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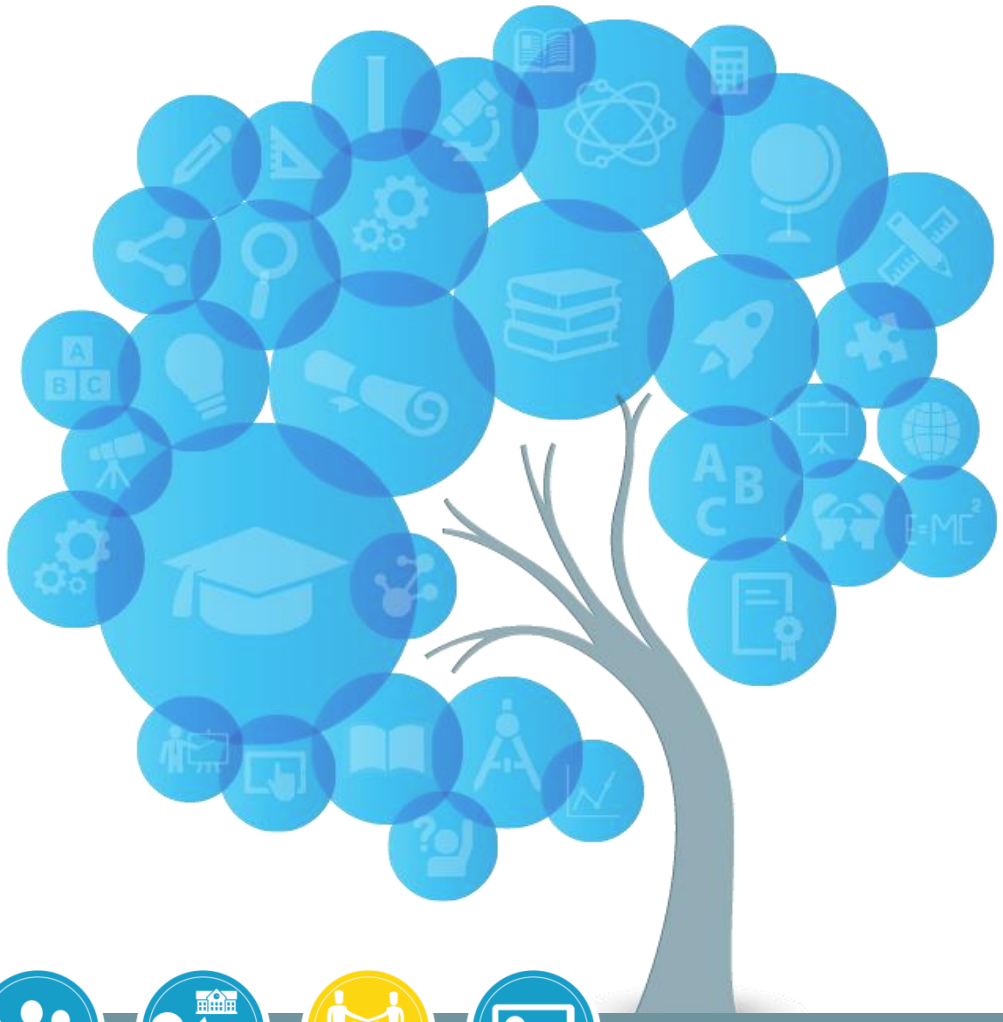

Thematic Fiche: Uses and abuses of (modern) media

ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education

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ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education

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(A) Introduction

This Thematic Fiche was produced by the members of the ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education. The Working Group operated within the context of the 2018-2020 mandate[1] and comprised representatives from Member States and Candidate countries, as well as from relevant EU agencies, stakeholder associations, social partners and international organisations. The Working Group was coordinated by DG EAC of the European Commission, supported by two consultants from Ecorys.[2]

The Thematic Fiche addresses one of the four sub-topics covered under Theme 1 of the Working Group's mandate: 'Promote common values and intercultural competences, including citizenship education and digital citizenship'.

The first version of the Thematic Fiche was prepared for the Peer Learning Activity (PLA), which took place in Zagreb (Croatia) on 4-5 April 2019. This PLA was entitled: *Promoting common values and inclusive education through cooperation between education institutions and civil society: Exchanging national approaches and experiences.* The following document, incorporating presentations and discussions in Zagreb and in the subsequent Working Group meeting in Brussels, brings together some of the major insights, findings and discussions pertaining to uses and abuses of (modern) media.

The Fiche presents definitions, previous work of the European Commission and other relevant international organisations, key research and impact evidence, as well a brief mention of several (policy and applied) practices presently being implemented across Europe. It takes the form of a 'living' document. Working Group members contributed to the present version of this fiche by suggesting additional challenges, inspiring practices and key issues. They have been included in document below.

(B) Key definitions

The following concepts, which are used throughout this Fiche, are briefly defined below.

1. **Digital citizenship**: According to the Council of Europe, "The notion of digital citizenship has evolved to encompass a range of competences, attributes and behaviours that harness the benefits and opportunities the online world affords while building resilience to potential harms…..It refers to the ability to engage positively, critically and competently in the digital environment, drawing on the skills of effective communication and creation, to practice forms of social participation that are respectful of human rights and dignity through the responsible use of technology."[3]
2. **Disinformation**: Disinformation - or fake news - consists of verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm.[4]

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et2020_mandates_2018-2020_final.pdf
[2] Barry van Driel and Vicki Donlevy
[3] https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/digital-citizenship-and-digital-citizenship-education
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/fake-news-disinformation

3. **ICT** (Information and Communication Technologies). ICT refers to technologies that provide access to information through the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication media.[5]
4. **Media literacy**: There are many components to media literacy, but a concise definition is "ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contexts and to create communications in a variety of contexts."[6]
5. **Cyberbullying**: Cyberbullying has been defined by the Cyberbullying Research Center as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices."[7]

(C) Trends in digital learning in Europe

The use of modern (multi-) media applications in both educational and personal domains has skyrocketed in the last two decades, radically changing how individuals interact with the world around them. Digital technologies have become so pervasive in education and elsewhere that the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLP), among others, speaks of a 'digital revolution'.[8]

The effective use of digital learning technologies and resources in education and training is considered to be a key enabler, related to accomplishing the main educational targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy.[9] The European Commission has also pointed to the connections to digital learning, empowerment and an 'inclusive' future.[10] The European Commission for example refers to this connection between inclusion and digital learning in *MOOCs4inclusion*, which was designed and financed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.[11] This EC report summarises research conducted in a five-month study (July-December 2016) on the efficiency and efficacy that free digital learning (FDL) offers for the integration, inclusion and further learning of migrants and refugees in Europe and in neighbourhood regions in conflict.

Eurostat has shown that more than 90% of those aged 16-29 in the EU used computers or the internet on a daily basis in 2016. They also mention that it has become commonplace to see young children playing on mobile phones and tablets even before they are able to read and write.[12] This is a clear indication that many pre-school children have already been exposed to digital media before they have ever set foot in school. The importance of the internet at a later (yet young) age cannot be exaggerated. PISA 2015 asked students how much time they spent online and how they felt when they are engaged in online activities. The data showed that across

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[5] https://techterms.com/definition/ict
[6] See: http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/31574/1/AR2_Teaching%20Media%20Literacy_NESET.pdf, p.12. For more extensive components, see page 2 of: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2008/397254/IPOL-CULT_NT(2008)397254_EN.pdf
[7] https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2017_ENG_WEB.pdf, p.74
[8] http://lllplatform.eu/who-we-are/members-and-partners/european-digital-learning-network/
[9] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digital-education-policies
[10] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/digital-learning-ict-education
[11] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/free-digital-learning-opportunities-migrants-and-refugees-analysis-current-initiatives-and
[12] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:People_who_used_a_computer_or_the_internet_on_a_daily_basis,_EU-28,_2011-2016_(%25_share)_BYIE18.png

OECD countries, 88% of school students in the PISA study agreed with the statement that: "the internet is a great resource for obtaining information."[13]

A 2018 JRC publication in 17 EU countries looked at how 0-8 year olds engage with digital technologies, the extent to which parents mediate this engagement and parental awareness of the risks and opportunities offered by digital technologies. Some of the main conclusions were that:

- Children gain many of their digital skills in the home context;
- They mostly mirror and observe their parents' and their siblings' behaviour, not without risk; and
- Digital literacy in schools can mitigate the risks associated with using digital technology, also if schools integrate digital homework into the school's homework policies.[14]

With respect to schools, already in 2012, on average, more than 80% of students in the EU were in schools where teachers reported using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for educational purposes.[15] ICT is also becoming more commonplace in history education[16] and citizenship education[17] in Europe. Nevertheless, Fonseca and Potter (2016) point to studies relating to online civic participation among young people and show that their levels of interest are quite low despite their intensive personal use of the internet.

PISA data has shown that 26% of students reported that they spent more than six hours per day online during weekends, and 16% spent a similar amount of time online during school days. The study also showed that extreme internet use – more than 6 hours a day – corresponded with a negative relationship with students' life satisfaction and school engagement. The PISA study also noted that with cyberbullying on the rise, using the Internet could be a source of harassment.[18] The Lifelong Learning Platform notes furthermore that the digital revolution poses challenges to an inclusive digital society due to a digital skills mismatch, while various surveys and studies conducted, for instance, by the European Commission, the OECD and the World Economic Forum point to continuing gap in the integration of Digital Learning in European education systems.[19]

(D) Opportunities and challenges of using modern media for (civic) learning

There is little doubt that the digital revolution provides educators in both formal and non-formal settings with new opportunities to broaden the perspectives of young people and provide them with an almost unlimited amount of information, in just about any language imaginable. A recent European Commission report on media literacy, entitled 'Teaching media literacy in Europe: evidence of effective school

[13] https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2015-Results-Students-Well-being-Volume-III-Overview.pdf, p.4
[14] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/young-children-0-8-and-digital-technology-qualitative-study-across-europe
[15] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2018-3/netherlands_country_profile_2FE28D05-0DDC-4AEB-3400625E40C86921_49448.pdf
[16] See e.g. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000148553
[17] See e.g. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9780203597101/chapters/10.4324%2F9780203597101-22
[18] https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2015-Results-Students-Well-being-Volume-III-Overview.pdf
[19] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digital-education-policies

practices in primary and secondary education'[20] notes that "wider access to the internet and digital media has delivered to students and teachers increasing amounts of information, and facilitates self-expression, active forms of citizenship, and creative communication with a broader audience."

Haydn (2012) mentions the following advantages of using ICT in citizenship education, including:

- The massive amounts of information available to school students online;
- School students can learn to appreciate the importance of citizenship in their own lives, for instance the huge repository of citizenship related clips on *You Tube*;
- Various perspectives can be accessed online, problematising social issues. These films can trigger enquiries, discussions and debates;
- Newspaper articles can be easily accessed; and
- School students learn to become mature, efficient and autonomous users of the internet.

Given the penetration of ICT both inside and outside schools, new media can greatly assist teachers of all subjects, but perhaps especially those working in the field of citizenship education, media and democratic literacy, community cohesion and global citizenship. Makosa (2013) notes that the large majority of e-course books, which have become very popular, contain multimedia elements such as films, animations, simulations, etc. These are intrinsically more exciting than written text and static illustrations. The author also points to evidence that digital media vastly increases student motivation and activity in class. Haydn further notes that it has become clear that, despite the great potential for 'citizenship' learning outside the classroom, the majority of school students do not use ICT for educational purposes once they leave the school grounds, pointing to the importance of what happens in classrooms.

Recent research is showing how contact between students and communities from different backgrounds can be positively impacted (intercultural learning and empathy) if it takes place via social media or online (Mazziotta et al., 2011). Numerous intercultural projects have been developed throughout Europe and beyond.

Nevertheless, despite the many opportunities for education associated with modern media, there are also risks and potential abuses.[21] The Council of Europe has emphasised on several occasions that digital technology poses ethical issues for human behaviour.[22] UNICEF, in a recent report, points to the fact that: "the internet increases children's vulnerability to risks and harms, including misuse of their private information, access to harmful content, and cyberbullying. The ubiquitous presence of mobile devices [...] has made online access for many children less supervised – and potentially more dangerous."[23] UNICEF also points to other potential dangers associated with ICT, such as child sexual abuse, live streaming of child sexual abuse, childhood depression, anxiety and obesity.[24] It concludes that: "if we don't act now to

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[20] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329718142_Teaching_media_literacy_in_Europe_evidence_of_effective_school_practices_in_primary_and_secondary_education

[21] See: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264419797_Advantages_and_disadvantages_of_digital_education

[22] https://rm.coe.int/prems-187117-gbr-2511-digital-citizenship-literature-review-8432-web-1/168077bc6

[23] https://www.unicef.org/media/media_102303.html

[24] https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2017_ENG_WEB.pdf

keep pace with rapid change, online risks may make vulnerable children more susceptible to exploitation, abuse and even trafficking – as well as more subtle threats to their well-being."[25]

The earlier mentioned 2018 European Commission report highlights the many dangers of disinformation (or fake news), new forms of on-line propaganda, and online conspiracy theories, and argues for the introduction of effective media literacy policies and programmes across the EU.

A recent JRC report[26] also argues for effective media literacy initiatives to address, among other things, challenges such as 'digital dystopia[27], information overload, an inability to 'switch off', the blurring of lines between professional and personal spheres. disinformation, cyberbullying, isolation, and a reinforcement of negative world views including personal lack of satisfaction based on perceptions that others have a better life.

The importance of media literacy to combat violent extremism has also been emphasised in recent years. UNESCO has pointed to the fact that the internet is increasing being used by extremist groups to recruit sympathizers, but that it also holds the greatest potential as a tool to contribute to the reduction of youth extremism and radicalism (p.13).[28] In its mapping of media literacy practices and actions in the EU, the Council of Europe (CoE) notes that multiple projects include a focus on challenging radicalisation and hate speech online. The CoE places such projects in the category of Intercultural Dialogue.[29]

In this fiche, due to the focus of the PLA in Zagreb, we will focus first on some key elements of addressing cyberbullying and disinformation.

(E) Cyberbullying

Being connected to the world online, and the proliferation of social media use among young people, has also led to new forms of bullying behaviour. The Fundamental Rights Agency conducted, in 2014, an online EU wide survey and concluded that cyberbullying is becoming a common threat with respect to children's well-being in the EU.[30] Likewise, in 2014, EU Net Children Go Mobile Report showed that 12% of the 3,500 children aged 9-16 years old that it studied across the EU had been cyberbullied.[31] In 2016, the European Parliament published a research report entitled: *Cyberbullying among Young People*[32] , looking at the phenomenon of cyberbullying in Europe. Among the various kinds of cyberbullying identified in the report, the following were identified as particularly common across the EU:

[25] On a positive note, UNICEF notes that children who struggle offline can sometimes develop friendships and obtain various kids of social support online that tends to be inaccessible elsewhere.
[26] Donlevy, V., Van Driel, B. (2019). Education as self-fulfilment and self-satisfaction, https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/education-self-fulfilment-and-self-satisfaction
[27] Diglin, G. (2014), Living the Orwellian Nightmare: New Media and Digital Dystopia, *Learning and Digital Media*, v11 n6 p608-618, URL: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2304/elea.2014.11.6.608
[28] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246371
[29] https://rm.coe.int/0900001680783500
[30] https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/lifestyle/health/39591/cyberbullying_common_threat_for_children_says_eu_rights_agency#.XIZzIBNKii4
[31] Mascheroni, Giovanna & Ólafsson, Kjartan. (2014). Net Children Go Mobile: risks and opportunities. Second edition. Milano: Educatt.. 10.13140/RG.2.1.3590.8561. Because this is self -report data the actual figure could be higher.
[32] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU(2016)571367_EN.pdf

> Sexting, submission of nasty messages or emails, threats through the use of ICTs, spreading fake information/defamation, posting humiliating videos or photos without consent, personification in the form of hacking into social network accounts, stalking, blackmailing, happy slapping, name calling, and exclusion. (p. 28)

The same report details the various ways in which cyberbullying can take place:

> Cyberbullying can be carried out through different means, such as mobile devices, internet, messaging (e.g. instant messaging, chat programs, text/audio/video programs, multimedia messages, gaming devices and social networks). Initial research in this area showed that the most common channels to perpetrate cyberbullying were phone calls and text messages. However, the rapid pace of ICT innovation determined changes in patterns. Nowadays, cyberbullying is increasingly performed through social networks (mostly Facebook, followed by Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and YouTube). (p. 28)

Finally, the report points to the harm that cyberbullying can cause:

> Although cyberbullying may be carried out in different ways, the detrimental effects that such behaviours can have on the life of victims are the same. Victims can experience psychological maladjustment, social isolation and feelings of unsafety. As shown by the cases reported in the media across Europe, in extreme situations, cyberbullying has led to the victim's suicide or attempted suicide. (p.28)

The 2015 PISA report also refers to increasing teenage use of electronic communications and rising cyberbullying as a new form of aggression via online tools. The OECD mentions mobile phones in particular.[33]

A scientific review of school bullying and anti-bullying programmes, funded by the European Union, shows that there is considerable overlap between traditional bullying behaviour and cyberbullying. However, there are some noticeable differences.[34] Similar to bullying, cyberbullying can negatively impact school performance, self-esteem and can cause depression and other forms of maladaptive behaviour. The study showed, however, that:

- One act of cyberbullying can lead to repeated victimisation because it can be 'spread' by social media. Single posts can be disseminated quickly and widely;
- The imbalance of power, typical in bullying behaviour, is often different in cyberbullying. Those engaging in cyberbullying tend to have advanced technological skills and they often know how to remain anonymous. This gives the sense that they are not taking many risks;
- Cyberbullying tends to take place with much less adult and authority supervision. It can take place from the comfort of one's room at home.

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[33] https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2015-Results-Students-Well-being-Volume-III-Overview.pdf

[34] http://files.eun.org/enable/assets/downloads/D1_1%20Review%20of%20bullying%20and%20cyber%20bullying.pdf

Wherever youth can take their smartphone, they can go online and engage in cyberbullying. In traditional bullying the perpetrators operate in school, en route to school or close to school;

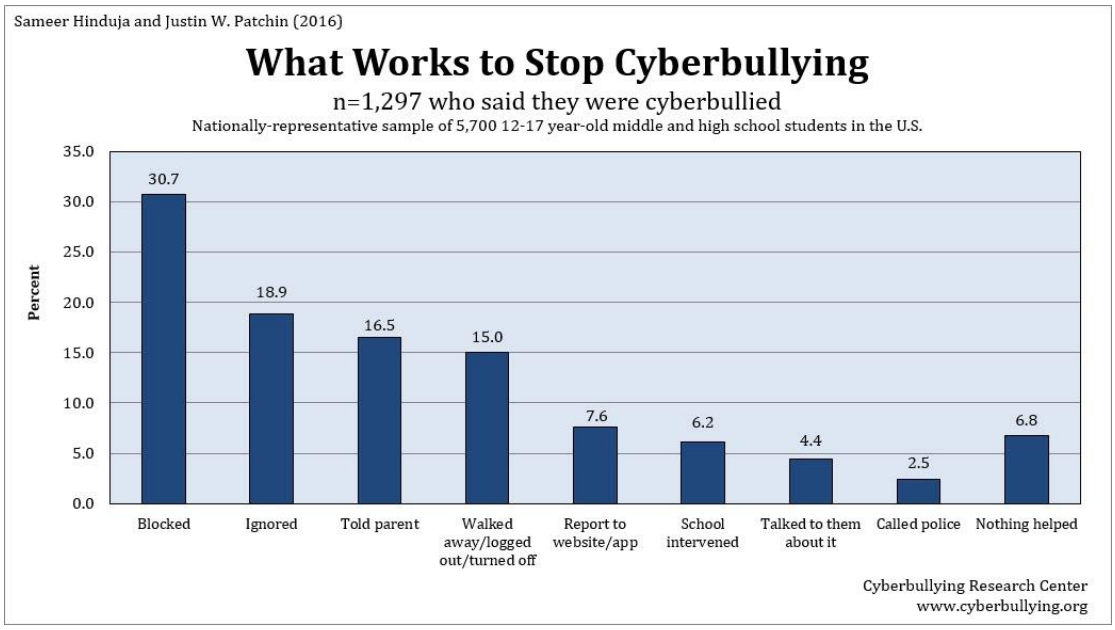
- Traditional bullying tends to occur during school hours. Cyberbullying can take place 24/7 and anywhere.

Approaches to combat cyberbullying

Multiple (international) organisations have, in recent years, developed guidelines and initiatives to address the phenomenon of cyberbullying, often connected to the development of digital citizenship. The European Parliament published the earlier mentioned report *Cyberbullying among Young People* in 2016. [35] The report notes that none of the 28 EU Member States have criminal legal provisions targeting cyberbullying specifically and none of the 28 EU Member States has specific legislation on cyberbullying in the civil area. Cyberbullying has also been a constant ingredient of the European Commission's #SaferInternet4EU campaign[36], which focuses on fostering digital culture among children and young people. The Council of Europe frames the issue of cyberbullying in terms of Children's Rights.[37]

A Pew Research study from 2018 revealed that close to 60% of teenagers in the United States admit to having been bullied or harrassed online,[38] a much higher percentage than found in the EU. The significant reporting gap between the USA and EU raises questions regarding the accuracy of reporting.

Perhaps instructive with respect to prevention is another US national study, conducted in 2016, in which researchers asked middle school and high school students to indicate what worked in combating cyber-bullying.[39] The table below shows the results.



[35] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU(2016)571367_EN.pdf
[36] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/saferinternet4eu-campaign-0
[37] https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/bullying#{%2212441005%22:[0]}
[38] http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/09/27/a-majority-of-teens-have-experienced-some-form-of-cyberbullying/
[39] https://cyberbullying.org/teens-talk-works-stop-cyberbullying

It is noteworthy that the Council of Europe emphasises that the two 'solutions' mentioned most often above ('blocking' and 'ignoring') are not truly solutions since: "children who become victims of cyberbullying may often feel like there is no escape. The hateful messages are already public, they continue to exist and they can have a profound negative effect on the victim's well-being."[40]

(F) Disinformation in the media

School students, among others, are increasingly at risk of exposure to various forms of disinformation (often referred to as 'fake news'), propaganda, radical and violent messages, indoctrination, and hate speech.[41] Disinformation is not neutral or accidental. It is based on ideology, deception and propaganda, and presents itself as 'the truth' and 'as reality'. Fact checking and deeper analysis quickly reveal that 'fake' news sources propagate rumours, images and videos of events that are staged to promote a cause (van der Linden et al., 2017). It has been shown that disinformation is more likely to be shared through new media than trustworthy content and that it travels much faster than more reliable content (Vosoughi et al., 2018). This has been attributed to the reliance of 'fake news' on evoking emotions such as anxiety or anger (see e.g. Berger & Milkman, 2012).

Across the EU, growing attention is being devoted to the impact and threat of disinformation in the media. The Paris Declaration from 2015[42] makes reference to this issue as well. It stresses the importance of:

> Strengthening children's and young people's ability to think critically and exercise judgement so that particularly in the context of the internet and social media, they are able to grasp realities, to distinguish fact from opinion, to recognise propaganda and to resist all forms of indoctrination and hate speech

The importance of addressing this issue among school students has been highlighted recently by European Commission, UNESCO[43] and the Council of Europe, among others, (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). They have stressed the importance of effective media literacy education campaigns and curricula to raise awareness about disinformation in the media and to provide schools, teachers, parents and students with the necessary tools and competences to address this threat.

With respect to efforts to enhance social cohesion by promoting the EU's common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching, the *Council Recommendation of May 2018 on Common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* invited Member States to combat the rise of populism, xenophobia, radicalisation, divisive nationalism and the spreading of fake news (McDougall et al., 2018). Also in 2018, a *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan against Disinformation* was published.[44] The document notes that it is critical that individuals become more

[40] https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/bullying#{%2212441005%22:[0]}
[41] http://nesetweb.eu/en/library/teaching-media-literacy-in-europe-evidence-of-effective-school-practices-in-primary-and-secondary-education/
[42] http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/01_-_janvier/79/4/declaration_on_promoting_citizenship_527794.pdf
[43] See: https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc; and https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/fake_news_eu_berger.pdf. Accessed 20.09.2018.
[44] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/action-plan-against-disinformation

resilient against disinformation, requiring continuous and sustained efforts to support education and media literacy, journalism, fact-checkers, researchers, and the civil society as a whole (p.12). The OECD has also emphasised that students need to learn to identify what is 'fake news'[45] and included an assessment of students' ability to 'spot fake news'[46] in PISA 2018. The results of the 2018 PISA study show that, on average, only around 8.7 per cent of students across the OECD countries was skilled at distinguishing fact from opinion.[47] Such results point to the support students need in gaining this critical competence.

Approaches to combat disinformation in the media

Based on research in different EU countries, a recent JRC study has confirmed that schools can play a major role in the acquisition of digital competences, starting at the kindergarten level. Such competence development can help raise awareness regarding safety issues and promote the development of critical thinking skills among children regarding the content they are exposed to in the digital media and also the devices that they use.[48]

A recent report by the European Commission[49], looking at media literacy and disinformation, concludes that media literacy competences:

> Work together to support students' active participation in learning through the processes of consuming and creating media messages. They can be supported in primary and secondary education through the integration of media literacy in the school curriculum, and in dedicated classroom practices via specific teaching and learning practices which address disinformation. Competences for media literacy are also supported by favourable contextual factors such as pertinent teacher education, a supportive school environment, and local partnerships (p.7).

Various empirical studies have shown that media literacy[50] programmes, as well as curricula aimed to promote a critical orientation towards what is encountered in the media, can positively impact students' knowledge, skills and attitudes (see McDougall et al., 2018) and disinformation (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017). Key outcomes include critical engagement with the media in its consumption and its use, within a general context of promoting civic participation. Media literacy education has also been identified as a useful intervention strategy to prevent violence and tackle online radicalisation (see e.g. Grizzle, 2016; Jolls & Wilson, 2016). Jeong et al., (2002) in a

[45] https://www.tes.com/news/pisa-boss-pupils-should-be-taught-recognise-fake-news
[46] See: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/focus-spotting-fake-news-new-skills-or-old-competences_en. Accessed 20.09.2018.
[47] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/5f07c754-en/1/2/6/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/5f07c754-en&_csp_=6aa84fb981b29e81b35b3f982f80670e&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book; https://www.csee-etuce.org/en/news/education-policy/3482-new-pisa-results-show-the-challenges-of-teaching-reading-in-a-digital-world; https://www.tes.com/news/chinese-students-better-spotting-fake-news-pisa
[48] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/boosting-children-s-digital-literacy-urgent-task-schools
[49] http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/31574/1/AR2_Teaching%20Media%20Literacy_NESET.pdf
[50] Media literacy is the "ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contexts and to create communications in a variety of contexts" (European Commission, 2007). Media literacy education is "the educational field dedicated to teaching the skills associated with media literacy". See: https://namle.net/publications/media-literacy-definitions/. Accessed 20.09.2018. A definition of media literacy, media education, and other key concepts used in this report, is provided in the Glossary.

meta-analysis, confirm that media literacy education should start at a young age and also that education by experts and peers are more effective than non-experts and non-peers.

Another meta-analysis (Banas and Rains, 2010) shows that inoculation approaches can be particularly effective in building resistance to the persuasive messages (overt or subtle) often contained in disinformation. Like an inoculation for a virus, school students are exposed to a "weakened" form of the disinformation beforehand. Even brief inoculations can counter the effect of lengthier deceptive and persuasive messages. Inoculation approaches are based in critical thinking and aim to prepare students for future exposure to potential disinformation. They do this by introducing students to the logical fallacies inherent in much disinformation. Students are trained to engage with media messages through a more critical and deeper analysis of information. Inoculation to disinformation also often includes exposure to a refuted version of the message beforehand.

(G) Unfinished business

In the following section we would like to highlight a few issues that need further discussion and further research.

In a society increasingly permeated by digital technologies, the discussion about the balance between the risks and opportunities that digital technologies have for education continue, at a time when the digital learning environment is constantly changing. A report by the Brookings Institute summarises how digital technologies can serve to both exclude and include.[51] They offer unlimited access to information and unlimited contact to others. Such technologies can draw in otherwise disadvantaged and 'at risk' students through the personalisation of material to a student's interest, learning style or through gaming technology. They can benefit disengaged, poorly performing students. Non-native speakers can benefit from digital media and on-line learning in the class by pausing briefly and looking up unfamiliar words.

On the other hand, such technologies reduce student oversight, and undermine the status of teachers who often know less about the digital world than their students, even the younger ones. Digital media can be detrimental for children who are less educationally motivated and get distracted by all the media offerings in their lived environments. Those students who receive less educational support at home can more easily fall behind. It is also been pointed out that that digital technologies cannot engage and motivate school students like a dynamic and charismatic teacher can. Also, as mentioned in this fiche, there is the danger of young people being (and engaging in) cyberbullied, encountering (and producing) hate speech and encountering (and engaging in the production of) disinformation. The above-mentioned concerns point to the education challenge for policy makers to find the right balance at a time when any balance can soon be outdated due to new developments and realities.

With respect to disinformation, there is an ongoing debate about whether combatting student belief in disinformation should avoid challenging their core beliefs, address them subtly, or address them directly. This also raises human rights concerns. Lewandowsky et al. (2017) have argued that corrections to biases tend to only be effective if people's core worldviews are left intact, since this can provoke a defensive emotional reaction, and that this can lead to unethical behaviour as an educator. They further claim that challenging a person's core belief system can in fact lead people to

[51] https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-opportunities-and-challenges-of-digital-learning/

fortify their belief systems. Hyman and Jalbert (2017), on the other hand, argue that the spread of disinformation in today's reality does not so much create intolerant worldviews. Rather, intolerant worldviews are what allows disinformation to spread. They therefore argue that worldviews need to be explicitly addressed and challenged where necessary. This discussion is a critical one since the two approaches lead to very different educational strategies.

The spread of conspiracy theories, as a form of disinformation on the Internet and through other media sources, poses another dilemma. Conspiracy theories promote the idea that certain groups of people are engaged in conscious and malevolent actions to accomplish evil goals (van Prooijen 2017). Efforts to counter conspiracy efforts, however, run a risk. Several studies have shown that merely being exposed to such information can make people less likely to accept 'real' information. It is also difficult to disprove conspiracy theories since they reduce highly complex issues to overly simplistic explanations. Hobbs (2014) also points to the dangers involved with teaching about conspiracy theories in schools.[52] In her view, education to address conspiracy theories needs to go beyond just educating school students about the dangers of conspiracy theories. Students, she argues, need to assume an active role in becoming more critical about media messages (she mentions student centred, interactive and experiential learning). The foregoing poses a particular challenge to educators and policy makers (ignore conspiracy theories or run the risk of amplifying them if not addressed appropriately).

In line with the insights relating to conspiracy theories, McDougall et al. (2018) note that competences alone do not guarantee a certain level of civility since the creators of disinformation, political campaign teams using social media data, extremists, and 'troll farm' agents, all possess very high levels of competences in media literacy. The authors note that there has to be an element of agency that goes beyond competences (p.15).

Summarising the above, and after input from the Croatian PLA, we can formulate several key questions for further discussion:

1. How do policy makers and other stakeholders strike an appropriate balance when developing policies and implementation strategies relating to digital literacy, taking into consideration both the opportunities and risks that digital technologies have for education?
2. How do policy makers and other stakeholders best strengthen the resilience of young people to both cyberbullying and disinformation, and also their resilience to hate speech and extremist messages?
3. What kinds of media literacy approaches are the most effective and also sustainable? What consequences does this have for policy makers?
4. Is it more effective to have a separate subject or class on media literacy or should media literacy competences be integrated in a cross curricular manner?
5. Should education about disinformation *avoid* challenging the core beliefs of some students or *address them explicitly*? Since this question is critical, how can policy makers support research that sheds more light on this issue, keeping ethical and human rights concerns in mind?

[52] That merely mentioning them in lessons might serve to validate them in the eyes of some, and that in-depth understanding might get replaced by superficial and inadequate knowledge.

6. What role should students themselves play in the implementation of strategies against cyberbullying and disinformation? What role should teachers, parents, NGOs, policy makers and other stakeholders play?
7. How can initial and continuing teacher education best prepare teaching staff for tackling the challenges and opportunities of new media in the classroom? In what ways can the involvement of NGOs support teachers?
8. What are the most appropriate educational approaches to teaching about conspiracy theories? What role can policy makers play here?
9. Is a focus on gaining competences sufficient to combat disinformation (and perhaps also cyberbullying)? McDougall refers to the need for agency. Students need to be the architects of their own learning. There is a need to obtain more evidence on how students can create their own learning and how this is best done, and what the consequences are for policy makers in the education realm?
10. There is almost always a political dimension attached to disinformation. Should this political dimension be engaged with or avoided as much as possible?

(H) Inspirational practices relating to uses and abuses of modern media

In general, though policies and actions to promote responsible digital citizenship are fairly new, they are becoming high priorities, evidenced by the large number of projects, programmes and policies that have appeared in the educational landscape in recent years. In 2017, the Council of Europe published a report on the TRANSLIT/COST project, which examined digital citizenship education in 47 countries. National experts selected 62 projects to focus on. The most 'sense-making' projects, according to the results were long term and experiential, and the projects mostly involved the public sector, NGO's and academia. In terms of competences, the only one consistently mentioned was 'safety', such as the 'Safe Internet Day' (briefly described below). In sum, there was more of a focus on protection instead of empowerment. Also, those projects that generated most attention were media centred and not competence centred, with learning by doing the preferred pedagogy (versus school system based approaches). Finally, the report noted that practitioners found it difficult to implement teaching about values, focusing more on attitudes and behavioural change.[53]

In particular, the following two projects, which also have a Croatian presence, provide examples of initiatives taken to address responsible digital citizenship:

- *BRIGHTS project*[54]: the BRIGHTS project was a two-year ERASMUS+ project that focused on Social Inclusion, and youth empowerment, with media literacy at its core. Initiated in 2017, it involved a partnership with six organisations from four different countries (Belgium, Croatia, Greece, and Italy). Using the technique of digital storytelling, BRIGHTS aimed to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in both formal and non-formal educational contexts. It also utilised blended training courses. The main objectives of BRIGHTS were to build teachers' and trainers' capacity to implement GCE with young people using digital storytelling techniques, and to empower young people (13-19 years old)

[53] https://rm.coe.int/prems-187117-gbr-2511-digital-citizenship-literature-review-8432-web-1/168077bc6a. Accessed 09.03.2019
[54] https://eavi.eu/boosting-global-citizenship-education-using-digital-storytelling/. Accessed 09.03.2019

to develop social, civic and intercultural competences as well as critical thinking, media literacy, creativity and digital skills. BRIGHTS upscaled two existing practices, which the creators linked to the Paris Declaration: (a) the project RIGHTS, which promotes 'Global Citizenship Education through Digital Storytelling" – an online course; and (b) the project UNITE-IT "Uniting Europe through digital empowerment".

- *Safe Internet Day*[55]: Safe Internet day started as an initiative of the EU Safe Borders project in 2004. The initiative has spread to some 140 countries worldwide. Its aims, according to its website are defined as follows: "From cyberbullying to social networking, each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and chooses a topic reflecting current concerns." Each country develops to some extent its own programmes. The Croatian Safer Internet Centre (SIC), in 2019, prepared educational packs intended for schools and organisations, flyers and posters with safer Internet tips, media and press coverage, workshops and a picture book and a workbook for children about safer Internet use and most of the social networks. SIC focuses on educating a variety of stakeholders using lectures and workshops relating to safe Internet use of social networks, helping young people realise that their online actions have real life consequences.

Programmes and projects to combat media disinformation

Multiple digital initiatives are being implemented to inoculate youth against 'fake news'. For instance, an online game in the UK and the Netherlands aims to provide a 'fake news vaccination'. The simulation game puts players in the shoes of an aspiring propagandist. In this simulation, the school students create their own 'fake news'. The youth manipulate digital news and social media. A pilot study has shown that the game has had some degree of success in building resistance to 'fake news' among teenagers.[56]

In another approach, multiple educational programmes across Europe, often supported by Ministries of Education and/or professional journalist associations, involve professional and well-trained journalists. These professionals turn into educators who help young people understand the difference between professional journalism and the information provided by for instance media bloggers. Such initiatives often focus on the strengthening of critical thinking skills among youth. Examples include the BBC in the UK, the association '*Entre les lignes*'[57] (Between the lines), and the newspaper *Le Monde* in France.

The Press and Media Week at School is an ongoing French initiative that also uses journalists as educators. Launched in 1990, it is organised and implemented by the French Centre for Media and Information Education (CLEMI).[58] There is a different theme every year and teachers, journalists and trainers contribute to the drafting of a teaching pack for schools. The theme for 2019 was *L'information sans frontiers*? (Information without borders?). Each year more than 200,000 teachers participate in this week. A key aim is to promote democratic citizenship by helping learners, from kindergarten to high school, to better understand the media system, to form their own critical judgment, to develop their interest in current affairs and to forge their identity as citizens.

[55] https://www.saferinternetday.org/
[56] See: https://phys.org/news/2018-02-fake-news-vaccine-online-game.htmlAccessed 10.03.2019.
[57] See: http://entreleslignes.media/. Accessed 10.03.2019
[58] (https://www.clemi.fr/fr/semaine-presse-medias.html. Accessed 13.03.2019

The Finnish project '*Faktana, kiitos*!' (Facts please!)[59] is also a good example of a practice involving professional journalists. It was launched in 2017, as a response by Finnish journalists to concerns about media disinformation, and also awareness that there was growing sentiment against journalists in society. In this programme, journalists discuss with school students how news reporting takes place, why certain stories are produced, what deceptive information looks like, and how to critically look at information. Journalists also discuss professional ethics with the school students. During the 2017-2018 school year, more than 160 journalists from throughout Finland visited primary and secondary schools to discuss media literacy, journalism values, freedom of speech and social media responsibility.

During the Croatian PLA, the international project Mind over Media, which connects media literacy to education about propaganda, was presented.[60] Mind over Media was a one-year project, launched in January 2018, which includes 7 EU partners from Belgium, Poland, France, Finland, Romania and Croatia. The primary aim of the project was to develop a European network of educators and professionals and create a crowd-sourced online platform. Users learned how to recognise propaganda, rate examples, interpret their messages and assess their impact, browse and sort examples uploaded on the site and upload and share examples from their communities. The platform actions were accompanied by contextualised educational resources and online and offline workshops and seminars for teachers, librarians and media leaders. The special teachers' section of the website, which remains online, was meant to contain thousands of examples of 21st century propaganda from around the world at the end of the project.

Two additional projects, which address cyberbullying, were highlighted during group discussions during the Croatian PLA:

- *Tools and games against Cyberbullying*[61] was an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership involving partners from Czechia (coordinator), Slovakia, Estonia and Germany, which ran from cooperated from 2016 until 2018. The aim was to exchange knowledge, as well work with new and tested approaches in the fight against Cyberbullying and other risks associated with the internet. The project had a preventive aim and the key outcome was a publication bearing the same name (Tools and Games against Cyberbullying). The resulting online publication is aimed at teachers, managers, parents and all those concerned with the issue of cyberbullying. The publication includes multiple games and tools such as webinars against cyberbullying.

- *The APPs project*[62] is an ongoing project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, involving partners from Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania and Ireland, and involves experts, school directors, teachers and students aged 8 to 17. This is a 30-month project that started in September 2017 and will finish in 2020. The main aim of the project is to develop and promote an integrated approach in the prevention of cyber-bullying phenomenon in schools. This will be achieved by working to develop common and tailored educational strategies. Key outcomes will include: (1) research and analysis of school needs in terms of prevention of cyber-bullying

[59] See: https://ipi.media/new-finnish-project-brings-journalists-to-schools-to-teach-media-literacy/. Accessed 10.03.2019.
[60] https://propaganda.mediaeducationlab.com/;
https://www.facebook.com/mindovermediaineu/
[61] https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/resource-centre/content/tools-and-games-against-cyberbullying
[62] http://www.appsproject.eu/

through interviews, literature reviews, data analysis, case studies etc.; and (2) development of vertical learning modules connected to the social and emotional education of students. A core activity will involve the co-creation by students of artistic material using different verbal and non-verbal art forms (e.g. music, theatre, audio-visual, etc.).

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