

**KEY INSIGHTS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND OPEN DEBATE  
CYBERFORT KICK-OFF MEETING IN BRASOV, ROMANIA**

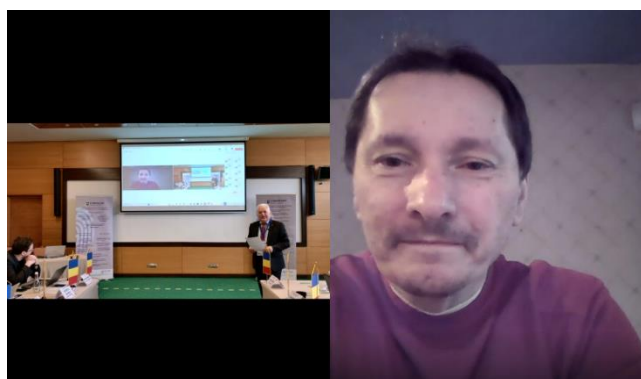
3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025, Carina Ioana NITA

CYBERFORT Consortium successfully organized the Kick-Off Meeting of a European Funded Project – CYBERFORT „*Strengthening Cyber Defenses of SMEs for Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) Compliance*”. The Project objectives are: aiming to simplify the process of CRA compliance for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); enhancing the efficiency of compliance documentation through automation; creating flexible tools that not only serve SMEs but are also adaptable to the needs of stakeholders. The Project is delivering training to elevate the cybersecurity knowledge and practices for SMEs; ensuring the tools evolve in response to new cybersecurity challenges; and fostering collaborations with key cybersecurity networks across Europe.

CYBERFORT Project funded by the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC), under Digital Europe Programme, started its implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024. Project gathers 8 Consortium Partners Organizations from Cyprus and Romania. The European Consortium Partners is coordinated by I-ENERGYLINK (RO) working with BOLTON TECHNOLOGIES (CY), CLONE SYSTEMS (CY), COLUMBIA SHIPMANAGEMENT (CY), DEALIO LIMITED (CY), ROMANIAN NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY DIRECTORATE (RO), ELIAS NEOCLEOUS (CY) and EXIMPROD ENGINEERING (RO).

The Kick-Off Meeting of CYBERFORT took place on 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, in hybrid format with the physical meeting in Brasov, Romania. CYBERFORT Kick-Off Meeting Agenda addressed key topics: Project Description, Consortium Structure, CYBERFORT Project Objectives; Cyber Resilience Act; Project Technical Coordination; CRA Compliance Automated Tool Development; Cybersecurity CRA specific training sessions; Dissemination, and Exploitation.

Mr. Dan CIMPEAN – The DIRECTOR, National Cyber Security Directorate (DNSC) presented a **Keynote Speech** entitled: **“Cybersecurity Challenges and Opportunities for Increasing the resilience of European SMEs through International Collaboration”**. *“We are extremely happy and proud to be part of this Consortium and I trully belive that this is the way to move forward, to have a mix of Public and Private Partners that work toghether, because it is the only way to make tangible progress. I am very happy that Projects like CYBERFORT really can help in convincing the decision makers in those organizations that Security and Cyber Resilience Act are very important”*, highlighted Mr. Dan CIMPEAN.



Open Debate on Cyber Resilience Act Compliance for SMEs was jointly prepared by Angelos FOUNTOULAKIS – Manager, Eximprod Engineering, and Alexander OSWALD - ICT Manager, Columbia ShipManagement. *“The challenges that SMEs are facing in CRA Compliance are: limited Financial and Technical Resources, the complexity of regulatory requirements, the lack of Cybersecurity expertise and dedicated teams, and balancing compliance with business operations. We should fill these gaps through CYBERFORT Solutions, to have a greater impact on the market”*, underlined Mr. Angelos FOUNTOULAKIS.

*“The benefits of CRA Compliance for SMEs will be: “to Strengthen Cyber Resilience, improve defense mechanisms against cyber threats, market competitiveness will also gain trust from customers and Partners, the regulatory alignment will future proofing against complying standards, and Financial Incentives will give access to funding and grants for cybersecurity improvements in the SMEs”*, pointed out Mr. Alexander OSWALD.

CYBERFORT Project presents a comprehensive approach designed to strengthen the cybersecurity defenses of SMEs. It offers an integrated strategy to improve SMEs' cybersecurity by implementing the CRA requirements. The project emphasizes creating and sharing tailored compliance tools, best practices, and educational resources to help SMEs tackle the challenges posed by cybersecurity threats.