**STAR II’s CPDP Panel: ‘The GDPR is easy: (Un)tangling SMEs compliance hurdles’**

On 22 January 2020, the STAR II project jointly hosted with the [Horizon2020 SMOOTH project](https://smoothplatform.eu/), a panel at the 13th edition of the Computers, Privacy and Data Protection (CPDP2020) conference in Brussels. The Panel was entitled: ‘The GDPR is easy: (Un)tangling SMEs compliance hurdles’ building upon some of the concerns raised by SME Associations in the early stages of the project that compliance with the GDPR is not, contrary to some Data Protection Authority (DPA) suggestions, ‘easy’ for many SMEs.

STAR II partner Trilateral Research took part in the panel, represented by Dr Mistale Taylor, who presented on the core issues SMEs and SME Associations have identified to the STAR II project so far. This information was based on the queries received by the dedicated SME hotline service developed and trialled by the Hungarian Data Protection Authority (NAIH) as part of the project, as well as the interviews and online survey that formed the basis of deliverable D2.2 ‘SMEs and the GDPR’. The hotline receives queries in Hungarian and English and will continue to be operated by the DPA after the project has ended. Mistale’s presentation is available here: <https://testtrilateral.sharepoint.com/:p:/s/company/EYEdv3S-J6BEnL13o4yVHXQB7AcW_weszljzLltLbjDi7g?e=AgwZTg>

Other Panelists included Narseo Vallina Rodriguez from the Institute of IMDEA Networks, U.S. based Joan Antokol of Park Legal LLC. and Karen Clements of the European Small Business Alliance. The discussion took place under the moderation of Annika Linck of the European Digital SME Alliance.

Although an early Panel on the first day of CPDP2020, many people attended the session, roughly two thirds of which were SMEs or advisors to SMEs. The discussion raised some of the same issues identified within the STAR II research, such as why the GDPR was *not* easy for SMEs, the need for SMEs to keep a record of data processing activities and a mistrust of advertised GDPR services, including a desire by SMEs for advice on how to evaluate such ‘expert’ services. SMEs interested in the SMOOTH project were also invited to participate in the [SMOOTH platform pilot](https://smooth.fundingbox.com/).