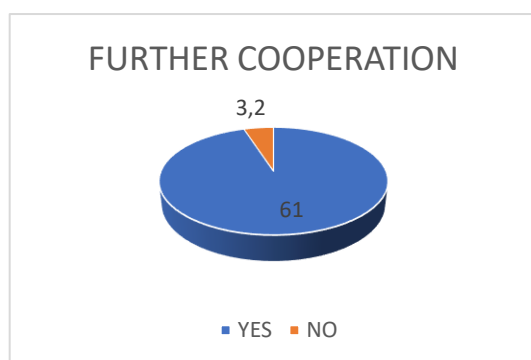
Respondents seem to find **half of the indicated learning tools as appropriate** when it comes to training and support tools in making their SME GDPR compliant.

Nevertheless, the **e-learning tools** score the highest of all tools - **42%, followed by the formal courses and the networking**, with which of the respondents strongly agree.

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree (neutral)	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>E-LEARNING / ONLINE LEARNING/ E-LEARNING GUIDES</b>	0,5	8,6	10,75	35,6	<b>42,25</b>
INDIVIDUAL COACHING / MENTORING	10,4	12,58	19,95	30,85	22,25

CASE STUDIES	2,7	8,75	40,03	31,3	9,43
<b>NETWORKING</b>	<b>5,85</b>	<b>6,75</b>	<b>24,98</b>	<b>37,15</b>	<b>22,53</b>
BLENDED TRAINING PROGRAMMES	4,98	13,6	20,23	39,48	20,23
WORKSHOPS	10,63	10,08	27,18	40,2	11,9
<b>FORMAL COURSES</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>9,33</b>	<b>18,9</b>	<b>43,38</b>	<b>23,18</b>
SELF-TEST / SELF-ASSESSMENT / QUIZZES	0	22,5	26,1	35,1	16,175
HARD COPY TEXTBOOKS AND PRINTED MATERIAL	0	14,675	24,275	36,65	19,275
OTHER	50,3	9,8	8,5	12,55	18,85

## FURTHER COOPERATION



The closing section of the questionnaire aimed to gain more information from respondents on their particular interest in the activities of the project. **Most of the respondents (61%)** stated that would like to receive more information about the results of the project. They all have **provided a valid email address** and will be automatically subscribed to news and updates related to the project implementation

## 4. Chapter IV

### General summary and conclusions

The present chapter presents in summary some of the main findings that were documented as a result of the research on the competences and array of knowledge that business advisors/consultants of SMEs would require in order to effectively support them in the process of becoming GDPR compliant even beyond “the compliant side”.

The main findings of the present overall report is cross-fertilizing the results of the four project country reports / BG, EL, ES and PL/ in order to develop methodological/pedagogical layout and

tools that would best suit business advisors/consultants to enhance their consulting competences in their work with SMEs on GDPR.

Two groups of survey subjects have provided feedback in the survey carried out: SMEs representatives (managers, owners, directors) and business consultants. If we could draw out two umbrella survey topics in both cases, they would be one about their general understanding regarding personal data protection and GDPR and their importance and benefits with respect to 'doing business', and a second about the knowledge and skills acquired or needed in order to become GDPR compliant at the side of SMEs, and to provide support and consulting services regarding that at the side of the business consultants.

The **quantitative part** of the research on project level included **69 business consultant** with various professional background and consulting experience that were surveyed online and 49 representatives of SMEs that were surveyed online.

In addition, there was conducted a qualitative survey among **20 business consultants who were interviewed** in person or via Skype/telephone in order to gain more detailed understanding on their needs and experience in working with SMEs, as well as on their existing knowledge/experience in GDPR issues.

## SMEs and GDPR

The profile of the participating companies in the online survey shows that they are **mainly SMEs** but also 4 associations of SMEs have taken part. Most of the respondents are operating in the field of **services provision**, which could indicate that the services sector is more active or dependent on the GDPR. Most of the respondents are **micro-enterprises** while some of them are small enterprises, working mainly on **national level**. The majority of the SMEs representatives stated that their **companies are required** by law to become GDPR compliant. And irrespective of the fact of being obliged to be GDPR compliant, almost 90% of the participants stated that it is in their **intentions to become compliant**, which means that they are willing to follow the GDPR regulation. The majority of the respondents don't have a data protection officer but in certain organizations/enterprises, it is not required.

According to this survey, **two** are the main ways by which the companies have prepared for their GDPR compliance – **they have either created a data inventory of the data they held and which is subject to GDPR (22%), or they appointed a data protection officer to deal with the matter (22%)**. A good part of them have conducted **assessment of their ability to comply with the new regulations**. Despite the fact that most of the companies/organizations have taken measures

to meet the new personal data protection requirements, **only 4% of the respondents have indicated that they have allocated budget specifically for the GDPR compliance.**

They acknowledge the benefits of becoming GDPR compliant, especially regarding **company reputation** and **loyalty of customers** and collaborators, which in any case are crucial for any SME.

**Uncertainties about how the EU regulation affect their business (i.e. fines, sanctions, audits, etc)** seems to be the biggest concern for them regarding the acquisition of readiness to become GDPR compliant. This means that they still approach GDPR compliance from the punitive side (fines, penalties) rather as an investment priority that should be of active rather than passive character (i.e. to avoid the cost of legal and other penalties). Other concerns are ***the need of having appropriate policies in place, adequate tools to deal with security breaches***, as well as **DATA SECURITY AND DEALING WITH BREACHES**. Among all **STAFF TRAINING** is also highly appreciated.

Around 72% of the respondents find the **information and guidance** in the four countries to be **good or satisfactory** and 24% think that it is of poor quality. Very small percentage think that it is very good. Comparing the data, Greece makes an impression with 4/10 SMEs perceive GDPR relevant information at country level as poor.

In terms of investment – i.e. allocating budget to become GDPR compliant – most respondents see rather **obligation and legal and other liabilities as the main motivators to do so, promoting the punitive aspects of the regulation**. But **improving branding and reduce risk** is also a factor.

**As positive outcomes of GDPR** compliance, the majority of the respondents chose **greater data security globally** as the most relevant, followed by **reputation** and then greater **customer loyalty**, which is closely associated with the former. Surprisingly or not, **increasing the revenue** of companies **is not** among the GDPR compliance positive outcomes anticipated.

With respect to training and consulting initiatives for SMEs to support them in becoming GDPR compliant, there seems to be a wide-spread awareness of the availability at the market level. However, here the difference among the 4 countries are very visible. For Spain and Greece- 90% of the surveyed SMEs were aware of the training support while in Poland- 80% of the surveyed SMEs were not aware for such support.

However, most **SMEs have not yet showed any interest** to participate in them, while at the same time their representatives state that **they are intending to do so**.

**Understanding the specific requirements of GDPR** and personal data protection is highlighted as the most relevant topic for them in the first place, followed by **Ensuring staff awareness and training**. **Provision of sufficient budget and human resources to implement GDPR** is pointed out as the least applicable.

Judging across business sectors to which the participating SMEs belong, **processing of personal data** / either for employees or customers/ and the **means to do so** seem to be a priority.

When it comes to actual training, the **e-learning** and **learning through traditional** (hard copies material and formal education) are the most **preferred tools**, while **blended learning** is the most preferred delivery **method**.

Lastly, most participants have expressed their willingness to collaborate with the partnership throughout the **mindthedata** project.

## **Business Consultants and GDPR**

Business consultants are the main target group of the project. The survey participants are all operating in Bulgaria, Poland, Spain and Greece and the majority of them do not provide GDPR relevant consulting services. In Greece, all respondents indicated that they were not working with SMEs on GDPR. In the other countries, the number of consultants providing services to SMEs on GDPR is just a bit higher than those not providing such services. However, almost all of the respondents are interested to do so

They state that according to their professional experience, **SMEs are not very well aware** of GDPR importance, which is reflected in the fact that as they state, SMEs do not have GDPR as a business priority in their agendas.

**Most business consultants** have stated that for SMEs, **establishing a data protection culture is the most challenging issue** while preparing to become GDPR compliant. Furthermore, the consultants stressed **assessment of what is needed to become compliant**, **prioritization of GDPR** among other business priorities, as well as **potential fines** and **costs of compliance** as the next important challenges.

With respect to **preferred learning methods and tools** that would best suit them, almost half of the business consultants state that their knowledge and skills level is **middle or good** now, so eventually they are interested in receiving relevant training.

Now the main sources of acquiring skills and knowledge on the topic of GDPR compliance for the business consultants have been the **personal research and interest on the topic**, as well as **case studies**.

The **e-learning/online learning** are undoubtedly the most appealing form of improving their competences and skills in the field of GDPR, according the participated business consultants, but the **blended training programmes and the workshops** are preferred methods too. They seem thus to prefer a mixed distance and face-to-face learning method, combined with focused workshops.

Although more than half of the respondents are already providing GDPR related services to SMEs, most of them have never been trained on how to provide these services to the companies. This means that the development of such a training programme for business consultants will be timely and beneficial for both BCs and SMEs.

The important training subjects are those touching upon ***The Data protection in everyday workplace*** and ***GDPR as competitive advantage*** as well as ***GDPR as opportunity for a business-culture shift SMEs beyond the 'beyond compliance'*** follows closely.

On the demand side (**what SMEs request/need regarding consulting services**) the most relevant topics according to the consultants are the **need to understand and getting acquainted with GDPR requirements**, as well as that of **establishing appropriate data protection and security policies**. ***Staff training, awareness, compliance*** and ***maintaining the necessary documentation in line with the principles of accountability*** are highlighted as well.

**Missing policies and absence of staff training** which often **leads to intra-company breaches by employees** are according to consultants the most common breaches points for SMEs. They are followed by overall **failure to identify personal data, inappropriate communication** (e.g. emails), as well as **lack of security measures** in general.

Business consultants seem to be in line with SMEs regarding the perceived benefits of becoming GDPR compliant, that is, **customer loyalty** and **company reputation**, adding however as equally important ***the benefits that entail the establishment of a corporate data protection culture*** that reaches beyond direct benefits.

Lastly, most business consultants have expressed interest in collaborating in project activities.

## 5. Chapter v

### Annexes

Annex I: Quantitative research tool (Online survey questionnaire) for *Business Consultants*

Dear Participants,

This survey forms part of the European project *MindtheDATA* which is **co-funded by the European Commission**, under the Erasmus + Programme, and is implemented by a consortium of seven partners in Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Poland.

The project will collect, analyse and use the survey data with the aim to identify the specific needs that SMEs would require in terms of specialized support or training for data protection as regards of GDPR and the possibilities to be provided by business consultants/advisors.

By participating in this online survey, you provide us with invaluable data on your needs of specialized support and training for the implementation of the requirements of EU Regulation **2016/679** on the protection of natural persons with regards to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data ("GDPR"), around which educational content will be developed by the consortia.

The survey includes **18 multiple choice questions and will take you no more than 10 minutes to complete**. All information will be treated confidentially and no personal data or information will be disclosed or be otherwise used except for research purposes.

This survey, and the project as a whole, will be even more successful if you assist us in identifying more business consultants/advisors who would like to participate by just forwarding this link which provides access to the online questionnaire.

You can also visit our website at [www.mindthedata-project.eu](http://www.mindthedata-project.eu) and like us on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/MindtheData](http://www.facebook.com/MindtheData)

Thank you!

*The MINDTHEDATA CONSORTIUM*

## PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1. Which country do you currently work in?

- Bulgaria
- Greece
- Spain
- Poland
- Other ...

### 1.2. Gender

- Male
- Female

### 1.3. What is your age?

- Less than 25 years;
- 25 – 34 years;
- 35 – 44 years;
- 45 – 54 years;
- 55 – 64 years;
- 65 + years;

### 1.4 What is your present role in your organization?

- Business consultant / advisor;
- Professional / certified business consultant / advisor;
- Training expert / consultant;
- Trainer/Mentor;
- Mediator;
- Other (Please specify):\_\_\_\_\_

## PART 2: experience in CONSULTING SMEs on GDPR compliance

### 2.1 Do you provide consulting services for SMEs/organizations regarding GDPR?

- Yes
- No

**2.2 If you do not provide any consulting to GDPR, would you be interested in providing such services in the future?**

- Yes
- No

**2.3 Based on your experience, do you think that SMEs are aware of their obligations as it concerns GDPR?**

- Yes
- No

**2.4 Do you feel that the owners and/or corporate officers within the SMEs you worked with, have made becoming GDPR compliant a business priority?**

- Yes
- No

**2.5 Which of the following challenges/concerns the SMEs that you have consulted are facing while preparing for GDPR compliance? (Select all that apply)**

- Organizational data protection culture education and awareness programs
- Data discovery and mapping
- Preparation for data subject access or deletion requests
- Preparation for breach notifications
- Assessing what your organization needs to do to become compliant
- Prioritizing GDPR compliance among other business priorities
- Potential fines
- Cost of compliance
- Integration with other data protection rules in other regions/nations
- Other concerns (please specify).....

## **PART 3: KNOWLEDGE BACKGROUND OF BUSINESS CONSULTANTS/ADVISORS**

**3.1 How would you rate your knowledge and skills in SMEs GDPR consulting/advising? (One answer only)**

- None
- Low

- Medium
- Good
- Very good

### 3.2 If you possess knowledge and skills in SMEs compliance to GDPR, where did you gain this knowledge? (Multiple-choice question)

- E-Learning / Online learning;
- Individual coaching / mentoring;
- Case studies;
- Networking among experts;
- Workshops;
- Specialized formal training course;
- Self-tests / self-assessment / quizzes
- Personal research and interest on the topic;
- A specialized service provision programme related to GDPR in the organization that I work for / manage
- Step by step e-guidelines
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.3 Would you be interested in participating in a training programme or to receive specialized support and tools that will improve your competences and skills in consulting SMEs/organizations on GDPR? (One answer only)

- Yes, I am interested
- Neutral
- No, I am not interested at the moment
- No, I am not interested at all
- 

### 3.4 Which of the following learning methods and tools seem appealing to you? (Multiple-choice question)

- ☐ E-Learning / Online learning
- ☐ Blended training programmes
- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Formal courses
- ☐ Self-tests / self-assessment / quizzes

☐ Other, please specify

### 3.5 Have you ever attended / participated at a specialized training programme on how to consult SMEs on GDPR related issues? (One answer only)

- Yes
- No

### 3.6 The Mindthedata training provision, for business consultants, will be developed across the topics below. Please rate the importance of each topic according to your opinion. This will allow the training material to match your interests.

	VERY IMPORTANCE	HIGH IMPORTANCE	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE
General aspects of the new data protection framework for EUs digital economy and society	<input type="checkbox"/>	▪	▪	▪	▪
The nature of personal data and their diverse formats	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
The responsibilities attached to forms of collection, storage and use of data	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Assessing GDPR compliance status-quo	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Data protection in everyday workplace	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
GDPR as a competitive advantage (in-company policies which can lead to more transparency and thus trust for the customer base	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

GDPR as an opportunity to create a culture shift in how to do business, by going 'beyond the compliance' aspect	▪	▪	▪	▪

## PART 4: EXPERIENCES FROM FORMER GDPR CONSULTANCIES

### 4.1 Based on your experience please specify the consulting services that SMEs usually request/need in the field of GDPR? (Multiple-choice question)

- Getting acquainted to and understanding the new requirements of the GDPR
- Having appropriate data protection and security policies in place
- Consulting on the restrictions on their direct marketing activity / obtaining consents to direct marketing activity
- Staff training, awareness and compliance
- Dealing with subject access requests
- Data security and dealing with breaches (i.e. the loss or theft of personal data)
- Uncertainties about how the forthcoming EU regulation will affect their business
- Data mapping and gap analysis/internal assessment of the organization
- Assessing the data protection risks and choosing appropriate security measures for the protection of personal data
- Determining the appropriate legal ground for processing of personal data (consent, contract, legal obligation, legitimate interest, etc.)
- Maintaining the necessary documentation in line with the principle of accountability

### 4.2 Based on your experience, which are the most common (or prospect) breaches of data protection law for the SMEs? (Multiple-choice question)

- Failure to have required policies /contracts in place
- Failure to identify personal data
- Computer or telephone hacking
- Lack of employee training
- Employee breaches (either due to lack of awareness, accidental or deliberate breach)

- Emails sent in error
- Lost document
- Failure to encrypt data
- Lost/stolen devices (e.g. laptops, mobile phones, hard drives)
- Inadequate security measures
- Unsolicited emails/nuisance calls

### 4.3 Based on your experience, which could be the GDPR “beyond compliance” benefits for the SMEs when adopting GDPR? (Multiple-choice question)

- Improved business reputation
- Competitive advantage in the EU
- Improved business revenue
- Greater customer loyalty
- More accurate data for analysis and insight
- A tool for consumer empowerment( placing consumers and their rights at the center)
- Marrying data security best practices with corporate culture
- Other positive outcome anticipated (please specify).....

## PART 5: FURTHER COOPERATION

Would you be interested in further cooperation with the project “mindtheDATA” and content, which will be developed, and/or receiving further information on its outcomes?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide us with a valid e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for participating in project “mindtheDATA” survey!**

**More information at: [www.mindthedata-project.eu](http://www.mindthedata-project.eu)**

**Join and like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MindtheData](https://www.facebook.com/MindtheData)**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This survey reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

## **Annex II: Qualitative research tool (Open interviews / discussions guidelines) for *Business Consultants***

### **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The qualitative interviews to be conducted in the frames of IO1, TASK3 are part of the primary research process. A qualitative interview aims to gain a deep insight into the topics and themes under examination. In other words, it seeks to understand the respondents' opinion and their perception about their experience. In the present research case interviews and open discussions aim to gain more qualitative feedback and detailed understanding on the competences that business advisors and consultants of SMEs to acquire and further develop in order to effectively support and consult SMEs in the process of GDPR compliance. For that purpose, open discussions in the form of interviews (either face-to-face or online) will be organized by project partners in the respective partner countries with representatives of the target group (business advisors).

### **METHODOLOGY**

Interviews or open discussions with members of the target groups are a useful tool for gaining additional data in research and to determine areas needing further development. Participants usually bring up more issues and concerns outside the prepared question path.

The interview themes and questions

The themes represented in the interview questions are the following:

- A. Respondent background and experience in consulting/supporting SMEs FOR GDPR
- B. Specific support and training needs of business consultants.
- C. The knowledge/ skills needed by business consultant to sustain and grow their role of business consultants in the process of GDPR SMEs compliance.

## **INTERVIEW PROCESS**

### ***Beginning the interview***

The interview includes 12 open questions and should take around 20 to 30 minutes to complete face-to-face or via Skype. The interview should start by a short presentation of the project aims and objectives to the interviewees.

Also, it is very important that you ask the respondents' permission to record the interview (if applicable) as well as reassure them about their anonymity and the confidentiality of the data they provide and their use for the purposes of the project only.

At the beginning of the interview, in order to build rapport and make the interviewees feel comfortable, use the opportunity to discuss the interviewees' background, such as their job and work experience.

### ***During the interview***

During the interview, you can follow the 80%-20% law (let the interviewees speak for 80% of the time while you speak for 20% when needed to clarify points or prompt the interviewee to elaborate more on a given question).

### ***Concluding the interview***

To conclude the interview, allow the interviewees some time for any comments, ideas, points they might want to add or elaborate more on an issue previously discussed by asking "Is there anything else you'd like to add?".

The interviews will be conducted either face-to-face, in written (via email) or via online communication tools (such as Skype, GoToMeeting, etc.) for approximately 20 – 30 minutes depending on the questions asked and the eagerness of the interviewee.

There will be not less than 5 interviews conducted with members of the target group (business advisors / consultants) in each participating country. In total not less than 20 open discussions / interviews will be implemented in the frame of the qualitative research phase of IO1, TASK 3.

## **Questions**

The interviews have been designed in a semi-structured format (i.e. open questions grouped under specific themes in a specific order) so that they cover the different aspects of family business that are relevant to the aims of the project.

In general, the following interview / open discussion should be followed:

### INTRODUCTION:

- o Introducing yourself or team conducting the discussion.
- o Presenting project “MindtheDATA”: project aims and foreseen results.
- o Defining and explaining the goals of the interviews and establish ground rules.

OUTCOME 1: Respondent background and experience in consulting/supporting SMEs FOR GDPR

OUTCOME 2: Specific support and training needs of business consultants.

OUTCOME 3: The knowledge/ skills needed by business consultant to sustain and grow their role of business consultants in the process of GDPR SMEs compliance.

### OPEN DISCUSSION

### CLOSURE

-Summarizing the key issue raised and key points made and explaining what actions will be taken as a result of their feedback, and how this will be communicated.

- Inviting to participate in project “MindtheDATA” activities, sharing project links and contacts.
- Thanking participant/s for their time and input.

Note: Total time between 20 – 30 minutes depending on the eagerness of the interviewee.

## General information

<b>Name of the interviewee</b>	
<b>Company/Organization</b>	
<b>Title / Position</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Date and time of Interview</b>	
<b>Location of the interview (e.g online, Skype, face-to-face, via email, etc.)</b>	
<b>Name of the interviewer</b>	

## A. Respondent background and experience in consulting/supporting SMEs FOR GDPR

<b>What is your professional background in regards to business consulting/advising of SMEs/entrepreneurs as regards data protection and GDPR?</b>	
<b>Where do our SMEs stand today as regards to GDPR compliance?</b>	
<b>Do you think that since the entrance of GDPR (May 2018), SMEs today are aware of the importance to comply with the data protection regulation and its importance for the EU digital society?</b>	

Do you know of any training initiatives for preparing business consultants in supporting SMEs in GDPR related issues? Have you attended any of these? If yes, how would you evaluate this training?	
In your opinion, are the SMEs in your country interested to engage in advice and consulting related to GDPR “beyond compliance”? Do they consider “GDPR compliance” as a business differentiator? To what extent (if any) is GDPR becoming an integral element at the organizational level of a company?	

## B. Specific support and training needs of business consultants.

When it comes to consulting SMEs on GDPR what will be the most preferable learning tool that will aid you in further developing and brooding your skills and competences on the topic?	
Would you be interested in participating in a training programme or to receive specialized support and tools that will improve your competences and skills in consulting SMEs/organizations on GDPR?	

## C. The knowledge/ skills needed by business consultant to sustain and grow their role of business consultants in the process of GDPR SMEs compliance.

Which are the most important competences/knowledge a business consultant	
--	--

<p>should have in order to effectively support SMEs in the process of GDPR compliance? ( like General aspects of the new data protection framework for EUs digital economy and society; The nature of personal data and their diverse formats; The responsibilities attached to forms of collection, storage and use of data...)</p>	
<p>To what extent do you have these knowledge?</p>	
<p>In what ways did you acquire them (e.g. through formal education, vocational training, networking, mentoring, practical experience, etc.).</p>	

## D. Closing questions

<p>Do you want to add or comment on something?</p>	
--	--

## FURTHER COOPERATION

Would you be interested in further cooperation with the project "mindtheDATA" and content, which will be developed, and/or receiving further information on its outcomes?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide us with a valid e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for participating in project "mindtheDATA" survey!**

**More information at: [www.mindthedata-project.eu](http://www.mindthedata-project.eu)**

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### **Annex III: Quantitative research tool (Online survey questionnaire) for SMEs**

Dear Participants,

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The project will collect, analyse and use the survey data with the aim to identify the specific needs that SMEs would require in terms of specialized support or training for data protection as regards of GDPR.

By participating in this online survey, you provide us with invaluable data on your needs of specialized support and training for the implementation of the requirements of EU Regulation **2016/679** on the protection of natural persons with regards to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data ("GDPR"), around which educational content will be developed by the consortia.

The survey includes **20 multiple choice questions and will take you no more than 15 minutes to complete**. All information will be treated confidentially and no personal data or information will be disclosed or be otherwise used except for research purposes.

This survey, and the project as a whole, will be even more successful if you assist us in identifying more SMEs who would like to participate by just forwarding this link which provides access to the online questionnaire.

You can also visit our website at [www.mindthedata-project.eu](http://www.mindthedata-project.eu) and like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MindtheData](https://www.facebook.com/MindtheData)

Thank you!

*The MINDTHEDATA CONSORTIUM*

## **PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

(Please provide us with more information on the company / business that you own / are employed in)

### **1.1. You are representative of...**

- SME
- Association of SMEs

### **1.2. Which country do you currently work in?**

- Bulgaria
- Greece
- Spain
- Poland
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### **1.3. Your activities/ the activities of the SMEs in your association relate to:**

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Wholesale and retail trade
- Transportation and storage
- Accommodation and food service activities
- Information and Communication
- Financial and insurance activities
- Real estate activities
- Education
- Other service activities

### **1.4 Please specify the geographic coverage of your business activity/association:**

- International
- European
- National
- Sub-national/local

### **1.5 How many employees does your organisation have in total?**

- Fewer than 10 employees
- 10 – 49 employees
- 50– 249 employees

## PART 2: GDPR compliance

### 2.1 To the best of your knowledge, is your organization required by law to become GDPR compliant?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

### 2.2 If your organization is not required by law to become GDPR compliant, does your organization intend to become GDPR compliant in the near future?

- Yes
- No

### 2.3 Does your organization have an executive officer, responsible for data privacy protection? (E.g. a Data Protection Officer)

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

### 2.4 How did your company prepare for compliance with GDPR? *(select all answers that apply)*

- Appointed a data protection officer under GDPR
- Invested in new technologies or services to prepare for the new requirements
- Created a data inventory of the data we held that was subject to GDPR
- Created a data map showing data flow and processes of personal data under GDPR
- Allocated budget specifically for compliance with GDPR
- Conducted an assessment of our ability to comply with the regulations
- Other (please specify).....

### 2.5 Do you agree or disagree that clients/partners will see GDPR compliance as a differentiator when making business decisions, concerning you?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

### 2.6 Please indicate which in your view are the biggest DATA PROTECTION concerns of the SMEs (multiple choice)

- ☐ Having appropriate data protection and security policies in place
- ☐ Restrictions on their direct marketing activity / obtaining consents to direct marketing activity
- ☐ Staff training, awareness and compliance
- ☐ Dealing with subject access requests
- ☐ Data security and dealing with breaches (i.e. the loss or theft of personal data)
- ☐ Uncertainties about how the EU regulation will affect their business(i.e. fines, sanctions, audits, etc.)
- ☐ Other (please specify).....

## 2.7 How do you assess the quality of data protection regulations information and guidance in your country?

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor

## 2.8 Investing in GDPR compliance, could be motivated by some of the following factors (multiple choice):

- ☐ Requirement of complying to the specific privacy regulations;
- ☐ Avoid legal & contractual liabilities, fines and penalties
- ☐ Using privacy to improve branding, and reduce risk;
- ☐ Privacy complaints and sensitivity towards policies and customer's expectations;
- ☐ Scale up business in EU market and beyond;
- ☐ Inconsistent implementation of privacy practices among independent organisations
- ☐ Other (please specify).....

## 2.9 What are the anticipated positive outcomes you expect to see from your organization's GDPR compliance?

- Improved business reputation
- More engaged customers
- Competitive advantage in the EU
- Improved business revenue
- Greater customer loyalty
- More accurate data for analysis and insight
- Greater data security global
- Stronger collaboration across business units
- Marrying data security best practices with corporate culture
- Other positive outcome anticipated (please specify).....

## PART 3: SUPPORT AND TRAINING NEEDS IN GDPR COMPLIANCE

### 3.1 Are you aware of any firms / institutions in your region that provide support and specialized consulting targeted to SMEs GDPR compliance?

- Yes
- No
- Other, please specify

### 3.2 Have you received support already?

- Yes
- No
- Never searched

### 3.3 Are you interested in receiving support and consultancy regarding GDPR compliance?

- Yes, interested
- No

### 3.4 Please rate which in your view are the most common issues and challenges encountered by SMEs in achieving GDPR compliance on the scale from 1 (least applicable) to 4 (most applicable)

- Getting acquainted to and understanding the new requirements of the GDPR

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Performing data mapping and gap analysis/internal assessment of your organization

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Assessing the data protection risks and choosing appropriate security measures for the protection of personal data

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Ensuring staff awareness and training

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Provision of sufficient budget and human resources to implement GDPR

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Determining the appropriate legal ground for processing of personal data (consent, contract, legal obligation, legitimate interest, etc.)

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Maintaining the necessary documentation in line with the principle of accountability

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Other (please specify) .....

**3.5 Please indicate which of the following issues are of particular importance in the specific industry sector in which your organization/ association operates with regard to GDPR requirements. Please rate on the scale from 1 (least relevant) to 4 (most relevant):**

- Processing of personal data of employees

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Processing of personal data of customers, including for direct marketing

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Need to carry out Data Protection Impact Assessment

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Appointment of a Data Protection Officer

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- How to respond to requests by data subjects to exercise their rights (e.g. right to access, right to be forgotten, right to objection, data portability right, etc.)

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Implementation of appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure security of processing of personal data (e.g. pseudonymisation, encryption, etc.)

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Cookies and websites

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- International transfers of personal data

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Notification of personal data breaches

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4

- Processing of sensitive data

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

- Other (please specify) .....

### 3.6 What would be your preferable training and support tools in making your SME GDPR compliant?

(Please rate each of the statements below)

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree (neutral)	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
E-Learning / Online learning/ E-learning guides					
Individual coaching / mentoring					
Case studies					
Networking					
Blended training programmes					
Workshops					
Formal courses					
Self-test / self-assessment / quizzes					
Hard copy textbooks and printed material					
Other, please specify					

### PART 4: FURTHER COOPERATION

Would you be interested in further cooperation with the project "mindtheDATA" and content which will be developed and/or receiving further information on its outcomes?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide us with a valid e-mail address:

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**Thank you for participating in project “mindtheDATA” survey!**

**More information at: [www.mindthedata-project.eu](http://www.mindthedata-project.eu)**

**Join and like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MindtheData](https://www.facebook.com/MindtheData)**

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