

GDPR READINESS AND AWARENESS IN BULGARIA

Time for action

ABSTRACT

The EU's General Data Protection Regulation comes into force on 25 May 2018, is the Bulgarian business ready for it?

Research report

January 2018



Contents

Introduction.....	2
Methodology and scope.....	3
General GDPR awareness	4
Personal data management.....	5
GDPR – a threat or opportunity.....	6
Preparing for the deadline	7
Conclusions	8

Introduction

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a regulation by which the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission intend to strengthen and unify data protection for all individuals within the European Union. It also addresses the export of personal data outside the EU. The GDPR aims primarily to give control back to citizens and residents over their personal data and to simplify the regulatory environment for international business by unifying the regulation within the EU.

The GDPR is an evolution of the EU's existing data rules, the Data Protection Directive. It addresses many of the shortcomings in the DPD, adding requirements for documenting IT procedures, performing risk assessments under certain conditions, notifying the consumer and authorities about data breaches, as well as strengthening the rules for data minimization.

The GDPR will come into force in May 2018 and will become part of the rules, which will be mandatory for all businesses, operating with personal data of EU citizens.

According to data presented by the Bulgarian commission for personal data protection, there are some 450 000 entities registered as personal data administrators in Bulgaria.

In January 2018, Alpha Research conducted an independent research on behalf of Telelink, which seeks to demonstrate the level of awareness among Bulgarian companies as far as the regulation is concerned, the preparatory steps they are taking in order to get ready for the biggest data protection reform in the past 20 years, and the level of confidence in their capacity to comply with the data protection principles by May 25th, 2018.

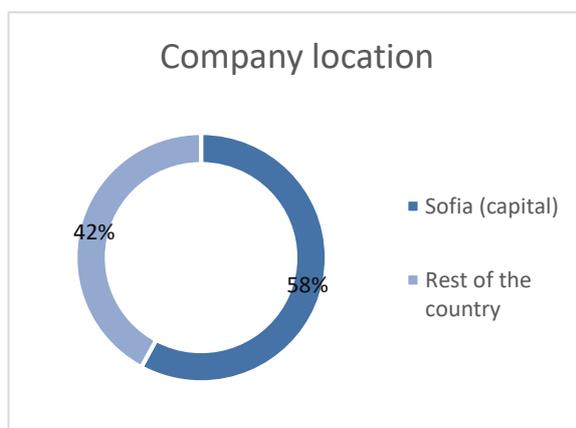
Methodology and scope

The poll was carried out between January 2nd and 19th, 2018 as a short questionnaire distributed among the members of the Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria (CEIB).

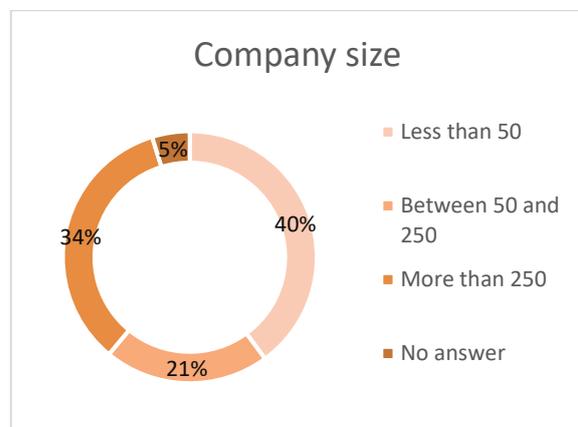
The research is based on the AROS software platform, provided by the marketing and social research agency Alpha Research.

The survey was completed by representatives of 228 companies from different sectors, including industry, trade, technology, banking and finance, operating in both the capital city of Sofia and the rest of the country.

During the data processing and presentation process, some of the businesses' characteristics, such as sectors and regions, have been grouped in terms of similarity, in order to ensure greater reliability of the results.



Higher activity registered among companies based in Sofia



Above 60% of the polled represent small and medium-sized businesses



Sectors that traditionally collect and process large quantities of personal data on a regular basis demonstrate stronger interest in the poll.

Telelink insights

The questionnaire was sent to more than 12 000 members of CEIB. We find the fact that only 2% of them responded worrisome. The low activity could be a sign that companies are not familiar with the topic and refuse to realize that the regulation will affect most, if not all of them.

General GDPR awareness

A large part of the interviewed companies believe they are familiar with the rules set in the Regulation



A significant part of the polled businesses claim to be well acquainted with the rules set in the Regulation but some of them are hesitant and unsure about the exact measures they need to take in order to observe them.

Location	Which of the following best applies to your organization in relation to the general data protection rules (GDPR)?				
	I am familiar with the GDPR and my company is prepared for its application	I am familiar to some extent with the GDPR but I am not sure about the specific requirements for my company	The GDPR is mandatory for my company but the Regulation is not considered a priority	The GDPR is mandatory for my company but we lack the resources needed to take action	My company is exempt from GDPR, so we have not taken any action
Sofia (capital)	41,7%	41,7%	4,5%	9,1%	3%
Rest of the country	31,3%	50,0%	4,2%	10,4%	4%
Total	37,3%	45,2%	4,4%	9,6%	3,5%

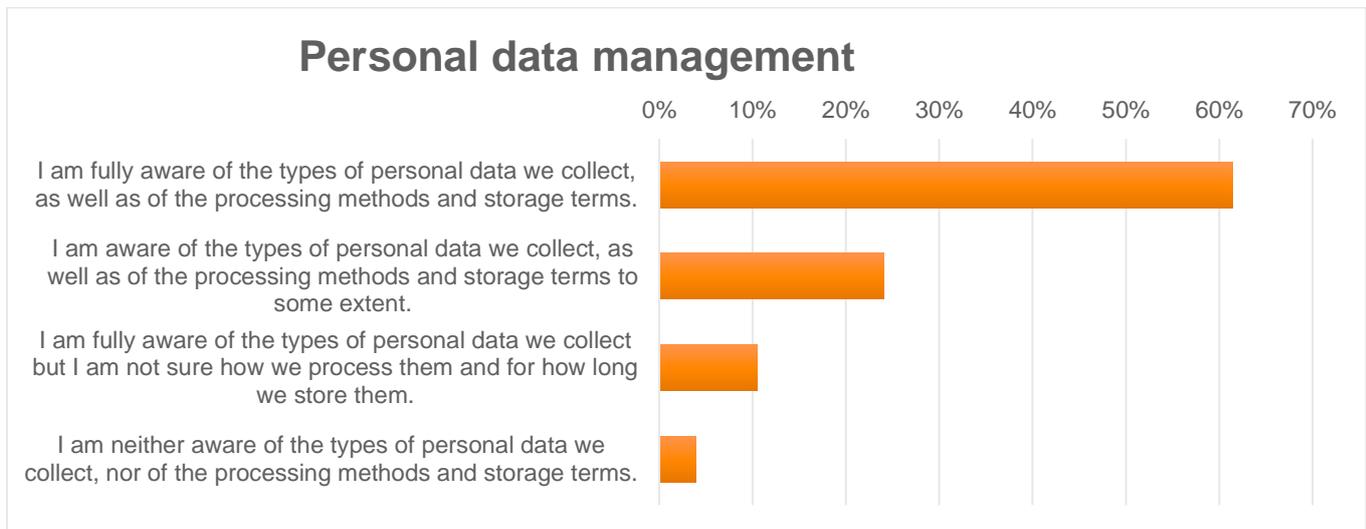
The survey proves that the large and medium-sized companies from the capital have deeper knowledge of the Regulation's prescriptions. This trend might be attributed to the fact that, in one way or another, these companies already use some information security systems in their business (e.g. ISO 27001 and others).

Telelink insights

It is encouraging to see that most of the participating companies demonstrate some level of familiarity with the upcoming changes but bearing in mind the vast number of organizations which process personal data in Bulgaria (450 000), we believe that a significant portion of them are not aware of the changes that the regulation will impose.

Personal data management

The majority of the polled companies are familiar with the types and processing and storage methods of the personal data they collect as part of their business activities.



Most of the companies have good knowledge of the types, processing and storage procedures concerning the personal data they collect as part of their business activities. The businesses that have between 50 and 250 employees take the lead with 71%, followed by the companies employing less than 50 with 62% and the large companies with more than 250 employees with 56%.



Most of the companies do not have an employee that is particularly responsible for management and protection of personal data, but have entitled employees on different positions to deal with the issue.

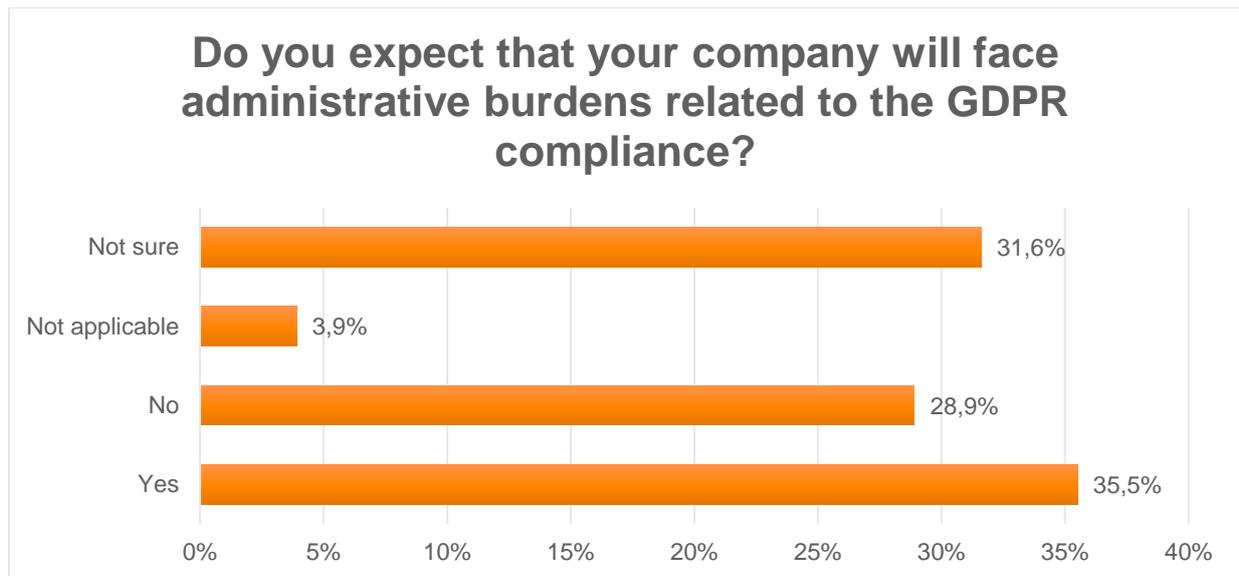
Hardly 20% of the businesses with more than 250 employees have a dedicated position for management and protection of personal data, while the share of small and medium-sized companies with such position is below 10%.

Telelink insights

According to estimations of the Bulgarian commission for personal data protection, some 45 000 companies will have to appoint data protection officer (DPO) – a staggering figure.

What is encouraging is that under the regulation, not all companies are required to appoint a DPO; in fact, even those which are required to do so do not have to hire a full-time employee. Instead, they can save money by appointing an ad-hoc qualified consultant as their [Data Protection Officer](#).

GDPR – a threat or opportunity



About one-third of the respondents find it difficult to say if the new rules will have a negative impact on their administrative routine while more than 35% are confident that the Regulation will additionally complicate their day-to-day operations.

Telelink insights

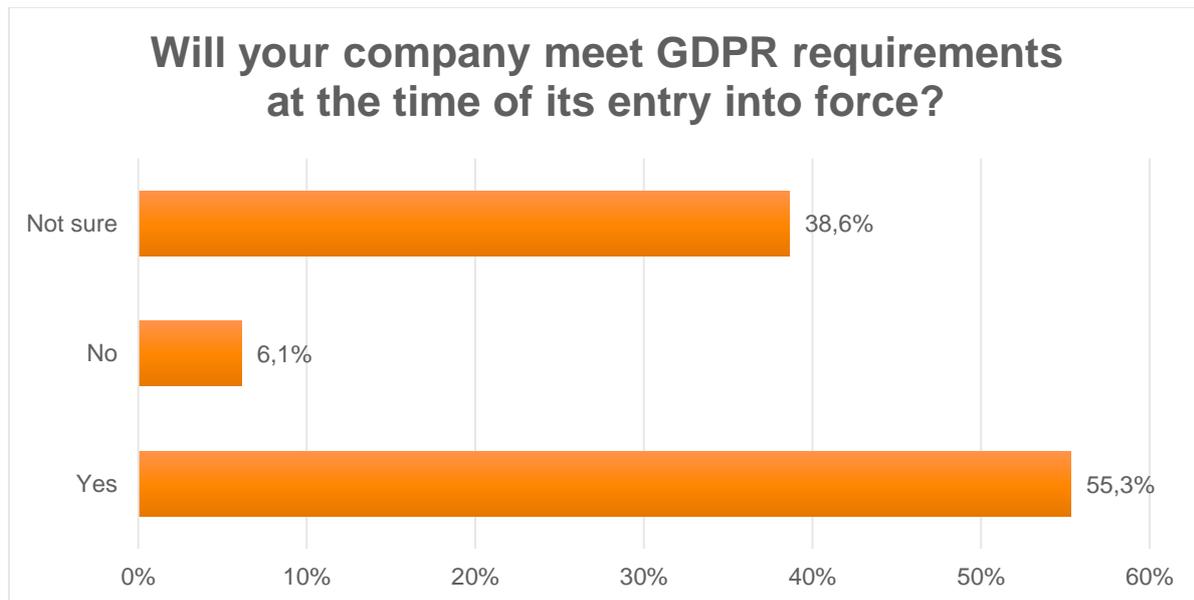
The data shows that only 29% of the companies believe that the new regulation will not bear a negative effect on their operations.

We believe that GDPR should be treated as an enabler and not a hurdle. Intelligent implementation is of the utmost importance in order to capitalize on the need for change and transformation to turn a compliance requirement into a business enabler.

According to the European Commission, the GDPR helps improve reputation and gain competitive advantages in the following ways:

- The GDPR encourages innovation by providing businesses with the flexibility they need to make innovative use of big data while protecting individuals' fundamental rights.
- The GDPR addresses citizens' concerns and helps businesses regain consumer trust. Businesses that fail to adequately protect an individual's personal data risk losing their trust. This trust is essential for the development of many new business models and for making consumers use new products and services online.
- It also clarifies the conditions under which a company can transfer Europeans' personal data to countries outside the EU, while guaranteeing a high level of protection for the data travelling abroad.

Preparing for the deadline



More than half of the polled companies believe they will be ready to comply with the Regulation as of the moment it comes into force.

Large companies with more than 250 employees are at the chart's top, 70% of them being sure they will be ready on time. The share of medium-sized businesses that are confident in their timely preparation comes in at 50%. Half of the smallest enterprises cannot determine if they will be ready to comply by May 2018.

Conclusions

The poll results demonstrate higher awareness of the novelties related to personal data management and protection among the businesses based in Sofia. It is also evident that the companies from the rest of the country are not sure about the measures they need to take in order to comply with the Regulation's rules.

According to the survey, the large companies tend to be better informed and prepared for the adoption of the new rules, while the small and medium-sized enterprises are hesitant about their successful synchronization with the GDPR's set of rules on time, and are not sure if the Regulation would entail administrative hurdles.

ABOUT TELELINK

Telelink is a technology company that helps businesses and organizations from all sectors embrace the digital economy challenge. With its expertise, experience and client-oriented approach, Telelink is a leader and a trusted business partner in the creation and implementation of comprehensive projects in the fields of information technologies, communications networks, digital transformation, information security, data centers and smart cities.

Telelink solutions in the field of management and protection of personal data

The GDPR is a process, not a one-time action. Telelink offers a complete set of consultancy services associated with GDPR compliance, application, post-application control and compliance management, in both their legal, technical and process-related aspects. The company has a thorough expertise in the field of information security and personal data protection, covering the processes of adoption, integration, documentation and management of policies, processes, services and technological solutions.

www.telelink.com

ABOUT ALPHA RESEARCH

Alpha Research is an independent private agency founded in 1997. It offers complete set of market and social research services. Alpha Research is a member of the global opinion and market research organization ESOMAR, and of the Bulgarian Association of Marketing and Opinion Researchers.

Alpha Research is renowned for its rich experience in the social and marketing research and for its individual touch. We never do compromise with the quality of our work – from the data collection stage to the analyses and publications. The driver of our professional and business development is the trust of the respondents, clients and the large public.

<http://alpharesearch.bg/en.html>

The data from this study is owned by Telelink Bulgaria EAD and can only be used if Telelink Bulgaria EAD is explicitly indicated as the source.