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MIL and PRE-BUNKING approaches for Critical thinking in the education sector

ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD — [ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD-LOT1]
Project Number: 101132716

D2.1 - MIL & Debunking: datasheet, needs, good practices

WP2 – Mapping existing resources and training materials development

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Project Information

Project acronym:	MILES
Project title:	MILES - MIL and PRE-BUNKING approaches for Critical thinking in the education sector
Call:	[ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD] — [ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD-LOT1]
Project number:	101132716
Authoring partner:	OLAE- Portugal
Date of preparation:	March of 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 Summary of the project

The project **MILES - MIL and PRE-BUNKING approaches for Critical thinking in the education sector** is a co-operation initiative funded by Erasmus+ program between 11 partners from 10 European Union countries. The aim of the project is to tackle the growing challenges of disinformation and digital manipulation that directly impact the education sector and the formation of informed and critical citizens. In an age where information circulates quickly and is accessed by anyone, often without checking sources, the promotion of media literacy, pre-bunking and data literacy becomes an imperative. Through these approaches, the MILES project aims to train teachers and future educators to be agents of transformation, equipped to strengthen resilience against disinformation and cultivate critical thinking in the classroom and in society.

MILES' main objectives are:

- Develop and implement training programmes for teachers and future educators in media literacy, pre-bunking and data literacy, covering two levels of training: Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Train teachers and educators to become multipliers of critical thinking practices, creating a network of educators prepared to apply and disseminate innovative methodologies in their daily practices.
- Integrate pre-bunking and data literacy methods into the school curriculum, training teachers to develop pedagogical tools and run workshops that involve students in identifying and critically analysing false and misleading information.
- Engage families and educational communities in digital literacy activities, using resources such as student-developed board games to raise awareness about the dangers of disinformation and promote a culture of critical thinking beyond the school environment.
- Create a lasting and sustainable impact on European digital education, involving policymakers and educational stakeholders to ensure the continuity and replicability of the methodologies developed.

The project aims to implement robust training programmes, covering essential aspects of digital and critical literacy for both novice and experienced educators. Training at ITE level will enable early-career teachers to develop the skills to incorporate critical and digitally aware pedagogical practices from the very beginning of their work. This level of training is essential, since most teachers do not yet have the necessary competences to face the challenges of a digital environment saturated with misinformation. At CPD level, aimed at more experienced educators, the project will seek to improve and update their skills, offering practical approaches to tackling disinformation and promoting a critical culture in the classroom. With this, MILES hopes to train a total of 180 teachers, distributed between the two types of training.

In addition to training, MILES is committed to developing pedagogical tools so that teachers can multiply the impact of the concepts learnt. Teachers who complete the training at CPD level will have the key role of co-creating an educational 'toolbox' full of practical activities to encourage students to identify and resist misinformation before it causes harmful impacts, a process known as pre-bunking.

Inspired by the concept of psychological vaccination, pre-bunking exposes students to small doses of disinformation in a controlled environment so that they can develop immunity against false content in real situations. Through classroom workshops, around 540 students will be directly impacted and will have the opportunity to apply the concepts learnt, promoting critical thinking in their school routine. The project also has a strong family and community engagement component. In order to integrate the educational community, MILES will develop an educational board game, which will allow students to apply and share their knowledge of disinformation with their families. This activity will be conducted in specific workshops for families, with the aim of raising awareness about the risks of disinformation and fostering a culture of critical analysis beyond the school walls. Around 270 parents and carers will be involved in these workshops, which will contribute to creating a community environment where critical thinking is encouraged, strengthening the ties between school and family.

The expected impact of MILES is significant and profound, aiming not only to transform pedagogical practice in the digital context, but also to strengthen European society as a whole. In the short term, the project is expected to improve teachers' ability to deal with misinformation and empower students to develop critical skills that will be applied in the digital environment. In the medium and long term, MILES aspires to contribute to building a more resilient society aware of the dangers of digital manipulation, while promoting the continuity of critical digital learning through the engagement of stakeholders and policymakers. By promoting guidelines and promising practices at local, national and European level, MILES aims to establish a legacy of educational innovation that can be replicated and sustained in different educational contexts. This dissemination and integration of the methodologies developed in the project has the potential to inspire long-term political change, helping to create a European education system that values and cultivates critical thinking, digital literacy and resistance to disinformation, thus contributing to a more robust and informed democracy.

MILES partnership is composed by the following partners:

- Coordinator: Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci (Italy)
- OLAE – Associação de Investigação Observatório Lusófono de Actividades Economimas (Portugal)
- Aproximar – Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social (Portugal)
- ALSDGC – Asociatia Lectura si Scrierea pentru Dezvoltarea Gandirii Critice (Romania)
- Bupnet – Germany
- KMOP – Education Hub (Greece)
- GO! – Belgium
- Cardet – Center for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology (Cyprus)
- die Berater – Austria
- Atermon – The Netherlands
- Danmar Computers – Poland

1.2 Summary of the report j

This report is based on the reports of the European partners, who conducted interviews, desk research and online surveys in an initial research phase to explore the current situation regarding MIL in their countries, identifying main trends, learning needs and inspiring practices to be taken as reference on the next steps of the project. Partner countries in which the research has been carried out are the following: **Italy; Portugal; Romania; Germany; Greece; Belgium; Cyprus; Austria; Netherlands; and Poland**.

This report, specifically, is the result of the following conducted actions:

- One desk research per country on national context, literature review and 5 promising/good practice on the project topics.
- Interviews to 5 policy makers, 5 actors working in the school environment and 2 stakeholders per country, for a total reached of **124 people.**
- 100 surveys per country, targeting 70 adults (teachers especially) and 30 students/youngsters, reaching **1159 people** in total.

Here below, the main highlights of the results are presented.
The MILES project reports on interviews conducted in partner countries have highlighted significant challenges and provided detailed recommendations for tackling fake news and disinformation. **These reports underscore the importance of comprehensive media literacy education and the integration of critical thinking skills into the school curriculum**.

A key challenge identified across the reports is the **rapid evolution of media and the increasing sophistication of disinformation tactics**. Educators and policymakers are particularly concerned about the "Infodemic" – an overwhelming amount of information, including false and misleading content, which makes it difficult for individuals to discern credible sources. This challenge is exacerbated by the high levels of engagement with social media platforms among young people, who are often the most vulnerable to disinformation due to their reliance on these platforms for news.

Another significant issue is the **lack of continuous professional development for educators**. Teachers need ongoing training to stay updated with the latest digital tools and strategies to combat disinformation. The reports stress the importance of investing in teacher training programs that focus on media literacy, including artificial intelligence and algorithmic literacy, to equip educators with the skills needed to guide students effectively.

The reports also emphasize the **need for community involvement and collaborative efforts**. Engaging parents, local communities, and media organizations in media literacy initiatives is crucial for creating a comprehensive approach to tackling disinformation. Community-based projects and partnerships between schools and media organizations can provide practical,

real-world experiences for students and foster a broader understanding of the media landscape.

In terms of **promising practices**, several initiatives have been highlighted. For instance, the News Literacy Project in London and the Segura Net initiative from Portugal's Directorate-General for Education are notable examples of effective media literacy programs. These initiatives provide valuable resources and frameworks for educators and students to develop critical media literacy skills. Additionally, books like "Gosto, logo existo" have been recommended for their educational value in addressing media literacy topics.

Policy recommendations from the reports include the **integration of media literacy across all educational disciplines, starting from an early age**. Developing critical thinking skills and fostering tolerance and diversity are seen as essential components of a robust media literacy education. There is also a call for better journalistic rigour and fact-checking mechanisms to ensure the credibility of information disseminated to the public.

The reports suggest that **national strategies should be aligned with European frameworks**, given the cross-border nature of disinformation. However, the reports highlight the need for these strategies to be context-specific, recognizing the diverse backgrounds of students and the varying impacts of disinformation.

Technological, legislative, and educational approaches must be integrated to effectively address the challenges posed by fake news and disinformation. The reports recommend leveraging technology to develop tools for detecting and countering disinformation, implementing legislative measures to regulate the spread of false information, and promoting comprehensive educational strategies to build resilience against disinformation.

In conclusion, the MILES project reports advocate for a **multifaceted approach to tackling fake news and disinformation**. Indeed, fake news and disinformation are related concepts but are not exactly the same.

Fake News

The term generally refers to news articles or media content that intentionally contains false information, fabricated to look like legitimate news. These articles often aim to deceive readers into believing something that isn't true. Fake news can be spread with different motives, such as to influence opinions, attract clicks (clickbait), or generate outrage, but not always with a strong intent to manipulate.

Disinformation

It is false information spread deliberately with the intent to mislead or manipulate people. It is a broader concept that includes not only fake news but also other tactics like doctored images, deepfake videos, and propaganda. Disinformation is often used to influence public opinion, discredit individuals or groups, or even destabilize political or social structures.

Both are problematic, but disinformation typically involves a more strategic, often malicious intent, while fake news may sometimes be less targeted or even spread unintentionally by people who believe it to be true. This includes enhancing media literacy education, continuous professional development for educators, community involvement, and robust policy frameworks. By adopting these strategies, countries can build a well-informed and critically thinking society capable of navigating the complexities of the modern information landscape.

2. Desk Research

2.1 Literature Review

The MILES project reports on fake news and disinformation from various partner countries and provides a comprehensive literature review that delves into the multifaceted challenges and strategies for combating disinformation. The literature reviewed in these reports highlights **the rapid evolution of digital media** and **its profound impact on the spread of false information**. Scholars and experts agree that the rise of social media platforms has significantly amplified the reach and speed at which disinformation spreads, creating a complex environment for individuals to navigate.

In order to conduct this desk research we analysed information and references from not only the European Union countries, but also some studies on these topics conducted in countries outside the EU and overseas experiences.

A recurring theme in the literature is the concept of "**Infodemic**," which refers to the overwhelming amount of information, both true and false, that people encounter daily. This phenomenon complicates the ability to distinguish between credible and non-credible sources. Studies underscore that young people, who are heavy users of social media, are particularly susceptible to disinformation. Research from the United States, for example, indicates that adolescents and young adults are frequently exposed to misinformation on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Similarly, studies in the United Kingdom have shown that digital literacy skills among young people are insufficient to effectively navigate the

complex online information landscape. Several studies in the United States and the United Kingdom have highlighted the **susceptibility of young people to disinformation and the need for improved digital literacy skills to navigate online information**. In order to add some examples, we would like to enhance the following studies from US: Pew Research Center reports that young Americans are among the most frequent users of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, where they encounter various types of misinformation. Pew studies have shown that social media is a primary source of news for many young adults, which increases their exposure to potentially misleading or false information.

Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) found that middle school, high school, and college students in the U.S. often struggle to evaluate the credibility of online information. Their study, "Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning" revealed that young people frequently cannot distinguish between credible sources and unreliable information on social media.

From the United Kingdom it is important to highlight the following studies: Ofcom (2021) (the UK's communications regulator) publishes an annual report on "Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes," which indicates that children and young adults are increasingly reliant on social media for news and information but often lack the skills to critically assess its accuracy. This report highlights concerns about digital literacy and the potential for young people to be misled by disinformation online.

The National Literacy Trust (2018) conducted a study showing that young people in the UK need better digital literacy skills to navigate the digital landscape safely. Their report, "Fake News and Critical Literacy," stresses that a significant number of young people lack the skills to identify false information online, making them vulnerable to disinformation.

The literature stresses the need for enhanced media literacy to equip individuals with the critical thinking skills required to evaluate the vast amounts of information they consume. Researchers argue that media literacy should be a core component of education from an early age, helping students develop the skills necessary to critically assess information. This educational approach is supported by various initiatives and frameworks, such as the National Media Literacy Plan and the National Strategy for Education for Citizenship in Portugal, which serve as guiding documents for implementing media literacy across different educational levels. Comparable efforts in countries like Finland, which has integrated media literacy into its national curriculum, demonstrate the effectiveness of such approaches in fostering critical thinking and resilience against disinformation. UNESCO has highlighted Finland as a leading example in media literacy education. Reports on media and information literacy often reference Finland's integration of media literacy into its curriculum and its success in fostering critical thinking among students.

Finnish National Agency for Education has detailed information on the integration of media literacy into the Finnish national curriculum, emphasizing how these initiatives promote critical thinking and protect students against disinformation.

Teacher training is another critical area highlighted in the literature. The need for continuous professional development for educators is a consistent theme, with studies indicating that teachers require ongoing training to stay updated with the latest digital tools and strategies to combat disinformation. The literature suggests that effective teacher training programs should include components on artificial intelligence and algorithmic literacy, as these areas are increasingly relevant in the context of digital media and disinformation. In Canada, for instance, teacher training programs have incorporated digital literacy and critical thinking modules to better prepare educators for the challenges posed by disinformation.

Community involvement and collaborative efforts are also prominent in the literature. Researchers advocate for engaging parents, local communities, and media organizations in media literacy initiatives to create a comprehensive approach to combating disinformation. Studies show that community-based projects and partnerships between schools and media organisations can provide practical, real-world experiences for students and foster a broader understanding of the media landscape. Examples from Australia highlight successful community-based initiatives that bring together schools, parents, and local media to educate the public about the dangers of disinformation and the importance of critical media consumption.

Several promising practicess are highlighted in the literature, including initiatives such as the *News Literacy Project* in London and the *Segura Net program* from Portugal's Directorate-General for Education. These programs are cited for their effectiveness in providing valuable resources and frameworks for educators and students to develop critical media literacy skills. Additionally, educational materials like the book "*Gosto, logo existo*" are recommended by the Portuguese Ministry of Education, for their role in addressing media literacy topics in an engaging manner. Similar programs in Sweden, such as the "*Media and Information Literacy*" initiative, offer comprehensive resources and training to help educators and students navigate the digital media landscape.

The literature also discusses **the role of technology and legislative measures** in combating disinformation. Studies identified in the lines below emphasize the need for technological solutions to detect and counter disinformation, as well as legislative frameworks to regulate the spread of false information. The importance of robust fact-checking mechanisms and journalistic rigor is repeatedly underscored, with scholars arguing that these elements are crucial for maintaining the credibility of information disseminated to the public. Here are some examples of studies and reports that emphasize the need for technological solutions and legislative frameworks to address disinformation:

- **European Commission's "Tackling Online Disinformation: A European Approach"** (2018) – This report outlines the European Union's strategy to counter disinformation through a combination of technological solutions, including artificial intelligence and machine learning for content moderation, and legislative efforts to regulate the spread of false information. The report advocates for a stronger regulatory framework to ensure accountability from digital platforms. Source: European Commission. (2018). "Tackling Online Disinformation: A European Approach."
- **"The Global Disinformation Order: 2019 Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation" by Oxford Internet Institute** – This study reviews the role of technological tools, such as bot detection software, to identify and mitigate disinformation campaigns. It also highlights the importance of governmental policies and international cooperation in regulating social media platforms. Source: Bradshaw, S., & Howard, P. N. (2019). "The Global Disinformation Order: 2019 Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation." Oxford Internet Institute.
- **"Artificial Intelligence and the Fight Against Disinformation" by NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence** – This report discusses the role of AI-based solutions in detecting fake news, including deepfakes, and how AI can be used to enhance fact-checking processes. It also covers the need for robust policy frameworks to address the ethical and regulatory challenges posed by AI-driven tools in combating disinformation. Source: NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence. (2020). "Artificial Intelligence and the Fight Against Disinformation."
- **"Disinformation and 'Fake News': Final Report" by the UK House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2019)** – This report emphasizes the need for a legal framework to hold social media platforms accountable for the spread of disinformation. It also advocates for technological innovation to help detect false information and calls for stricter regulations on political advertising on digital platforms. Source: House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. (2019). "Disinformation and 'Fake News': Final Report."
- **UNESCO's "Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training"** – While focused on journalism, this handbook discusses the technological and legislative approaches needed to combat disinformation. It emphasizes the role of automated detection tools and suggests policy recommendations for media and digital literacy initiatives. Source: UNESCO. (2018). "Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training."

The following studies highlight the critical role of both technological innovation and regulatory measures in creating a comprehensive strategy to counter the spread of disinformation.

- **Legislative efforts in Germany**, through the Network Enforcement Act, demonstrate how regulatory frameworks can effectively target the dissemination of fake news on social media platforms. Germany's Network Enforcement Act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz or NetzDG), enacted in 2017, is a prominent example of legislative efforts aimed at tackling the spread of fake news and hate speech on social media platforms. The law was designed to ensure that social media companies, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, are held accountable for the content shared on their platforms, particularly when it involves illegal material under German law, including disinformation, hate speech, and incitements to violence.

- One of the most influential documents in the fight against disinformation in Europe is the European Commission's **"Action Plan Against Disinformation"** (European Commission, 2018). This plan outlines a strategic approach to enhancing the EU's capabilities in detecting, preventing, and responding to disinformation. It emphasizes the need for coordinated responses across member states and focuses on four key pillars: improving detection, coordinating responses, mobilizing the private sector, and raising societal awareness.

- The "**Code of Practice on Disinformation"** (European Commission, 2018) complements the Action Plan by involving major online platforms and the advertising industry in the fight against disinformation. Companies like Facebook, Google, and Twitter have committed to measures such as enhancing transparency in political advertising, disrupting advertising revenues for misleading content, and tackling fake accounts and automated bots. This code highlights the critical role of industry cooperation in mitigating the spread of false information online.

- The **European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)**, established by the European Commission, serves as a central hub for fact-checkers, academic researchers, and other stakeholders. EDMO facilitates the sharing of best practices and fosters collaborative research on disinformation, playing a pivotal role in building a networked response across Europe (EDMO, 2020). The observatory supports efforts to debunk false narratives and enhance media literacy, contributing to a more resilient information ecosystem.

- The academic community has made significant contributions to understanding and combating disinformation. The report "**A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Disinformation"** by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS, 2018) offers an in-depth analysis of the origins, mechanisms, and impacts of disinformation. It advocates for a multi-pronged strategy that includes regulatory measures, media

literacy education, and technological innovation. The report underscores the complexity of disinformation and the need for comprehensive solutions.

- Authors such as Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) in their study **"Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making"** provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the different types of disinformation and their dissemination methods. Their work emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary research in developing effective countermeasures.

- Member states have developed national strategies that align with broader European frameworks, each bringing unique approaches and insights. Finland, for example, has integrated media literacy into its national curriculum from an early age, aiming to equip students with the skills to critically assess information (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, 2018). This approach has been effective in fostering critical thinking and resilience against disinformation.

- Sweden's **"Media and Information Literacy"** initiative provides comprehensive resources and training for educators and students, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking in combating disinformation (Swedish Media Council, 2019). The initiative highlights the role of education in building a society that can navigate the complexities of the digital information landscape.

- Germany's **Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG)** sets a precedent for legislative action by requiring social media platforms to remove illegal content, including hate speech and fake news, within specific timeframes (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 2017). This act demonstrates a proactive legal approach to holding platforms accountable and ensuring swift action against harmful content.

- Technological solutions are crucial in detecting and countering disinformation. The European Union's efforts to develop advanced algorithms and tools for identifying fake news are well-documented. The Joint Research Centre's report "**Automated Detection of Disinformation" (JRC, 2019)** outlines the potential of machine learning and artificial intelligence in monitoring and analyzing online content.

- Legislative frameworks are also essential in regulating the spread of false information. The European Parliament's resolution on **"Online Platforms and the Digital Single Market" (European Parliament, 2019)** calls for more stringent regulatory measures to ensure transparency and accountability of online platforms. The resolution reflects a growing consensus on the need for robust legal frameworks to complement voluntary industry efforts.

Educational materials such as **"Gosto, logo existo"** are recommended for their role in addressing media literacy topics in an engaging manner (Ramos, 2018). These materials help educators introduce complex concepts in a relatable way, fostering a more informed and critically thinking student body[1].

2.2 Transnational Context on media and data literacy

In the past decade, **fake news and disinformation have become critical issues facing Europe**, threatening not only the integrity of democratic processes but also the social fabric of European societies. The growing reliance on digital platforms for information has created **new challenges for citizens and governments** alike. Social media platforms, while offering opportunities for information dissemination and connection, have also become fertile grounds for the spread of false and misleading content. Disinformation campaigns, often conducted by state and non-state actors, aim to influence public opinion, interfere in elections, and sow discord among populations. European nations have recognized the scale of the problem, and various responses have emerged, ranging from regulatory efforts to public awareness campaigns. The European Union, in particular, has played a key role in coordinating actions across member states, promoting collaboration, and setting regulatory frameworks to combat disinformation at the European level. Researcher Claire Wardle, a leading expert on misinformation and co-founder of First Draft, emphasizes the critical nature of this issue: "The spread of disinformation is a fundamental challenge to democracy. Without a well-informed citizenry, the very foundation of democratic governance is at risk" (Wardle, 2019). Wardle's work highlights the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the spread of false information in the digital age. The scale of fake news and disinformation in Europe has reached unprecedented levels in recent years (Wardle, 2023). The phenomenon has been most visible during pivotal political events, such as elections and referendums, and during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Disinformation campaigns** have targeted European elections, public health measures, and even the legitimacy of governments and institutions. These campaigns have used a variety of platforms—most notably social media, but also websites, blogs, and messaging services—to spread false information rapidly. **One of the most prominent examples of disinformation in Europe** was the 2016 **Brexit** referendum in the United Kingdom. Disinformation played a significant role in shaping public opinion on both sides of the debate, with numerous false claims about the European Union and the

[1] Some other very interesting sources are A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment; Media literacy for all: Supporting competencies to face information disorder; Digital education action plan 2021-2027 of the European Commission. Other references that we would like to highlight are: Krotz, F. (2011). Media Connectivity: Concepts, Conditions, and Consequences. Wiesbaden: Springer VS; Köhler, M. (2017). Digital Communication and Democratic Participation. Wien: Springer; de Jong, W., & Hoebink, P. (2017). Media and Development: Issues and Challenges in Communication for Development. The Hague: KIT Publishers

consequences of leaving it. Misleading advertisements, social media posts, and websites disseminated false narratives that were amplified by algorithms designed to increase user engagement. The impact of this disinformation campaign was profound, as it contributed to the polarization of British society and complicated the political discourse around Brexit. Professor Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, notes the impact of such campaigns: "**The Brexit referendum was a turning point in understanding the role of disinformation** in influencing public opinion. It demonstrated how easily false narratives can be propagated and the profound impact they can have on political processes" (Nielsen, 2018).

Eastern Europe has also been a significant target for disinformation campaigns, particularly in countries such as Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine (EUnews, 2024). At the same time, the **COVID-19 pandemic created fertile ground for disinformation across Europe,** to which the European Commission answered with a specific strategy (see "Joint Communication – Tackling COVID-19 disinformation: getting the facts right" in 2020 and "European Commission Guidance on Strengthening the Code of Practice on Disinformation", in 2021). Dr. Divina Frau-Meigs, a professor at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University and an expert on media and information literacy, has highlighted the role of digital platforms in spreading health-related disinformation: "The pandemic has shown us how quickly disinformation can spread on social media, particularly in areas like public health where the consequences can be dire. We must strengthen our media literacy programs to help people navigate this complex information landscape" (Frau-Meigs, 2020).

The spread of fake news and disinformation is not limited to the political or public health realms. **Disinformation also affects areas such as migration, environmental policy, and social issues**, with false narratives often designed to inflame tensions and polarise public debate. In countries such as Spain and Italy, disinformation campaigns have targeted immigration, framing migrants as a threat to national security and cultural identity. These narratives, often shared by far-right groups, have contributed to the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe and have made it more challenging for governments to implement inclusive policies. Given the scale and complexity of the problem, it is clear that **no single approach can fully address the issue of disinformation. A multifaceted response is required**, one that involves governments, media organisations, civil society, and the private sector.

This report will now turn to the strategies and policies that have been developed at the European Union level to combat disinformation, as well as the specific measures taken by individual European countries. The European Union has been at the forefront of efforts to combat fake news and disinformation across its member states. Recognizing the threat that disinformation poses to democratic institutions, the EU has developed several initiatives designed to address the issue at both the European and national levels. These initiatives are built around the principles of collaboration, transparency, and accountability, with a particular focus on regulating digital platforms and promoting media literacy. One of the most significant

initiatives developed by the EU is the **European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO),** which was launched in 2020. EDMO serves as a hub for researchers, fact-checkers, and media literacy experts, providing a platform for collaboration and information sharing. EDMO's primary goals include monitoring disinformation trends across Europe, promoting best practices in media literacy, and fostering cooperation between various stakeholders. **EDMO's work is aligned with the European Commission's Action Plan against Disinformation,** which was introduced in 2018 to enhance the EU's capabilities in detecting, analysing, and responding to disinformation. Professor Sonia Livingstone, a renowned expert on media and communications at the London School of Economics, has praised the EU's approach: "The European Digital Media Observatory represents a significant step forward in our efforts to combat disinformation. By bringing together experts from across Europe, it provides a much-needed platform for collaboration and the sharing of best practices" (Livingstone, 2021).

Another critical initiative is the **Digital Services Act (DSA),** a comprehensive regulatory framework that was adopted in 2022. The DSA introduces new obligations for digital platforms, requiring them to take proactive measures to monitor and remove illegal content, including fake news and disinformation. **Under the DSA, platforms are required to be more transparent about how they use algorithms to recommend content, and they must provide users with greater control over the information they see.** The DSA also mandates that platforms work with independent fact-checkers to identify and flag disinformation. The penalties for non-compliance are significant, with fines that can reach up to 6% of a company's global revenue. The DSA represents a major step forward in holding digital platforms accountable for the content they host and ensuring that they take responsibility for combating disinformation. **The European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP),** introduced in December 2020, complements the DSA by focusing on strengthening democratic processes and protecting free and fair elections across Europe. The EDAP **outlines a series of measures designed to protect the integrity of elections, promote independent media, and combat disinformation**. One of the key components of the EDAP is the regulation of political advertising, which has been a major source of disinformation during election periods. The EDAP proposes new rules that require greater transparency in political advertising, ensuring that citizens know who is behind the ads they see and how they are being targeted. The plan also emphasises the importance of media literacy, calling for increased efforts to educate citizens about the risks of disinformation and how to critically evaluate the information they encounter.

Media literacy is widely regarded as one of the most effective tools in the fight against disinformation. It involves teaching individuals the skills needed to critically evaluate the information they encounter, understand the sources of that information, and make informed decisions about its credibility. In an era where misinformation can spread rapidly through social media and other digital platforms, media literacy is essential for helping citizens navigate this complex information landscape. Dr. Divina Frau-Meigs, who has extensively researched media literacy in Europe, argues that "Media literacy is not just a set of skills; it is

a crucial component of civic education in the 21st century. **By empowering individuals to critically engage with the media, we can build a more resilient society that is better equipped to resist disinformation"** (Frau-Meigs, 2020). An example of this approach is Finland, which has been a leader in media literacy education, integrating it into the national curriculum from an early age. Finnish schools teach students how to navigate digital media, recognize disinformation, and engage in critical thinking. This proactive approach has resulted in a population that is more resilient to disinformation, and Finland consistently ranks high in global media literacy indexes (European Commission, 2023).

The European Commission has supported several initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of disinformation and the importance of critical thinking. The "#ThinkBeforeSharing" campaign, for instance, encourages social media users to verify the accuracy of information before sharing it online. Such campaigns are crucial in fostering a culture of scepticism and critical analysis among the public. In addition to formal education, **public awareness campaigns play a vital role in promoting media literacy** across Europe.

The fight against disinformation in Europe faces numerous challenges, many of which are deeply entrenched in the digital infrastructure and societal norms of the modern information age. Among the most significant challenges are the role of social media platforms, the decline of trust in media and institutions, and the educational disparities that exist across different regions of Europe. Social media platforms have become the primary battlegrounds in the fight against disinformation. These platforms are designed to maximise user engagement, often prioritising sensational content that generates clicks and shares over more accurate, yet less engaging, information. This dynamic has created an environment where false information can spread rapidly and widely, often reaching more people than corrections or factual content. Professor Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, who has extensively studied the role of social media in the spread of disinformation, has noted, "The design of social media platforms inherently favours the spread of disinformation because it prioritises content that is engaging, even if it is not accurate. This presents a significant challenge for those seeking to combat false information" (Nielsen, 2020). Another major challenge is the decline of trust in media and public institutions. Across Europe, there is a growing scepticism towards traditional media outlets, driven by perceptions of bias, sensationalism, and political influence. This erosion of trust has led many individuals to turn to alternative sources of information, which may be less reliable and more prone to spreading disinformation. Professor Sonia Livingstone emphasises the importance of rebuilding trust in media, stating, "To combat disinformation effectively, we must restore public trust in the media. This requires a commitment to transparency, accountability, and high-quality journalism that serves the public interest" (Livingstone, 2019).

Educational disparities across Europe also present a significant challenge in promoting media literacy. In countries with well-developed education systems, media literacy is often integrated into the curriculum, equipping students with the skills needed to navigate the

digital landscape. However, in countries where education systems are less robust, media literacy may not be prioritised, leaving individuals more vulnerable to disinformation. Dr. Frau-Meigs highlights this issue: "Educational disparities across Europe mean that not everyone has the same access to media literacy education. This creates a digital divide where some citizens are better equipped to resist disinformation than others" (Frau-Meigs, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from governments, educational institutions, media organisations, and civil society. The next section will explore some of the best practices that have emerged across Europe in combating fake news and disinformation.

Despite the challenges, several European countries have implemented **effective strategies to combat fake news**, providing valuable lessons for others. These best practices include collaborative efforts, technological innovations, and comprehensive media literacy programs.

Collaboration between governments, media organisations, and civil society is essential for effectively combating disinformation. The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) plays a key role in fostering such collaboration by bringing together stakeholders from across Europe to share best practices and develop innovative solutions. Dr. Frau-Meigs has praised these collaborative efforts, noting, "The strength of EDMO lies in its ability to bring together a diverse group of experts and stakeholders, creating a network that can respond quickly and effectively to emerging disinformation threats" (Frau-Meigs, 2020). Technological innovations are also playing a vital role in combating disinformation. AI-driven tools for fact-checking, browser extensions that flag suspicious content, and platforms that aggregate fact-checked information are becoming increasingly important in the fight against disinformation. These technologies help individuals identify fake news and make more informed decisions about the information they consume. Dr. Nielsen has highlighted the potential of these technological tools: "Technological innovations, particularly those driven by AI, have the potential to significantly enhance our ability to detect and counter disinformation. However, they must be used in conjunction with broader strategies that include education and regulation" (Nielsen, 2021). In addition to technological solutions, comprehensive media literacy programs remain a cornerstone of efforts to combat disinformation. Countries like Finland and Sweden have led the way in integrating media literacy into their national curricula, ensuring that citizens are equipped with the skills needed to navigate the digital landscape. Professor Livingstone has underscored the importance of these programs: "Media literacy is not just about teaching people to identify fake news; it’s about empowering them to engage critically with all forms of media. This is essential for maintaining a healthy democracy" (Livingstone, 2020).

1) Statistics on MIL and data literacy:

Data literacy, defined as the ability to read, understand, and utilize data in different ways (Harvard, 2021), is becoming increasingly essential in the digital age. It enables individuals to make informed decisions, navigate the digital landscape, and participate fully in the information society. This section of the report presents current statistics and trends in data literacy across European countries, highlighting significant disparities and key initiatives aimed at improving these skills.

As of 2023, there is considerable variation in data literacy across the European Union (EU). According to Eurostat, **55% of individuals aged 16 to 74 in the EU possess at least basic digital skills**, which encompass essential data literacy capabilities. However, these average masks significant disparities between countries. For instance, the **Netherlands** and **Finland** have the highest levels of basic digital skills at **79%**, while **Romania and Bulgaria** are at the lower end with **28%** and **31%,** respectively (Eurostat, 2023). These disparities are influenced by various factors, including education, age, and socioeconomic status. Higher education levels are strongly correlated with better digital skills. For example, in the EU, 80% of individuals with higher formal education possess basic digital skills compared to only 34% of those with no or low formal education. **The largest gaps in digital skills by education level are observed in Portugal (66 percentage points), Greece (63 percentage points), and Malta (59 percentage points)**. Conversely, **Estonia (12 percentage points), Finland (14 percentage points), and Lithuania (22 percentage points) exhibit the smallest gaps** (Eurostat, 2023). Education significantly impacts data literacy levels. Countries with robust educational systems that integrate digital literacy into their curricula tend to have higher levels of data literacy. Finland, a leader in this area, incorporates media and data literacy from early childhood education through higher education. This comprehensive approach ensures that students develop strong digital skills as part of their overall education (Eurostat, 2023). **Age also plays a crucial role**. Younger individuals generally have higher levels of digital skills compared to older age groups. In the EU, **69% of men aged 25-34 have basic digital skills,** while this figure drops to **34%** for those aged 65-74**.** For **women, 71% of those aged 25-34 possess basic digital skills** compared to only **25% of those aged 65-74**. This trend highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve digital literacy among older populations (Eurostat, 2023).

Several initiatives at both the national and EU levels aim to enhance data literacy. The European Commission's "Digital Decade" initiative sets ambitious targets, aiming for at least 80% of EU citizens aged 16 to 74 to have basic digital skills by 2030. This initiative outlines a comprehensive vision for digital transformation, emphasising the importance of digital literacy in achieving these goals (World Economic Forum, 2023). National programs also play a critical role. Germany's Data Literacy Education Network (DLEN) offers extensive resources and training programs, integrating data literacy into all educational levels. Similarly, Italy's National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) publishes comprehensive reports on digital skills, helping policymakers develop targeted interventions (Eurostat, 2023). Despite significant progress, several challenges remain. Disparities between countries and within populations

indicate the need for more tailored and inclusive approaches. Ensuring that rural areas and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups have access to quality digital education is crucial. Additionally, continuous professional development for educators is essential to keep pace with technological advancements and new pedagogical methods. The integration of digital literacy into lifelong learning frameworks presents a significant opportunity. As technology evolves, so too must the skills required to navigate it. Lifelong learning initiatives can help individuals continuously update their skills, ensuring they remain proficient in an ever-changing digital landscape.

2) Current trends

Media literacy encompasses technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow a citizen to access, have a critical understanding of the media and interact with it (EDMO, n.d). In recent years, European countries have recognized the importance of media literacy in fostering informed and engaged citizens. According to the European Audiovisual Observatory (2018), approximately 65% of Europeans feel confident in their media literacy skills, yet significant disparities exist between countries.

Northern European countries, such as Finland and Sweden, lead in media literacy education, integrating it into their national curricula. Finland, for instance, is often cited as a model for media literacy education, with a comprehensive approach that starts in early childhood and continues through higher education. A 2018 study by the European Commission found that 90% of Finnish students receive formal media literacy education, compared to just 30% in some Southern and Eastern European countries.

The **European Media Literacy Index (2020)** indicates that countries like Denmark, the Netherlands, and Estonia also score highly, benefiting from strong educational systems and supportive government policies. Conversely, countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece face challenges, including limited resources and insufficient training for educators. Several pan-European initiatives aim to enhance media literacy. The European Media Literacy Week, launched by the European Commission, raises awareness and promotes best practices. The Media Literacy for All program funds projects that develop innovative tools and resources for media education. The **European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)** supports research and policy recommendations, fostering collaboration among stakeholders. It also promotes fact-checking and debunking initiatives, crucial for combating disinformation.
As the volume of data generated continues to grow, data literacy has become essential for individuals and organisations alike. **A 2019 survey by the European Data Portal** found that 58% of Europeans feel unprepared to handle data effectively, highlighting a significant skills gap. Western European countries, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, have made substantial investments in data literacy education and training. **Germany's Data Literacy Education Network (DLEN)** offers extensive resources and training programs, aiming

to integrate data literacy into all levels of education. The UK government's Digital Skills Partnership has also prioritised data literacy, working with businesses and educational institutions to address skills shortages. In contrast, Southern and Eastern European countries face greater challenges. **The European Data Market Monitoring Tool (2020)** reports that countries like Italy, Spain, and Poland lag behind in data literacy, with fewer educational programs and less industry engagement. **The EU's Data Literacy Project**, a collaboration between public and private sectors, seeks to improve data literacy across Europe. It offers online courses, workshops, and resources, targeting diverse audiences from students to professionals. Additionally, the Horizon 2020 program funds research and innovation projects that enhance data literacy, promoting interdisciplinary approaches and the use of advanced technologies. Fake news, or disinformation, poses a significant threat to democratic societies by undermining trust in media and institutions. **The Eurobarometer survey (2018)** revealed that 83% of EU citizens perceive fake news as a problem for democracy, with 73% concerned about the impact of disinformation on elections. The survey also indicated that social media platforms are seen as the main sources of fake news by 70% of respondents. **A study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2020) found that 28%** of Europeans regularly encounter fake news online. The prevalence of disinformation varies by country, with higher incidences reported in Southern and Eastern Europe. For example, in Romania, 42% of respondents reported encountering fake news frequently, compared to 16% in Finland.

The **European Commission's Joint Research Centre (2019)** highlighted that fake news often spreads faster and more widely than factual news due to its sensational nature. The study emphasised the role of algorithms in amplifying disinformation, as they prioritise engaging content, which is often misleading. To combat fake news, the European Union has implemented several initiatives. The Code of Practice on Disinformation (2018) involves major online platforms in efforts to increase transparency, disrupt advertising revenues for disinformation sources, and tackle fake accounts. The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) plays a critical role in coordinating fact-checking activities and supporting research on disinformation. National strategies also contribute to these efforts. Germany's Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG) requires social media platforms to swiftly remove illegal content, including fake news. Finland's comprehensive media literacy programs aim to build resilience against disinformation from an early age.

The **Open Data Maturity Report (2020)** highlights the importance of open data initiatives in promoting data literacy. Countries with robust open data policies, such as France and the Netherlands, tend to have higher levels of data literacy, as access to public data fosters a culture of data use and innovation. Despite progress, several challenges remain. Disparities between countries and regions, as well as between urban and rural areas, need to be addressed. Investment in teacher training and professional development is crucial, as educators play a key role in imparting media and data literacy skills. Collaboration between governments, educational institutions, and the private sector is essential to create

comprehensive and inclusive literacy programs. Policymakers must prioritize funding for initiatives that promote digital skills, ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to become media and data literate. Looking ahead, the integration of media and data literacy into lifelong learning frameworks will be vital. As technology continues to evolve, continuous upskilling and reskilling will be necessary to keep pace with new developments and challenges. The European Skills Agenda, which includes a focus on digital literacy, is a positive step in this direction, emphasising the need for a coordinated effort to enhance digital skills across Europe.

3) Obstacles and opportunities

Combating fake news and disinformation presents both significant obstacles and considerable opportunities. As societies become more reliant on digital media for information, the proliferation of false information has become a pressing issue, challenging the integrity of public discourse and democratic processes. As previously mentioned, the complexity of this problem necessitates a **multifaceted approach, involving technological, educational, and regulatory measures**.

One of the **primary obstacles** in tackling fake news is **the sheer volume and speed at which disinformation spreads**. Social media platforms, designed to maximise user engagement, often amplify sensational and misleading content. Algorithms prioritise posts that generate high levels of interaction, inadvertently boosting the visibility of fake news. This rapid dissemination makes it difficult to identify and counter false narratives promptly. Moreover, the borderless nature of the internet complicates efforts to regulate and control the spread of disinformation across different jurisdictions.

Another significant challenge is **the sophistication of modern disinformation campaigns**. Advances in technology, such as deepfake videos and automated bots, have made it easier to create and spread convincingly false information. These tools can be used to manipulate public opinion and sow discord, making it harder for individuals to discern truth from fiction. Additionally, the anonymity afforded by the internet allows malicious actors to operate with relative impunity, further complicating efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

The issue of trust also poses a considerable obstacle. Public trust in traditional media and institutions has been eroded, partly due to the proliferation of disinformation. When people lose faith in credible sources, they become more susceptible to fake news, which often exploits existing biases and emotions. This erosion of trust makes it challenging to promote reliable information and counteract false narratives effectively.

Despite these obstacles, there are **significant opportunities** to tackle fake news and disinformation. One of the most promising approaches is the **enhancement of media literacy**. Educating the public, especially young people, on how to critically evaluate information sources can build resilience against disinformation. Schools and educational institutions play a crucial role in this effort, integrating media literacy into curricula to equip students with the skills needed to navigate the digital information landscape. Programs like Finland's comprehensive media literacy education serve as successful models, demonstrating the positive impact of such initiatives.

Technological innovation also offers substantial opportunities. Advanced algorithms and artificial intelligence can be harnessed to detect and flag disinformation more efficiently. Fact-checking tools and digital literacy apps can assist users in verifying the authenticity of information. Collaborative efforts between tech companies, governments, and civil society organisations can lead to the development of more robust solutions to identify and mitigate the spread of fake news.

Regulatory measures present another avenue for addressing disinformation. Governments can enact legislation that holds social media platforms accountable for the content disseminated on their sites. The European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation and Germany's Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG) are examples of regulatory frameworks aimed at increasing transparency and accountability. These regulations can compel platforms to take more proactive steps in monitoring and removing false information.

Moreover**, fostering a culture of transparency and accountability within the media industry is vital**. Journalistic standards and ethics must be upheld to maintain public trust. Initiatives that promote transparency, such as the disclosure of sources and funding, can help restore credibility to traditional media outlets. Supporting independent journalism and fact-checking organizations is also crucial in the fight against disinformation.

Collaborative international efforts are essential given the global nature of the internet. Countries can share best practices and coordinate responses to cross-border disinformation campaigns. International organisations and alliances, such as the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), play a pivotal role in fostering cooperation and sharing knowledge.

In conclusion, while tackling fake news and disinformation presents significant challenges, there are ample opportunities to address these issues through education, technology, regulation, and international cooperation. Enhancing media literacy, leveraging technological innovations, enacting effective regulations, and promoting transparency within the media are critical components of a comprehensive strategy. By adopting a multifaceted approach, societies can build resilience against disinformation and protect the integrity of public discourse and democratic processes. The collective effort of governments, educational

institutions, technology companies, media organisations, and civil society is crucial in overcoming the obstacles and seizing the opportunities in the fight against fake news.

2.3 Promising practices

This chapter explores some of the promising practices identified by the partners of the MILES project in combating disinformation and promoting media literacy across educational settings in Europe. Through collaborative research and pilot implementations, MILES partners have developed and refined a range of innovative strategies and tools aimed at enhancing critical thinking, strengthening digital literacy, and empowering educators and students to navigate the complex landscape of online information. By documenting and analysing these practices, this chapter offers insights into effective approaches that can be adapted and adopted across diverse educational contexts. The practices highlighted here reflect a commitment to fostering resilience against disinformation, equipping educators with the resources needed to address digital challenges, and engaging students in meaningful learning experiences that build their capacity for critical inquiry and informed citizenship.
In total, partners identified 44 practices among several types: training programs; skill competence framework; practice or methodology aiming at boosting critical media and data literacy skills/pre-bunking; Policies or other. Here below, 8 practices has been selected in order to give a range of examples to be taken into account. However, the complete list of the practices can be found in the national reports of each partner, available under request.

1.

Name of Promising practice	Generazioni Connesse
Country	Italy
Type:	▪ Training program ▪ Skill competence framework ▪ Practice or methodology aiming at boosting critical media and data literacy skills ▪ Policies
Year of implementation	From 2022 - 2024 (sixth edition of the project)
Context	
Needs	"Generazioni Connesse" addresses the need for comprehensive digital education by developing a multi-layered platform. It creates educational materials, guides, and training programs for teachers, parents, and students. It also supports schools in forming digital policies, offers communication campaigns and awareness initiatives, and provides mechanisms for reporting and assistance related to internet safety.

Target involved: please, provide a short description of the target to which these promising practices has been addressed.	As a capacitation programme, teachers and educators from kindergarten upwards are most likely to be considered the direct target of most of the outputs of the project. Nonetheless, indirect beneficiaries are to be listed to, as the project has succeeded to reach more than 357.000 adults, including parents, as well as nearly 900.000 between boys and girls, in 2021.
Main objective	The project aims to improve digital, media and information literacy, and promote responsible internet usage across different age groups, with a focus on inclusivity.
Promising practices description	
Contents	Generazioni Connesse, supported for many years by Ministry of Education, has developed a multi-layered platform for improving digital education, involving partners like Save the Children, Telefono Azzurro, Cooperativa EDI Onlus, and CREMIT in producing educational materials and guides. The platform offers various levels of engagement, starting from basic access to informational materials, progressing to a new educational kit with detailed guides for classroom use and thematic deep dives into areas covered by the Digital Civic Education Syllabus, and culminating in the development of digital policies and practices for schools through teacher training courses and collaborative student projects. It involves communication campaigns, awareness initiatives, and training programs designed for adults (such as teachers, parents, educators, and childcare professionals) and young people (including children and adolescents). Young individuals are actively engaged in forming journalistic teams to share their perspectives on the digital world. The project also arranges events with national and international experts to discuss specific topics related to its themes. Secondary schools are encouraged to participate in a call for action to create apps or tools that promote a positive and conscious use of technology. Support mechanisms include a hotline for reporting illegal online content, focusing specifically on child

	pornography, and a helpline offering assistance for issues related to internet and digital technology usage. The project continues to assist school communities in developing internal policies to promote digital skills, enhance technology use in education, prevent problematic situations, and establish procedures to recognize, manage, report, and monitor incidents of misuse. These efforts are part of a broader commitment to effectively integrate digital literacy into educational practices.
Features of Interest	The Generations Connected project by the Safer Internet Centre is supported by the European Commission through the Digital Europe program. It is part of the "Better Internet for Kids" network managed by European Schoolnet in collaboration with INSAFE and Inhope, which bring together European Safer Internet Centres and hotlines, respectively
Link	https://www.generazioniconnesse.it/site/it/home/

2.

Name of Promising practice	Infuzarea educatiei media. Ghid de bune practice pentru profesorii de limba si literatura romana (liceu)/ Infusion with media literacy.
Country	Romania
Type:	methodology guidebook for teachers, resulting from a training programme
Year of implementation	2022 (online publication)
Context	
Needs	Lack of practical resources for teachers to learn how to develop their students' media literacy skills
Target involved	Teachers of Romanian language and literature teaching high school students
Main objective	To provide teachers of Romanian language and literature with guidance to develop media literacy in formal education (Romanian language and literature class) with high school students
Promising practices description	

Contents	Promising practices guide for teachers of Romanian language and literature (high school), a publication coordinated by Monica Halaszi, Centre for Independent Journalism (developed in the project I teach media literacy! – Media education and culture laboratory. Theoretical information about various central concepts in media education, approached in an integrated way through 25 lesson plans that show their concrete applicability in the classroom, in close correlation with the specific contents of Romanian language and literature.
Features of Interest	Highly practical, developed by teacher for teachers to show how to embed media literacy in their lessons, capitalising on the opportunities provided in the national curriculum
Link	https://educatiemedia.cji.ro/2022/12/23/infuzarea-educatiei-media-lb-ro-ghid-2022/

3.

Name of best practice	**Podcast – the Truth in Times of Corona**
Country	Germany
Type:	Audio podcast
Year of implementation	
Context	
Needs	• Overcome the limitations of classroom teaching • Raise interest into a subject • Offer a deeper dive into the topic than a lesson would allow
Target involved	General audience interested in a deeper dive in the topic of disinformation.
Main objective	Create a deeper understanding of conspiracy theories
Good Practice Description	
Contents	The podcast, created by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, is dedicated to conspiracy theories and myths surrounding the Corona virus. For the bpb, journalist Axel Schröder talked in this podcast with various experts about the most diverse aspects of this

	often bizarre and not infrequently hateful and violent world. In the first episode, Axel Schröder talks to Karolin Schwarz (founder of hoaxmap.org) and Jan Rathje from the Amadeu Antonio Foundation about the most common theories, the anti-Semitism that is often inherent in them, and strategies for action against conspiracy theories. The second episode deals with the social psychological aspects of conspiracy theories, and also looks at the role of social media providers. Social psychologist Pia Lamberty and blogger Katharina Nocun provide information on this. Prevention of conspiracy theories is the focus of the discussion with Saba-nur Cheema (Anne Frank Educational Center) and Renate Pulz (BildungsBausteine e.V.). And in the fourth episode, Schröder talks with David Begrich (Miteinander e.V.) about "resistance" in the context of the so-called "hygiene" demos, and with historian Hedwig Richter about the difficult relationship between authoritarian measures and democracy.
Features of Interest	The podcast can be listened to at any time and place – which makes it much more accessible that other types of learning material. It also can provide a deep understanding of a subject in a short amount of time. Lastly, it can be seen as an introduction to other podcasts on political education offered by the same author, bpb.
Link	https://www.bpb.de/mediathek/podcasts/wahrheit-in-zeiten-von-corona/

4.

Name of best practice	Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory
Country	Cyprus
Type:	Pre-bunking methodology/project
Year of implementation	2022
Context	
Needs	MedDMO project is of particular importance, for the defence of democracy and the strengthening of media literacy, to which the Authority attaches particular

	importance. By combating misinformation we contribute to strengthening critical thinking and creating active citizens. Fact-checking is of crucial importance in order to ensure that citizens are informed" and that the Authority considers informing citizens, preventing the spread of false news and disinformation, and especially in cultivation and continuous strengthening of citizens' skills.
Target involved	• General audience
Main objective	Acts as a hub for the EDMO, covering the south-eastern borders of Europe, with the participation of Cyprus, Greece and Malta who, apart from their geographical proximity, face common challenges in terms of disinformation campaigns, which try often to create polarisation around European public debates, such as immigration and border control issues.
Good Practice Description	
Contents	The Mediterranean Digital Media Observatory (MedDMO) is a regional hub of the European Digital Media Observatory covering Greece, Cyprus and Malta. Launched on December 1, 2022, the project, which runs up to May 2025, has received funding from the European Commission Digital Europe programme (2021-2027) for the creation of national hubs on digital media aimed at extending the reach of EDMO. Apart from the geographic similarities, Greece, Cyprus and Malta face quite similar challenges regarding disinformation campaigns that often try to polarise the EU debate, like immigration and border control issues. MedDMO is a consortium that provides new avenues for collaborative fact checking by focusing on emerging disinformation campaigns relevant specifically to the Mediterranean territory. It aims to be a crucial source of knowledge on local information environments. It brings together research, fact-checking and media organisations that conduct internationally acknowledged research work and activities in the area of disinformation. MedDMO inserts itself in the media ecosystems of the three countries. It plans to set up a technological platform directly connected to the

	EDMO infrastructure and also to provide a daily operation of investigative research that feeds the central and other national hubs with valuable information on a daily basis. The meddmo.eu portal is the digital gate that hosts the fact-checking work conducted by journalists and researchers from the three countries. It also includes the detailed activities of the consortium regarding further promotion of media literacy and news verification methods. Partners are expected to address issues journalistically and scientifically, such as immigration, climate change, health, elections matters and technology – topics that often appear at the centre of disinformation campaigns that have polarised the EU.
Features of Interest	The information that we will receive from the programme is of crucial importance for the Authority, not only as an important tool for the better implementation of its responsibilities in the radio and television field, but also especially for the implementation of the new responsibilities that the Authority has recently acquired, as National Coordinator for the implementation and operation of the DSA Regulation (Digital Services Act).
Link	https://meddmo.eu/

5.

Name of best practice	#FakeHunter-Edu
Country	Poland
Type	Practice or methodology aiming at boosting critical media and data literacy skills / pre-bunking
Year of implementation	2022
Context	
Needs	The primary need addressed by the #FakeHunter-Edu project is the lack of critical digital literacy skills among secondary school students. With the internet and social media being primary sources of information for many young people, there is an urgent requirement to teach them how to discern credible sources from false or misleading ones.

Target involved	The target audience for the #FakeHunter-Edu project comprises secondary school students, typically aged between 13 and 18 years. This demographic is particularly susceptible to the influence of social media and online information, making them a critical group for interventions aimed at improving digital literacy. Secondary school teachers are also a key target group, as they are the facilitators of the project's content and play a crucial role in educating students.
Main objective	The main objective of the #FakeHunter-Edu project is to raise awareness among secondary school students about the dangers of disinformation and fake news. The project aims to empower young people with the skills to verify online content, recognize false information, and practice safe and responsible behavior on the internet. By providing comprehensive educational resources, including video training, activity kits, and lesson plans, the project seeks to foster a generation of critical thinkers who can navigate the digital world with confidence and discernment. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more informed and resilient society that can effectively combat the spread of disinformation.
Good Practice Description	
Contents	#FakeHunter-Edu is an educational project aimed at secondary school students, the aim of which is to raise awareness of the dangers of disinformation, combat fake news, teach young people to verify content published on the Internet and reinforce safe behaviour. As part of the project, the #FakeHunter service prepared video trainings on countering disinformation, which teachers used during school classes with students. In the recordings, we explain how to recognise fake news, what the phenomenon of disinformation is, what the role of social media is in spreading false content and give tips on how to move wisely and consciously in virtual reality. In addition to

	the video training, all secondary schools also received an activity kit and a lesson scenario. The project is implemented by: Polish Press Agency, the Ministry of Education and Science, the GovTech Poland Centre and the Educational Research Institute.
Features of Interest	The project specifically targets young people in secondary schools, focusing on a critical age group that is highly active online and impressionable. The primary aim is to raise awareness about the dangers of disinformation and equipping young people with techniques to verify the authenticity of online content. It provides video training modules that teachers can use during school classes. These videos cover recognition of fake news, understanding the phenomenon of disinformation, the role of social media in spreading false information and tips for navigating virtual reality wisely and consciously. Each school receives an activity kit, providing practical tools and resources to engage students interactively. Overall, #FakeHunter-Edu exemplifies a well-rounded, collaborative, and practical approach to educating young people about disinformation and empowering them with the skills necessary to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.
Link	https://fake-hunter.pap.pl/edukacja

6.

Name of best practice	The Fake News Commissioner is on the loose
Country	Austria
Type	The project “The Fake News Commissioner is on the loose” (“Der Fake News Kommissar geht um”) is an online game aimed at enhancing media literacy and resilience against fake news among students. Combining elements of game-based learning with psychological approaches such as inoculation theory, the project offers a unique approach to tackling misinformation in the school context.
Year of implementation	2022-2024
Context	

Needs	In an era full of digital disinformation, there is a pressing need to equip young people with critical media literacy skills. They need to learn to foster resilience against fake news, critically evaluate online content and distinguish between factual information and disinformation.
Target involved	The primary target audience for the project includes students in schools, particularly adolescents who are increasingly exposed to digital misinformation. Additionally, the project involves teachers who play a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of interventions and supporting students in developing media literacy skills.
Main objective	The main objective of the project is to strengthen students' media literacy and resilience against fake news. By combining game-based learning with psychological strategies such as inoculation theory, the project aims to equip students with the necessary skills to critically evaluate online content and identify disinformation.
Good Practice Description	
Contents	The project consists of two main components: an interactive online game about fake news and a flyer with the same information and illustrations like the online game. The game immerses students in an interactive experience where they play the role of undercover agents who have to create and spread fake news without being caught by the fake news commissioner. Through engaging gameplay and youth-relevant content, students learn to recognize common strategies used in fake news and develop critical thinking skills. The flyer contains the same theoretical information about fake news that is presented and learned through the online game. Additionally, educational materials for teachers will be published on the website of the game in the next months and will provide guidance on integrating the

	game into classroom activities and facilitating discussions on media literacy.
Features of Interest	Game-Based Learning: The project uses gamification elements to increase student engagement and motivation in learning about media literacy and fake news detection. Inoculation Theory: By incorporating psychological principles such as inoculation theory, the project aims to build students' resilience against fake news by exposing them to weakened forms of misinformation. Youth-Relevant Content: The interventions feature youth-relevant content and scenarios, making the learning experience relatable and engaging for students. Teacher Support: Supplementary materials and workshops provide support for teachers in implementing the approaches effectively and integrating media literacy education into the curriculum.
Link	https://www.fakenewskommissar.eu/

7.

Name of best practice	***Stampmedia***
Country	Belgium
Type	• Training Program
Year of implementation	
Context	
Needs	StampMedia addresses the need for enhanced critical med data literacy skills among young people in Belgium. In an era n by rapid information dissemination through various media cha there is a growing necessity for young individuals to devel ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and create media conten It targets the lack of involvement of youth and young engaging in media literacy
Target involved	StampMedia's best practice primarily targets young people, particularly adolescents and teenagers, who are navigating the increasingly complex media landscape. These individuals are often active consumers and producers of media content but may lack the necessary skills to discern credible information from misinformation.

Main objective	StampMedia is the first youth media agency in Flanders that amplifies the voice of all young people in the media. StampMedia has been recognized by the Flemish Association of Journalists as a 'general news medium'. The main objective of StampMedia is to empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and tools to engage critically with media and effectively contribute to the media discourse. By providing training programs and practical opportunities for experimentation, StampMedia aims to foster media literacy, digital literacy, and critical thinking skills among its target audience.
Good Practice Description	
Contents	StampMedia offers a comprehensive training program and methodology designed to enhance critical media and data literacy skills among young people. Through workshops, mentoring, and hands-on projects, participants are guided to explore various aspects of media production, including text, photography, video, and audio. Additionally, StampMedia places a strong emphasis on active citizenship, encouraging young individuals to voice their perspectives and engage in societal discussions through media. PROJECTS Young people can come to us to experiment with text, photography, video, audio, ... They guide them tailor-made and provide them with workshops and training sessions. In addition, they consider the voice of young people very important. Young people are active citizens and claim their place in society. That's why we have several projects running to strengthen the voice of young people by working bottom-up and activating them. Projects like Lab X and Press Change are part of this. StampMedia also focuses strongly on tailor-made productions and multimedia projects. Young freelancers can work with them to carry out video and storytelling assignments.

	Furthermore, they regularly collaborate with schools, and everyone is free to use their tutorials and manuals with fun facts, useful information, and handy know-hows.
Features of Interest	They organize workshops for adults and for youngsters. *One of StampMedia's most notable features is its collaborative approach. By forging partnerships with schools, media organizations, and other stakeholders, StampMedia cultivates a supportive ecosystem for youth media involvement. This approach not only expands the network of support but also enriches opportunities for young people to participate in media creation and public discourse.* *Central to StampMedia's ethos is the empowerment of young people. Through direct involvement in media production, youth are given a voice and a platform to express themselves authentically. This empowerment not only fosters confidence and self-expression but also encourages active citizenship as young creators contribute to public dialogue and community narratives.* *StampMedia also plays a pivotal role in addressing media literacy among youth. By engaging them in the creation of media content, StampMedia equips young participants with critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of media production and consumption. This hands-on approach to media literacy helps young people navigate the complexities of the digital age and become discerning media consumers and creators.* *Furthermore, StampMedia provides opportunities for exploration and involvement. Whether it's through workshops, projects, or multimedia initiatives, young participants are encouraged to explore diverse media formats, topics, and storytelling techniques. This fosters creativity, curiosity, and a sense of ownership over media narratives, empowering youth to shape the stories that matter to them and their communities.* *In essence, StampMedia's commitment to collaboration, youth empowerment, and media literacy creates a dynamic*

	platform where young people can not only amplify their voices but also contribute meaningfully to the broader discourse, ultimately shaping a more inclusive and informed media landscape.
Link	https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/el_gr/interland

8.

Name of best practice	Be Internet Awesome & "Interland" Game
Country	Greece
Type	• Training Program • Serious Game
Year of implementation	
Conte	
Needs	Interland is an online game aiming to educate children on digital risks, ways to tackle them and prepare the digital citizens of the future.
Target involved	• Students • Teachers • Families
Main objective	The objective of the game is children to learn more about digital security and digital citizenship in an interactive and fun manner. By playing, children help other "Internauts" fight off rogue hackers, online phishers, over-communicators and bullies, practicing the skills they need to be proper citizens of the digital world.
Good Practice Description	
Contents	Interland is a free, web-based game designed to help kids learn five foundational lessons across four different mini-games, or 'lands.' Kids are invited to play their way to Internet Awesome in a quest to deny hackers, sink phishers, one-up cyberbullies, outsmart oversharers and become safe, confident explorers of the online world. For Educators, it provides a series of digital safety resources to be used in a classroom. The "Be Internet Awesome" curriculum gives educators the tools and methods they need to teach digital safety fundamentals. For Families, it provides the "Be Internet Awesome Family Guide", helping families to learn about online safety and citizenship at home and incorporate and practice good digital habits in their everyday lives.

Features of Interest	Developed by Google in partnership with numerous institutions specialised in technology and education, the Be Internet Awesome campaign promotes digital literacy and media literacy towards young ages, classrooms and families. The Interland game and much of the material developed has been translated in numerous languages (with Greek being one of them).
Link	https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/el_gr/interland

3. Field research

3.1 Interviews

This chapter explores the main results of the interviews carried out at national level, thus identifying main needs, experiences useful for the next phase of the project and to guarantee a strong impact.
The MILES project's approach to collecting information during the interview stage is designed to be both systematic and inclusive, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the media literacy landscape and the challenges of disinformation. This stage emphasizes a qualitative, semi-structured interview methodology to balance the need for consistent data collection with the flexibility to explore topics that naturally emerge in conversation. By using semi-structured interviews, the project captures both comparable responses and unique insights, contributing to a richer understanding of media literacy practices.

The interview guide is crafted carefully, covering a range of relevant topics. This guide is divided into thematic sections to address current practices in media literacy, challenges and barriers faced by practitioners, effectiveness of existing techniques, and recommendations for improvements. To ensure clarity and relevance, the guide is pilot tested with a small sample of participants before full implementation, allowing for adjustments based on initial feedback. A diverse participant selection is crucial to represent a wide array of perspectives in the field of media literacy. Participants include educators, media literacy experts, policymakers, NGO representatives, and students and parents. This range ensures that the project gathers insights from those directly involved in implementing and experiencing media literacy initiatives. A purposive sampling strategy is used to select individuals based on their expertise and experience, guaranteeing that the data is rich and insightful.

Interviews were conducted via various formats—face-to-face, virtual meetings, and phone calls—to maximize accessibility for participants. Recordings (with consent) and notes are used to capture responses accurately, aiding in the subsequent data analysis. Beyond individual interviews, the MILES project also benefits from contributions by experts and practitioners, who participate in workshops, panels, and collaborative discussions. These sessions serve multiple purposes: they allow experts to share best practices, validate findings, and inform the development of training materials. These contributions ensure that the project's outputs are grounded in real-world experience and reflect the

latest thinking in media literacy. After collecting data, the MILES project team engaged in a rigorous data analysis process to extract key themes and patterns. Thematic analysis is employed, with data categorized under areas such as successful practices in media literacy, barriers to implementation, and recommendations for future initiatives. The analysis process includes coding and cross-comparison to ensure that insights are systematically organized and that connections between different participant responses are identified.

The findings from the interviews, and expert contributions, were then integrated into the MILES project's outputs, directly informing the design of training modules, toolkits for educators, and policy recommendations. By drawing on the experiences and needs of diverse stakeholders, the project ensures that its resources are both relevant and practical. The insights gathered during this stage guide the creation of a toolkit that addresses the real-world challenges faced by educators and supports effective media literacy education. MILES project's methodology for collecting information is comprehensive and collaborative. By combining qualitative interviews with insights from experts and focus groups, the project captures a holistic view of the media literacy landscape. This approach ensures that the MILES project's strategies and resources are both evidence-based and adaptable, enabling educators, students, and communities to become more resilient to disinformation. The commitment to inclusivity and rigor in data collection ultimately supports the project's overarching goal: to foster an informed and critically engaged society.

3.1.1 Sampling

The sampling process follows a purposive sampling strategy, focusing on identifying individuals with relevant experience and expertise in media literacy. Participants are chosen based on specific criteria, including their professional background, role, and involvement in media literacy or educational initiatives. This approach ensures that the project benefits from a depth of insight, as each participant brings a unique perspective shaped by their position and experience.

The selected participants include educators, media literacy experts, policymakers, NGO representatives, and community members such as students and parents. Each of these groups offers a distinct viewpoint on the efficacy and challenges of media literacy programs. For instance, educators provide insights into the practical application of media literacy in classrooms, while policymakers can discuss broader systemic and regulatory frameworks that impact these initiatives. Involving students and parents allows the project to incorporate the perspectives of those directly affected by media literacy efforts, adding a valuable layer of experiential insight to the data collected. This purposeful and inclusive sampling methodology ensures that the MILES project captures a well-rounded understanding of media literacy needs and practices. By strategically selecting participants from diverse backgrounds, the project is able to gather data that reflects the multifaceted nature of media literacy and its role in building resilience against disinformation across different educational and social contexts.
In the following section, we summarise the profiles and people involved in the interviews according to their profile and country, taking into consideration also disaggregated data based on gender as requested by the European Commission:

Countries	Policy Makers	Actors working in School	Stakeholders	Men	Women	Nonbinary	Totol people achieved
Italy	5	5	2	5	7	0	12
Romania	5	5	2	1	11	0	12
Germany	3	6	3	6	6	0	12
Cyprus	6	13	2	10	11	0	21
Poland	5	5	2	2	10	0	12
Austria	5	5	2	2	10	0	12
Belgium	6	5	2	8	5	0	13
Greece	6	7	4	6	11	0	17
Portugal	5	5	3	8	5	0	13
Total number	**46**	**56**	**22**	**48**	**76**	**0**	**124**

The complete list of the people involved is available in the annex section of the current research.

3.1.2 Interview Design

The interviews were conducted through various formats, including face-to-face, virtual, and telephone interviews, depending on participants' availability and location, with one-to-one format, bringing the experts and stakeholders to reflect about the environment in schools, and the best approaches to tackle fake news and disinformation, as well as resources for this purpose, and the promising practices that could be replicated in other European countries.

The design of the interview stage in the MILES project was critical to gathering in-depth, qualitative insights from a diverse range of stakeholders. This stage was structured to ensure that interviews not only captured individual perspectives but also allowed for the exploration of broader themes relevant to media literacy, disinformation, and the effectiveness of educational interventions. The primary purpose of the interviews was to obtain a nuanced understanding of the current landscape of media literacy education and the challenges related to disinformation. Through these interviews, the project sought to identify successful practices and strategies in media literacy and pre-bunking efforts, understand the barriers and obstacles that different stakeholders faced in promoting media literacy, gather recommendations for improving educational frameworks and practical tools to combat disinformation, and ensure that the project's outcomes aligned with the real-world needs and experiences of those actively involved in the field. These goals shaped the structure and content of the interview questions, guiding the design to focus on specific themes while remaining open to unique insights from each participant.

The project used a semi-structured approach for the interviews. This design offered a balance between structure and flexibility, allowing interviewers to cover key themes while also following up on interesting insights or new ideas introduced by participants. Semi-structured interviews relied on a set of pre-defined questions to ensure consistency across interviews, but they allowed for natural conversation flow, enabling participants to share relevant

experiences in depth. The semi-structured approach ensured consistency in addressing core topics, provided flexibility to adapt to the participant's expertise and interests, and allowed for comprehensive probing of responses, leading to a richer understanding of issues. The interviews were developed to cover a range of relevant topics, organized into thematic sections. Each section focused on a specific aspect of media literacy and disinformation, creating a coherent structure for the interview. We focused to get info on the participant's professional background, their role, and experience in the field of media literacy or disinformation, helping to contextualize their responses. It also included questions about the existing methods and strategies participants used or were aware of in promoting media literacy and countering disinformation, aiming to identify best practices and commonly used tools. We've also explored obstacles that participants faced in their work, such as resource limitations, institutional constraints, or lack of public awareness, which was essential for identifying areas in need of additional support or innovation. The guide encouraged participants to discuss the impact and effectiveness of specific tools, programs, or approaches and gathered ideas for enhancing media literacy programs. Additionally, participants were invited to share their insights into emerging trends in media literacy and potential future challenges.

3.1.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to the design of the interview process. The project team ensured that participants were informed about the purpose of the research, how their data would be used, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained for personal information and specific responses, which were only used for the research purposes outlined in the consent form. All recordings and transcripts were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access, upholding data security throughout the research process.
No ethical considerations to be reported.

4. Analytic Results of Interviews

Interviews conducted under MILES project focused on Stakeholders, Policy Makers, and Actors working in school environment.
In total 22 Stakeholders, 44 Policy Makers, and 61 Actors working in school environment participated, with the following statistics.

Stakeholders

- Total: 22
- **Gender**
  - Masculine: 9 (40,9%)

- Feminine: 13 (59,1%)

- **Professional Roles**
  - Community Association Representatives: 6 (27.3%)
  - Media/Communication Specialists: 6 (27.3%)
  - Educators and Teachers: 5 (22.7%)
  - Journalists: 4 (18.2%)
  - Others (e.g. psychologists, students): 1 (4.5%)

- **Type of institution/organization**
  - Community Associations/NGOs: 9 (40.9%)
  - Educational Institutions: 8 (36.4%)
  - Private Sector: 2 (9.1%)
  - Other (e.g. Parent Representatives): 3 (13.6%)
- **Areas of expertise**
  - Media Literacy: 6 (27.3%)
  - General Education: 5 (22.7%)
  - Journalism/Media: 4 (18.2%)
  - Community Engagement: 4 (18.2%)
  - Psychology and Well-being: 3 (13.6%)

Policy Makers

- Total: 44
- **Gender**
  - Masculine: 23 (52,3%)
  - Feminine: 21 (47,7%)
- **Professional Roles**
  - Public Policy Officers: 17 (38,6%)
  - Teachers/Academics: 15 (34,1%)
  - NGO Representatives: 7 (15,9%)
  - Media Trainers/Educators: 2 (4,5%)
  - Others (e.g.: Programme Coordinators): 3 (6,8%)
- **Type of institution/organization**
  - Public/Governamental Sector: 23 (52,3%)
  - Educational Institutions: 11 (25%)
  - NGOs: 7 (15,9%)
  - Private Sector: 3 (6,8%)
- **Areas of expertise**
  - Media Literacy: 6 (13,6%)
  - Policy and Regulation: 17 (38,6%)

- Digital Education/Literacy: 9 (20,5%)
- Journalism/Media Practice: 5 (11,4%)
- Community Engagement: 7 (15,9%)

Actors working in school

- Total: 61
- **Gender**
  - Masculine: 23 (37,7%)
  - Feminine: 38 (62,3%)
- **Professional Roles**
  - Teachers: 38 (62.3%)
  - Trainers/Trainers: 13 (21.3%)
  - University Assistants: 5 (8.2%)
  - Students/Administrative Workers: 3 (4.9%)
  - Media Educators: 2 (3.3%)
- **Type of institution/organization**
  - Educational Institutions: 55 (90.2%)
  - Private Sector: 1 (1.6%)
  - Community Associations: 3 (4.9%)
  - Other: 2 (3.3%)

- **Areas of expertise**
  - Media Literacy: 2 (3.3%)
  - Education (various disciplines): 47 (77.0%)
  - Active Citizenship/Social Studies: 6 (9.8%)
  - Sciences, Humanities and Languages: 4 (6.6%)
  - Training and Professional Development: 2 (3.3%)

In the following sections we report the main results of the interviews of the profiles involved.

4.1 Stakeholders

General Information

The documents provide comprehensive insights into the general information and findings about the target groups involved and their areas of competencies. The target groups include a diverse array of stakeholders such as students, educators, researchers, policymakers, and media professionals, each contributing to the efforts to combat misinformation and enhance media literacy.

The report from Poland highlights the involvement of students from the English Philology studies at the University of Rzeszow.

The Greek focus group involved stakeholders such as a fact-checker, a representative from a popular fact-checking platform, a member of an NGO dealing with internet safety, and a representative from the Cyber Crime Division of the Hellenic Police. Their competencies include innovative learning methodologies, psychological research, educational activities, journalism, and policy development. They focus on combating disinformation, enhancing media literacy in schools, and integrating digital skills into educational frameworks.

In Austria, stakeholders involved include a media content developer and a media expert. They discussed the need for media literacy education, critical thinking skills, and updated teaching methodologies to combat fake news. Challenges such as the rapid spread of misinformation on social media platforms and the outdated nature of current educational systems were highlighted.

Summary of the main needs and challenges that emerged

Main Needs and Challenges Enhancing Media Literacy across various reports, there is a consensus on the need to systematically incorporate media literacy into school curriculums. Efforts to teach young people to verify the credibility of sources and discern accurate information from falsehoods are deemed crucial. Current initiatives are often sporadic and limited to internet safety rather than comprehensive media literacy. A. significant challenge is the lack of resources and support necessary to capacitate teachers to implement media literacy education effectively. Teachers often lack sufficient training and modern technological tools, which hampers the delivery of effective media literacy education. There is a recognized need for structured interdisciplinary programs and ongoing teacher training. Partnerships between schools, government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector can enhance media literacy initiatives. Clear policies and guidelines at the national level are necessary to ensure consistent and effective implementation across schools.

Resources and promising practices

Some of the most important educational resources that were pointed:

#FakeHunter-Edu Project: An educational project aimed at secondary school students to raise awareness about the dangers of disinformation. It provides video training, activity kits, and lesson plans to help students and teachers identify and combat fake news.

Digital Poland Foundation's 'Digital Youth' Program: A program that offers resources for teaching digital literacy and media education. It includes lesson plans, workshops, and activities designed to enhance critical thinking and media evaluation skills among young people.

Szkoła z Klasą Foundation - Fake kNOw More: A training program designed for children and young people aged 10-15. It includes educational games, lesson plans, and materials focused on building resilience against disinformation through self-awareness and understanding psychological mechanisms.

NASK - (Dez)informacja, czyli w co wierzyć w internecie: A comprehensive training program for educators and students that covers the identification of misinformation, development of critical thinking skills, and understanding the impact of fake news. It includes interactive elements and practical resources for educators.

Initiatives such as the "Keyboard Warriors" workshops are aimed at educating students on the threats of disinformation and equipping them with practical skills to navigate media responsibly. These workshops foster critical thinking and awareness, helping students discern reliable information and combat misinformation, thus preparing them to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

Stakeholders highlighted the creation of public websites that allow users to verify the authenticity of videos and articles. These websites serve as accessible tools for students and the general public to check the credibility of information. Workshops focused on teaching young people about cybersecurity and the detection of fake news. These practical sessions aim to equip students with the skills to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. Adapted in Polish schools, this program helps both students and teachers develop critical media skills. It emphasises practical, hands-on learning and the application of critical thinking to everyday media consumption. Offering continuous professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their media literacy expertise and stay updated with the latest tools and methodologies. This is crucial for effectively teaching media literacy in line with evolving media landscapes.

Stakeholders have highlighted a variety of resources and programs aimed at enhancing media literacy and combating disinformation. These include educational projects, training programs, public verification tools, and continuous professional development for educators. By leveraging these resources, educational institutions can better equip students with the skills necessary to critically evaluate media and resist misinformation.

Open space for ideas, quotes, remarks, etc.

Stakeholders emphasise the urgent need to integrate robust media literacy education into school curricula to foster critical thinking skills. This involves teaching students to question sources, evaluate evidence, and discern credible information from misleading or false claims. Moreover, incorporating practical and interactive methods such as gamification, storytelling, and hands-on projects is recommended to engage students effectively and demonstrate the real-world implications of misinformation. A significant challenge identified is the lag in the

school's response to rapidly evolving digital phenomena. Current programs often focus on reactive measures rather than proactive education. There is also a notable inconsistency in the integration of media literacy across different schools and regions. Additionally, educators face constraints such as lack of familiarity with newer technologies, fear, lack of time, and motivation, which hinder the effective teaching of media literacy. Collaboration between various stakeholders, including schools, NGOs, technology companies, and government bodies, is essential for leveraging diverse expertise and resources. Coordinated efforts are necessary to develop an effective media literacy framework that involves teachers, parents, and community organisations in promoting media literacy and combating misinformation.

Effective practices highlighted include integrating journalists into educational settings to provide firsthand insights into news-making and verification processes. Projects that combine scientific and humanistic elements and involve professionals from various fields for practical workshops are also recommended. The creation of public websites for verifying videos and articles and conducting cybersecurity workshops for youth are among the resources suggested to combat fake news. Parents play a critical role in media literacy education. They should actively teach their children how to deal with fake news and misinformation, complementing the efforts of schools. Engaging parents in understanding the importance of media literacy and their role in reinforcing these skills at home enhances the overall effectiveness of educational efforts. There is a need for careful legal frameworks that limit misinformation without infringing on freedom of speech. Stakeholders emphasise the importance of balancing regulatory measures with self-regulation by media platforms to effectively address the issue of fake news.

Training teachers and bringing in experts to raise awareness about the consequences of fake news are crucial steps. Continuous education and training for educators are essential to keep up with technological advancements and effectively teach media literacy. The findings underscore the importance of integrating media literacy into education systems, addressing educators' constraints, and leveraging collaborative efforts among stakeholders. Developing structured curricula, providing high-quality resources, and fostering partnerships are crucial steps toward enhancing media literacy and combating disinformation. These insights point towards a comprehensive approach involving practical, interactive, and collaborative methods to equip students with essential critical thinking and media evaluation skills.

Findings about the target groups involved and their area of competencies

Polish students possess strong academic backgrounds in language and literature, which potentially equips them with essential critical thinking and analytical skills for assessing media and information. Their insights are valuable as they represent the views of young adults who are both consumers and critics of media content.

Greek stakeholders emphasised the importance of verifying news sources, the supportive role

of technology, and the need for self-reflection on the tools used for information dissemination, target group consists of researchers and policymakers engaged in education, media literacy, and youth engagement.

In Austria, stakeholders emphasized the importance of educating the public on identifying credible sources and the need for robust communication strategies to counter misinformation. Efforts to integrate practical media literacy training into curricula and foster collaboration between educational institutions and media outlets are crucial. Integrate Media Literacy into Curricula, incorporating media literacy into existing subjects like civics or creating dedicated modules within the curriculum can be beneficial. Reducing hours from traditional subjects to make room for media literacy could also be an effective approach. Providing continuous training programs for educators to keep pace with technological advancements and evolving media landscapes is essential. This includes modernizing teaching methodologies and using gamification techniques to engage students. Schools need updated resources and technological tools to implement comprehensive media literacy and critical thinking initiatives effectively. Investments in these areas will empower both educators and students. Promoting unified efforts and cohesive policies through collaboration among educators, policymakers, media professionals, and civil society is vital for the success of media literacy programs. Sharing promising practices and resources can significantly enhance the impact of these initiatives.

These insights highlight the critical role of education, policy, and collaborative efforts in fostering media literacy and combating misinformation. The collective competencies and dedication of the stakeholders involved are instrumental in driving these initiatives forward

4.2 Policy makers

General information

The documents provide detailed insights into the general information and findings about the target groups involved in media literacy and their areas of competencies, particularly focusing on policymakers. The main stakeholders include organisations like the Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (RRDA) and the Voivodeship Labour Office in Rzeszów (VLO). These institutions play a pivotal role in regional development and employment support, intersecting with issues related to media literacy, fake news, and disinformation due to their impact on regional stability and workforce readiness.

Summary of the main needs and challenges emerged

The documents provide a comprehensive overview of the needs and challenges related to media literacy and disinformation as identified by policymakers across various regions. One of the primary challenges highlighted is the integration of comprehensive media literacy and critical thinking education into the formal school curriculum. Educators emphasise the need for structured programs that teach students how to critically analyse media content, discern credible sources, and navigate digital information responsibly. However, there is a notable

lack of standardised curriculum guidelines and resources tailored to these needs.

Teachers express significant gaps in their training and readiness to effectively teach media literacy and critical thinking skills. Many educators lack specific knowledge and pedagogical strategies, highlighting a critical need for continuous professional development programs that address evolving media landscapes and technological advancements. Schools face resource constraints, including limited access to updated educational materials, digital tools, and funding for specialised training programs. This limits the scope and effectiveness of media literacy initiatives that could otherwise empower students with essential skills for the digital age.

There is a recognized need for greater parental and community involvement in promoting media literacy outside of school. Parents often feel ill-equipped to guide their children in navigating digital information and discerning credible sources, underscoring the necessity for targeted outreach and educational initiatives.

The absence of comprehensive education policies and coordinated efforts across governmental, educational, and media sectors presents a significant challenge. Stakeholders emphasise the need for cohesive policies that support media literacy initiatives, foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and allocate resources effectively to sustain long-term impact.

While students are proficient in using digital platforms, they often lack the critical thinking skills needed to evaluate the reliability and credibility of online information. There is a pressing need to balance technological proficiency with robust critical thinking competencies to empower students as informed and responsible digital citizens.

There is a call for systematic evaluation and measurement of the impact of media literacy programs. Educators and policymakers seek data-driven insights to assess program effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and justify continued investment in media literacy education. Cyprus' unique cultural and linguistic context poses additional challenges in addressing misinformation and promoting media literacy effectively. Strategies must be tailored to local nuances and languages to engage diverse communities and ensure inclusivity in media literacy efforts.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach that prioritises education reform, professional development, policy advocacy, and community engagement. By fostering a culture of critical inquiry and media literacy, the aim is to equip citizens with the skills needed to navigate the digital landscape with discernment and resilience.

Resources and promising practices

Policymakers emphasise the importance of integrating media literacy into the school curriculum. They recognize the need for continuous professional development for educators to keep up with rapid changes in media and technology. This includes utilising online platforms and tools for interactive digital literacy education, collaborative projects between schools and community organisations, and updated training materials that reflect current media trends and challenges.

One notable resource is the IREX's Learn to Discern Program, which has been adapted in Polish schools to help both students and teachers develop critical media skills. Another important resource is the NASK, a National Research Institute in Poland, which has developed solutions to counteract disinformation. This includes the Department for Counteracting Disinformation, the first unit of its kind in Poland.

Promising practices highlighted by policymakers include engaging students in hands-on media projects that require critical thinking and creativity, partnering with local media outlets to provide real-world media experience, and incorporating practical media production assignments into teacher training programs. Conducting workshops and seminars on contemporary media issues is also recommended. Additionally, initiatives like the Digital Poland Foundation's 'Digital Youth' Program and the website https://fakenews.pl/ are recognized as valuable tools for debunking manipulative information in Polish media. These resources provide a structured approach to teaching media literacy and help in building resilience against disinformation.

The policy makers also pointed out resources like the InVID – WeVerify Verification Plugin, a browser plugin that supports debunking fake news and verifying videos and images. Gamification methods, such as using the "fake news game" to make learning about media literacy engaging, are also noted as effective. In Cyprus, educators emphasise the need for collaborative approaches, sharing insights and strategies among peers to enhance their effectiveness in teaching media literacy. The Media Literacy Experiential Project led by the Cyprus Radio Television Authority is an example of a promising practices that aims at continuous education, ensuring teachers remain adept at navigating evolving media landscapes. Moreover, the Mediawijs Knowledge Center in Belgium and VRT Public Broadcaster with Eduboxen are noted for providing educational tools and resources specifically designed to enhance media literacy among students. These initiatives offer structured proposals and strategies for implementation, making media literacy education more accessible and effective.

By utilising these resources and adopting promising practices, policymakers aim to create a robust framework for media literacy education that empowers students and teachers to critically engage with media, thereby fostering a more informed and democratic society.

Open space for ideas, quotes, remarks, etc

Policymakers underscore the essential need to integrate robust media literacy education into school curricula. They emphasise the importance of developing critical thinking skills in students, enabling them to question sources, evaluate evidence, and discern credible information from misleading or false claims. This educational process must be supported by parents, who play a critical role in teaching their children how to handle fake news and misinformation at home, thus complementing school efforts.

Concerns are raised about legal frameworks, with stakeholders cautioning that efforts to limit misinformation must not infringe on freedom of speech. They highlight the delicate balance required in policymaking to protect freedom of expression while combating disinformation. Furthermore, there is a significant challenge related to the resources available to voluntary organisations, such as the Journalist Ethics Committee, which often lack funding and resources to expand their efforts and achieve long-term impact.

Teachers' training emerges as a critical need, with consensus among stakeholders that educators require better training to effectively support the development of MIL skills media literacy and critical thinking skills to students. This is compounded by varying levels of digital competence among educators, a lack of confidence in teaching media literacy, and the overwhelming number of available resources, which can be confusing and difficult to navigate.

Effective practices and resources identified include hands-on media projects for students, partnerships with local media outlets to provide real-world media experience, and the use of news articles and interactive teaching methods in education. Projects like IREX's Learn to Discern Program and the Digital Poland Foundation's 'Digital Youth' Program are highlighted as valuable tools in enhancing media literacy among students and teachers.

Policy makers also stress the importance of continuous professional development for teachers to keep up with media and technological advancements. They recommend practical tools like Eduthek, workshops by Saferinternet.at, and the media decree for schools, which offer structured support for integrating media literacy into curricula. Collaboration with organisations such as "Lie Detectors" for workshops on critical thinking and identifying fake news is also highlighted.

In summary, policymakers point out the necessity of a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to enhance media literacy education. This involves continuous teacher training, developing comprehensive curricula, leveraging practical resources, and ensuring legal frameworks protect both freedom of speech and efforts to combat misinformation. These initiatives are aimed at creating a well-informed and critically thinking society capable of navigating the complexities of the modern media landscape.

Findings about the target involved and their area of competencies

Policy makers have identified a significant gap in media literacy education within the regional and national curricula. There is a clear need for extensive training programs aimed at educators to equip them with the necessary skills to teach media literacy effectively. Schools often lack the technological tools and support required to implement media literacy education efficiently, which hampers the overall effectiveness of such programs.

Furthermore, there is a low level of public and student awareness regarding fake news and disinformation. This indicates the necessity for broader educational campaigns to raise awareness and improve media literacy among the population. Effective media literacy education is not only about integrating it into the curriculum but also about ensuring that educators are well-prepared and that the public is informed.

Policymakers also recognize the value of partnerships with technology companies to provide the necessary tools and expertise to enhance media literacy programs. Continuous assessment mechanisms are crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of media literacy initiatives, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful in the face of evolving digital challenges.

In summary, policymakers are focusing on addressing the gaps in media literacy education, enhancing the technological support in schools, raising public awareness, and fostering collaborations with various stakeholders to improve the overall media literacy framework. These efforts are crucial for building a well-informed and resilient society capable of navigating the complexities of the modern media landscape

4.3 Actors working in the school environment

General information

Educators working in schools face the challenge of integrating media literacy into their teaching practices due to a lack of structured guidelines and basic resources. There is an evident need for comprehensive training in digital and media literacy for both educators and students. Current educational efforts often focus on internet safety rather than a broad, interdisciplinary approach to media literacy. This gap highlights the necessity for systematic and ongoing teacher training, ensuring educators are equipped to teach media literacy skills effectively. Additionally, educators point out the importance of addressing misinformation and fake news, which requires them to balance factual teaching with respecting students' emotions and cultural backgrounds.

Summary of the main needs and challenges emerged

The documents provide an in-depth analysis of the main challenges identified by actors working in schools regarding the integration of media literacy and the fight against disinformation.

One of the primary challenges highlighted is the inconsistent integration of media literacy across various subjects in the curriculum. This inconsistency creates significant gaps in students' knowledge, as educators often lack sufficient training and resources to effectively teach media literacy and combat disinformation. Additionally, the rapid advancement of technology makes it difficult for curricula to stay up to date, resulting in outdated teaching methods that fail to address current digital phenomena.

Another significant challenge is the lack of proper training and professional development for teachers. Many educators' express concerns about their readiness to effectively gather media literacy skills, citing a need for continuous and comprehensive training programs that keep pace with the evolving media landscape. Teachers also report feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of digital tools and resources available, which can be confusing and difficult to navigate without proper guidance and support.

Resource constraints are also a major issue, with schools often facing limited access to modern technology and insufficient funding for media literacy initiatives. This limits the scope and effectiveness of media literacy programs, as educators struggle to engage students using outdated or inadequate tools.

Engaging students in critical thinking about online information presents another challenge. Many students are disengaged and heavily reliant on the internet for information, often accepting online content at face value without critical analysis. Teachers find it challenging to foster a culture of scepticism and critical inquiry among students, who are accustomed to the convenience and immediate availability of online sources.

Furthermore, the collaboration between teachers and external experts is often hindered by traditional teaching practices and time constraints. Educators report resistance to integrating new methodologies and external expertise into their teaching practices, which can limit the effectiveness of media literacy education.

Finally, the documents highlight the broader systemic issues within the educational framework, such as heavy academic workloads and the reactive nature of current school programs. These programs often focus on addressing immediate issues like cyberbullying rather than proactively equipping students with critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the digital world. The need for a more structured and unified approach to media literacy education is evident, requiring coordinated efforts and support from all stakeholders involved

.

In summary, the main challenges identified by actors working in schools include inconsistent integration of media literacy, lack of proper training and resources for educators, limited access to modern technology, difficulties in engaging students in critical thinking, resistance to new teaching methodologies, and broader systemic issues within the educational framework. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to develop effective media literacy programs that equip students with the necessary skills to critically evaluate digital information.

Resources and promising practices

Educators face personal limitations such as lack of familiarity with newer technologies, fear, lack of time, and motivation. Technological support is highlighted as crucial, but its value depends on how it is used. There is a need for a structured approach to integrating media literacy into the curriculum, which is often inconsistent across educational institutions.

Effective practices include collaborative projects that combine scientific and humanistic elements and practical workshops with professionals from various fields. Interactive and hands-on learning, using digital tools, data analysis, and discussions, are recommended to teach critical thinking and media evaluation skills.

The development and dissemination of high-quality resources for teaching media literacy are essential. This includes digital platforms, collaborative projects, and professional development opportunities for educators. Creating public websites for verifying videos and articles and conducting workshops covering cybersecurity and fake news detection are also important. Stakeholder collaboration is crucial for leveraging diverse expertise and resources. Partnerships between schools, NGOs, and technology companies are vital. Coordination between policymakers, educators, and the broader community is necessary to develop an effective media literacy framework.

Promising practices emphasise practical, hands-on learning experiences using real-life scenarios. Gamification and interactive games are effective tools for engaging students and teaching media literacy. Involving students in media production projects enhances their understanding and critical evaluation skills. The stakeholders across different reports consistently highlight the need for integrating media literacy into education systems, addressing educators' constraints, and leveraging technology and collaborative efforts. Developing structured curricula, providing high-quality resources, and fostering partnerships are crucial steps toward enhancing media literacy and combating disinformation. These insights point towards a comprehensive approach involving practical, interactive, and collaborative methods to equip students with essential critical thinking and media evaluation skills.

Open space for ideas, quotes, remarks, etc.

Teachers and educators emphasise the critical need for continuous and comprehensive training to effectively teach media literacy skills. Many educators feel unprepared and lack the specific knowledge and pedagogical strategies required to address the rapidly changing digital landscape. One teacher mentioned, "We need more than just digital literacy; our students must decipher truth from falsehood and learn to question". This sentiment is echoed across various educational institutions, highlighting a shared concern about the adequacy of current training programs.

Educators face significant difficulties in integrating media literacy into existing curricula due to limited access to modern technology and resources. They often struggle with engaging students in critical thinking about online information. As one educator stated, "Students often take internet information at face value without critical analysis, influenced by the convenience and immediate availability of online sources". This issue is compounded by the rapid advancement of technology, which makes it challenging for educational programs to remain current and effective.

There is also a noted inconsistency in the integration of media literacy across different schools and subjects, leading to gaps in student knowledge. Teachers point out the necessity for a more structured and unified approach to media literacy education, rather than relying on the commitment of individual teachers. One remarked, "Media literacy is not yet a formal part of the curriculum; efforts depend largely on individual teachers' commitment".

Engaging parents and the broader community in media literacy efforts is highlighted as a critical factor. Educators stress the importance of involving parents in teaching media literacy at home to complement school efforts. This dual approach ensures that students receive consistent messaging about the importance of critical thinking and responsible media consumption both at school and at home.

Furthermore, educators face the challenge of addressing misinformation and fake news within the classroom while maintaining a positive learning environment. Discussions on emotionally charged topics can be particularly difficult, requiring a careful balance between factual teaching and sensitivity to students' emotions and cultural backgrounds. One teacher noted, "Because fake news usually works with strong emotions, it becomes more challenging to question and discuss them".

Findings about the target involved and their area of competencies

In practical terms, educators often struggle with engaging students in critical thinking about online information, navigating emotionally charged topics, and maintaining a positive learning environment. Many teachers lack familiarity with newer technologies and face personal

limitations such as fear and lack of motivation, which further complicates their ability to teach media literacy. Schools also face broader systemic issues such as limited access to modern technology and an overloaded curriculum that leaves little room for practical life skills education.

Despite these challenges, educators emphasise the importance of hands-on media projects, partnerships with local media outlets, and incorporating media production assignments into their teaching practices. They utilise various methods to address misinformation, such as classroom discussions, interactive tools, and encouraging students to critically assess the information they encounter online.

The integration of media literacy into the school curriculum remains inconsistent, often relying on the commitment of individual teachers rather than a standardised approach. This highlights the need for comprehensive strategies and structural support to ensure consistent and effective implementation across schools.

Overall, actors working in schools recognize the importance of media literacy but face significant challenges in integrating it effectively into the education system. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort to provide the necessary training, resources, and support for educators to foster a critically engaged and media-literate society.

3.2 Questionnaires

3.2.1 Sampling, questionnaires design and data collection

Regarding the administration of the questionnaires, the project overcame the foreseen number of people to be involved: **instead of 900 respondents, the total number of people involved in the survey was 1159**. The number of adults were 795 and 364 minors answered the survey

The questions asked was organised into the following categories:

1) Sociodemographic profile;
2) Exposure to news sources;
3) Perception and impact of fake news;
4) Information-seeking behaviour;
5) Media literacy and education;
6) Needs, best practices and examples;

The questionnaire was available online, and the partners invited directly the biggest part of respondents. Regarding minors, everyone gave the consent from parents, and the ages were above 12 years.

The questionnaires were sent by email and WhatsApp to partners' contact base, previously selected according to the specificity of the target group. A brief presentation of the project was included. For the minors, when needed in absence of previous agreements,

requests for collaboration were sent by email to schools with students aged between 12 and 18 years old. After acceptance, the informed consents were delivered to be signed by the parents and big part of the questionnaires were administered in a classroom context.

5. Analytic Results of Questionnaires

5.1 Going from National to Transnational Dimension

Despite the fact that MILES intends to achieve a European cross-country dimension, the comparison of the national findings from the MILES project reflects the diversity of approaches and perceptions towards media literacy and critical thinking in addressing fake news across the participating countries, bringing new light to the analysis. This comparative analysis delves into the similarities, differences, trends, and essential insights gathered from the reports of nations such as Greece, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Cyprus, Austria, Poland, Romania, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

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The demographic data from the questionnaires adds an important layer of understanding to the overall analysis, highlighting how the respondents' characteristics influence their attitudes towards the media and fake news. Despite the differences between countries, the data reinforces the need for localised strategies that consider cultural, age and gender variations to promote media literacy more effectively. The responses to the questionnaires in the MILES project provide rich insights into the media literacy landscape, highlighting varied levels of understanding, exposure to news sources, and strategies for combating fake news. This section delves into the nuances of the responses, offering a comparative and detailed analysis of key themes such as demographics, news consumption patterns, perceptions of fake news, and the educational needs across the participating countries.

The demographic analysis reinforces several trends already observed in the national reports. Firstly, there is a correlation between the educational level of participants and awareness of the importance of media literacy. In countries with a higher proportion of participants with higher education, such as Portugal, Germany and Austria, there was a greater emphasis on the need for critical skills to evaluate news sources and combat fake news. The age variation between countries also provides relevant insights. In countries such as Greece, where participants are predominantly older, there is a greater reliance on traditional news sources such as television and radio. In contrast, in countries like Germany and Denmark, where respondents are younger, the use of social networks as the main source of information is much more prevalent. Gender differences are also notable. The female predominance

in most countries may indicate a greater willingness on the part of women to participate in educational and social initiatives related to media literacy. This factor should be taken into account when developing targeted programmes, ensuring that the needs of both genders are addressed.

The demographic composition of respondents varied significantly between countries, which in turn influenced their perceptions and practices. In **Greece**, the majority of participants were aged 46-55, with a high percentage of women (over 71%) and many professionals in the education sector. This demographic profile aligns with the observed interest in formalized media literacy training and scepticism towards digital news sources. The age group suggests an audience already experienced in media engagement but seeking tools to navigate the complexities of digital misinformation.

In **Italy**, responses were more evenly distributed across age groups, with notable participation from younger adults (25-35 years). This younger demographic demonstrated a reliance on digital media and social platforms for news consumption, mirroring broader global trends. Italian respondents showed a high level of concern about the impact of fake news, particularly on social issues and public health, reflecting their active engagement with contemporary challenges in the digital ecosystem.

Portugal presented a contrasting profile, with participants spanning a broader age range but showing a concentration among middle-aged adults (36-45 years). The high trust in traditional media noted in the Portuguese responses is indicative of a media environment that emphasizes accountability and quality, though digital literacy programs were highlighted as an area for improvement to address younger audiences' reliance on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

Germany showed a balanced demographic mix, with respondents aged 25-55 years equally represented. The data indicated a sophisticated understanding of media sources, with a significant portion of participants regularly cross-verifying information. German respondents were unique in their preference for radio and podcasts alongside digital platforms, showcasing a diverse media diet and a strong tradition of trust in public broadcasters.

In **Cyprus**, the majority of respondents were educators and researchers, aged predominantly 36-45 years. Despite this professional background, participants expressed significant concern about their ability to discern misinformation, underlining the need for comprehensive and structured media literacy programs tailored to professional settings.

Austria revealed a participant base heavily composed of educators, with 58% identifying as teachers or trainers. The age group of 36-55 years dominated, and respondents emphasized the integration of critical thinking within existing educational curricula. Austrian respondents exhibited strong confidence in identifying and addressing misinformation, likely influenced by well-established educational initiatives in the country.

Poland report provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities in media literacy and combating misinformation. Demographically, the largest group of respondents fell into the 36-45 age range, followed by the 25-35 group. Female participants slightly outnumbered male participants. In terms of educational background, the majority held undergraduate or graduate degrees, with a strong representation from educators, researchers, and psychologists. Social media

platforms and online news websites were identified as the dominant sources of news, with TikTok and Facebook being perceived as the most susceptible to spreading fake news.

Romania and **Belgium** presented younger cohorts in their responses, with a notable presence of students and early-career professionals. While Romanian participants highlighted challenges in accessing credible sources, Belgian respondents indicated a higher level of engagement with institutional resources for media literacy, reflecting the robust educational infrastructure of the GO! network.

The Netherlands, with its tech-savvy population, showcased a unique trend of leveraging digital tools for media verification. Respondents here were predominantly aged 25-45 years, with strong English proficiency enabling access to global resources on media literacy.

5.2 Comparison

In **Greece**, the surveys highlighted a predominantly older demographic among the respondents, with a significant proportion being educators and academics. The participants showcased an acute awareness of the risks posed by fake news, coupled with a robust interest in formal educational programs to counter misinformation. The Greek respondents predominantly consumed news through online platforms but expressed concern over the reliability of these sources. This mirrors findings in other countries, though the emphasis on formal training for combating misinformation appears particularly pronounced in Greece.

Italy's findings revealed a diverse age demographic, although skewed slightly younger than Greece, with significant representation from the education sector. Italian respondents also showed a heavy reliance on digital platforms for news consumption. The focus on practical tools to identify and counter fake news was notable, with many participants advocating for the development of user-friendly applications and platforms to facilitate fact-checking. This technical approach distinguishes Italy's response from other nations that prioritize institutional or curricular interventions.

Portugal stands out with one of the highest levels of trust in news among the participating countries. This is attributed to institutional efforts in promoting media literacy through educational reforms and public awareness campaigns. However, the persistent spread of disinformation, particularly during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the need for sustained educational initiatives. Portuguese respondents emphasized the integration of critical thinking and fact-checking practices into the school curriculum, aligning closely with broader European trends.

In **Germany**, the analysis revealed a balance between traditional and digital media consumption. Respondents exhibited high levels of critical awareness and a proactive approach to verifying information, leveraging both institutional resources and independent tools. The German education system's integration of media literacy into its curriculum is a likely contributor to this proactive attitude. However, there remains a need to address gaps in older demographics, who tend to rely more on traditional media without as much engagement in verification practices.

Cyprus presented an interesting case where respondents expressed significant concern over their ability to discern fake news. This is partially attributed to a lower prevalence of structured media literacy initiatives compared to other nations. The findings emphasized the importance of introducing comprehensive educational frameworks targeting both adults and youth, highlighting the role of educators in fostering critical thinking.

In **Austria**, a high level of media literacy was evident, especially among younger demographics and professionals in the education sector. Respondents demonstrated an ability to critically evaluate information sources, reflecting the success of targeted educational programs and awareness campaigns. The Austrian approach emphasizes interactive workshops and digital tools, focusing on empowering individuals to identify and counter misinformation independently.

Romania faced notable challenges, with participants reporting higher exposure to fake news and limited access to resources for verification. This underscores a significant gap in media literacy infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Romanian respondents expressed strong interest in targeted educational programs and institutional support, signaling a pressing need for intervention at both policy and community levels.

Belgium, represented by the GO! network, showed a comprehensive engagement with media literacy among educators and students. The integration of critical thinking into educational curricula appears to be a well-established practice, yet respondents identified the need for more advanced tools and resources to keep pace with the evolving landscape of misinformation.

In **the Netherlands**, a focus on leveraging technology to combat fake news was prominent. Dutch respondents highlighted the use of digital platforms and apps to verify information, alongside traditional educational methods. The high level of English proficiency among the population has facilitated access to international resources, enriching the national discourse on media literacy.

Across all countries, common trends emerged, including the growing reliance on digital platforms for news, the pervasive impact of misinformation, and the universal recognition of the need for enhanced media literacy. However, the strategies and priorities varied significantly. Southern European countries like Greece and Italy tended to emphasize institutional reforms and educational outreach, while Northern European nations like Germany and the Netherlands leaned towards integrating advanced technologies and independent tools.

These findings underscore the importance of tailoring media literacy initiatives to the specific cultural, demographic, and technological contexts of each country. The MILES project provides a robust framework for fostering cross-national collaboration, ensuring that best practices are shared and adapted to enhance resilience against misinformation across Europe.

This report sets the stage for deeper exploration into the methodologies and outcomes of the MILES project, advocating for continued investment in media literacy as a cornerstone of democratic resilience in the digital age. If needed, further elaboration can be added to specific sections or additional points of comparison can be addressed.

5.3 News Consumption Patterns

Across countries, digital platforms emerged as the predominant source of news. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were frequently cited in **Greece**, **Italy**, **Portugal**, and **Romania**, whereas professional platforms such as LinkedIn and news aggregator sites were more common in **Germany** and **Austria**.

The reliance on television as a news source varied, with **Portugal** and **Greece** showing higher engagement compared to **the Netherlands**, where traditional television played a less significant role. Podcasts and radio were notably popular in **Germany** and **Austria**, reflecting cultural preferences for auditory media formats.

Respondents in **Cyprus** and **Romania** identified gaps in their ability to discern the reliability of online sources, correlating with higher levels of self-reported exposure to fake news. This contrasts with **Belgium** and **the Netherlands**, where respondents exhibited greater confidence in their ability to identify credible sources, thanks to targeted media literacy initiatives.

5.4 Perceptions of Fake News

The perception of fake news as a societal threat was unanimous across countries, though the extent of concern varied. In **Greece** and **Italy**, respondents identified social media platforms as primary vectors for disinformation, with significant emphasis on the role of influencers and unverified user-generated content. Similarly, **Romanian** participants noted the prevalence of sensationalism and emotionally charged content as significant contributors to misinformation.

Portugal and **Austria** demonstrated relatively high levels of trust in institutional news sources, mitigating the perceived threat of fake news. However, participants in these countries acknowledged the challenge of combating misinformation during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional trust dynamics. In **Poland**, the report highlights that while a majority of respondents encounter fake news and perceive it as a significant threat to democracy and politics, there is a notable gap in formal media literacy education. Most participants indicated a lack of training in critical thinking or media literacy skills, underscoring the necessity for targeted interventions. Despite this, many respondents actively engage in verifying news by cross-referencing with multiple sources and utilizing trusted fact-checking platforms.

In **Cyprus**, respondents expressed heightened vulnerability to fake news due to limited access to robust verification tools. In contrast, **the Netherlands** highlighted the proactive use of technological solutions and fact-checking platforms, reinforcing a culture of accountability in news consumption.

5.5 Educational Needs and Best Practices

The need for enhanced media literacy emerged as a consistent theme across all countries. **Greece** and **Cyprus** emphasized the development of foundational training programs targeting educators and students, reflecting a gap in formalized curricula. **Italy** and **Romania** advocated for the integration of

critical thinking and digital literacy within national educational policies, with a focus on addressing disinformation related to social and political issues.

Germany and **Austria** showcased mature media literacy frameworks, with respondents calling for more interactive workshops and real-time simulations to address emerging challenges. **Belgium** highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration between schools, NGOs, and government agencies to sustain a comprehensive media literacy agenda.

Portugal and **the Netherlands** underscored the significance of leveraging technology to combat fake news. Portuguese respondents supported the development of mobile applications for fact-checking, while Dutch participants advocated for AI-powered tools to detect misinformation in real-time.

5.6 Key Insights

The comparative analysis reveals that while countries face shared challenges in combating fake news, their strategies reflect unique socio-cultural and institutional contexts. Nations with robust educational systems, such as **Germany**, **Austria**, and **Belgium**, exhibit higher confidence in media literacy, while countries like **Romania** and **Cyprus** highlight gaps in resources and training.

The proactive use of technology, as seen in **the Netherlands**, offers a blueprint for integrating innovation into media literacy initiatives. Simultaneously, the emphasis on trust-building and community engagement in **Portugal** and **Greece** illustrates the importance of cultural adaptation in addressing misinformation.

This detailed examination provides a foundation for tailored interventions under the MILES project, ensuring that strategies align with the specific needs and capacities of each country. Further research and collaboration will be critical to advancing a cohesive European framework for media literacy and critical thinking in the digital age.

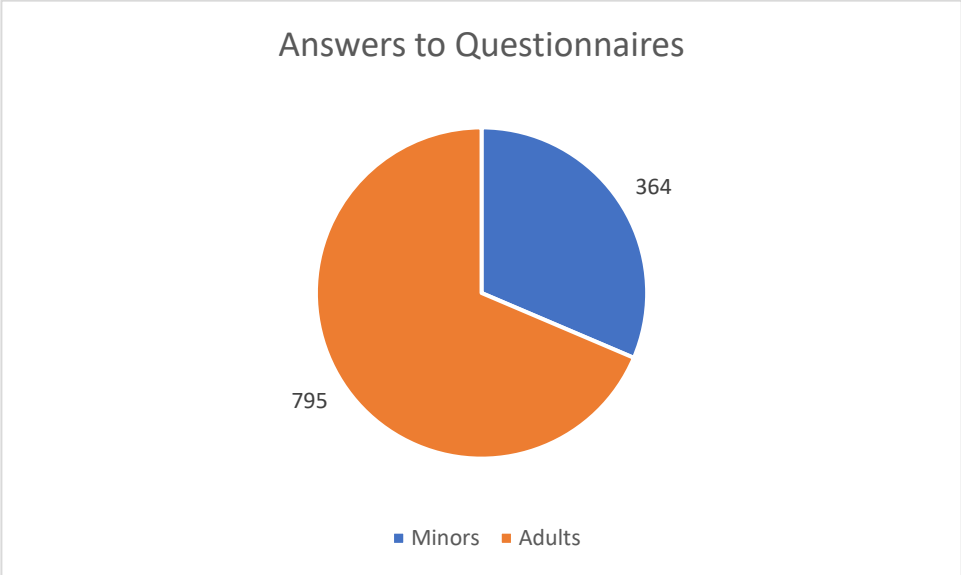
Graphs and numbers

5.7. Socio Demographic profile

Answers to questionnaires

The questionnaires were adopted to have a main survey with adults and another with adjusted questions for minors. The total number of respondents in the survey was 1159. The number of adults were 795 and 364 minors answered the survey. First our report will address only the answers from adults and minor's answers will be described in the last figures.

Graph #1

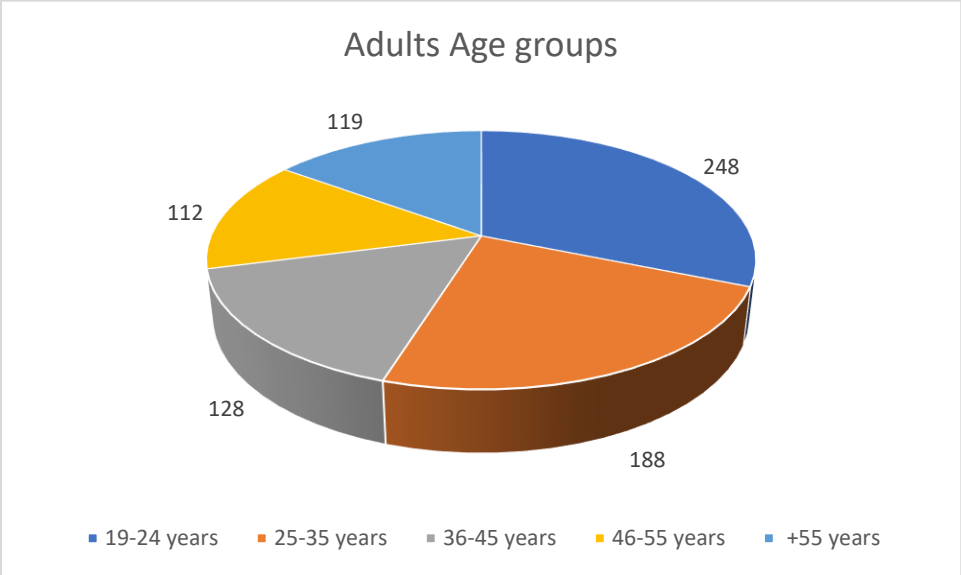


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Age groups

The age groups of adults responding to the survey had a bigger participation in the age groups ranging from 19 to 24 years and from 25 to 35 years old. The distribution of respondents across these age groups provides important context for interpreting the survey results. The dominance of the 25-35 years age group suggests that this demographic may have a significant influence on the overall findings. Meanwhile, the representation of older adults (+55 years) indicates a broad age range of participants, which can provide diverse perspectives on issues such as media literacy, exposure to disinformation, and other topics covered in the survey. Understanding the age distribution is crucial for analysing how different age groups perceive and engage with media and information.

Graph #2



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Gender distribution of adults

Regarding gender distribution of adults, from the group of respondents in the survey, the chart is divided into three segments, each representing a different category of gender identification among the participants.

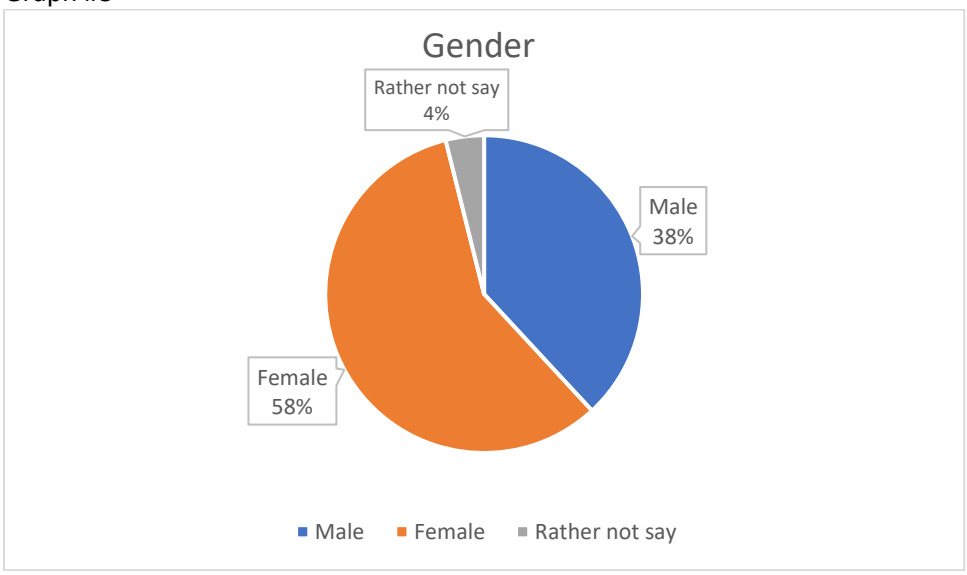
Female (58%): The largest segment of the pie chart is represented by the colour orange, which indicates that 58% of the survey respondents identified as female. This majority presence suggests that the survey had a higher participation rate from women compared to other genders.

Male (38%): The second largest segment, shown in blue, represents 38% of the respondents who identified as male. This proportion indicates that a significant but smaller portion of the survey participants were men.

Rather not say (4%): A small gray segment, making up 4% of the total, indicates respondents who chose not to disclose their gender. This option is important in maintaining inclusivity and respecting the privacy of participants who may not wish to specify their gender for personal reasons.

The gender distribution in this survey shows a higher representation of females compared to males, with a very small percentage of participants opting not to disclose their gender. This demographic breakdown is crucial in understanding the perspectives and experiences represented in the survey, as gender can influence media consumption habits, perceptions of fake news, and engagement with media literacy initiatives. This distribution should be considered when analysing other survey results, as it may affect the generalizability of the findings to the broader population.

Graph #3



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Level of education

The bar chart below illustrating the distribution of adult respondents based on their level of education. Each bar represents a different educational level, ranging from elementary education to advanced degrees, and the height of the bars corresponds to the number of respondents within each category.

At the lowest end of the spectrum, a small number of adult respondents have completed only elementary education. This suggests that the majority of the survey participants have pursued education beyond the elementary level, indicating a generally well-educated sample. Moving up the educational ladder, the number of respondents with high school education is higher than those with only elementary education, though it still represents a relatively small portion of the total group. This could include individuals who may have entered the workforce directly after high school or chosen vocational training instead of higher education.

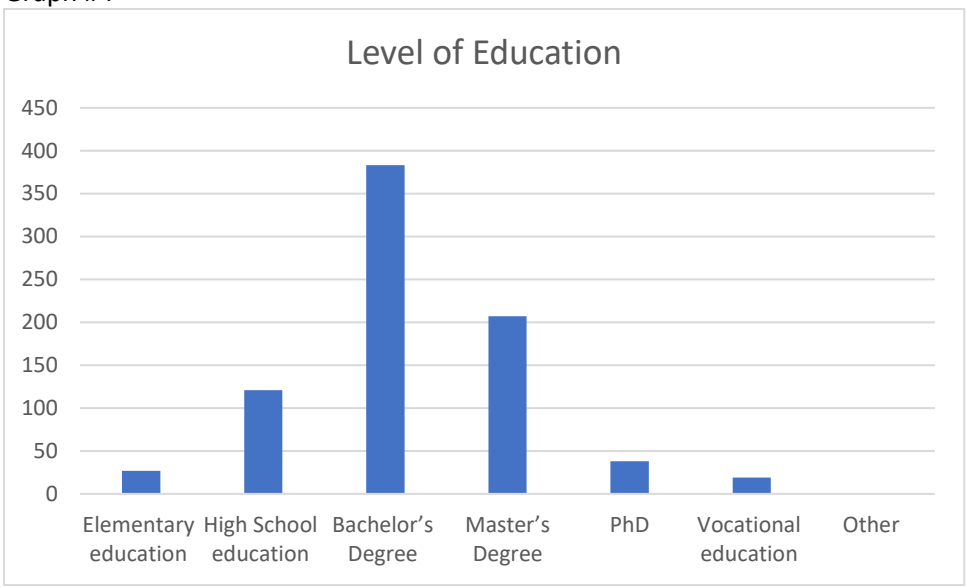
The most common level of education among the respondents is a bachelor's degree, as indicated by the tallest bar on the chart. This suggests that a significant portion of the survey participants have completed undergraduate studies, reflecting a demographic that is well-educated with a solid foundation in higher education. Following closely behind are those with a master's degree, the second-largest group in the survey. The presence of a substantial number of participants with graduate-level education reflects a commitment to advanced learning and further specialisation in their fields of study.

A smaller segment of the respondents holds a PhD, indicating that fewer participants have reached this highest level of academic achievement. This group likely includes individuals who have engaged in extensive research and specialised study, contributing to a high level of academic and professional expertise within the survey population.

The chart also shows a small number of respondents who have completed vocational education. This category likely includes individuals who have pursued specialised training and skills development in specific trades or professions, offering a practical, career-oriented educational path. Finally, the "Other" category, which has the fewest respondents, suggests that very few participants fall outside

the traditional educational pathways listed. This might include non-traditional forms of education, such as alternative learning methods or certifications that do not align with the other categories.

Graph #4



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Profession

The doughnut chart below illustrates the professional or occupational distribution of the survey respondents across various categories. The largest group, labelled as "Other," includes 281 respondents, indicating a wide range of professions not specifically categorised in the chart. This suggests diverse backgrounds among the participants.

The second-largest group consists of "University Students," with 187 respondents, highlighting a significant involvement of individuals engaged in higher education. This demographic is key in discussions about media literacy, given their active engagement with digital media.

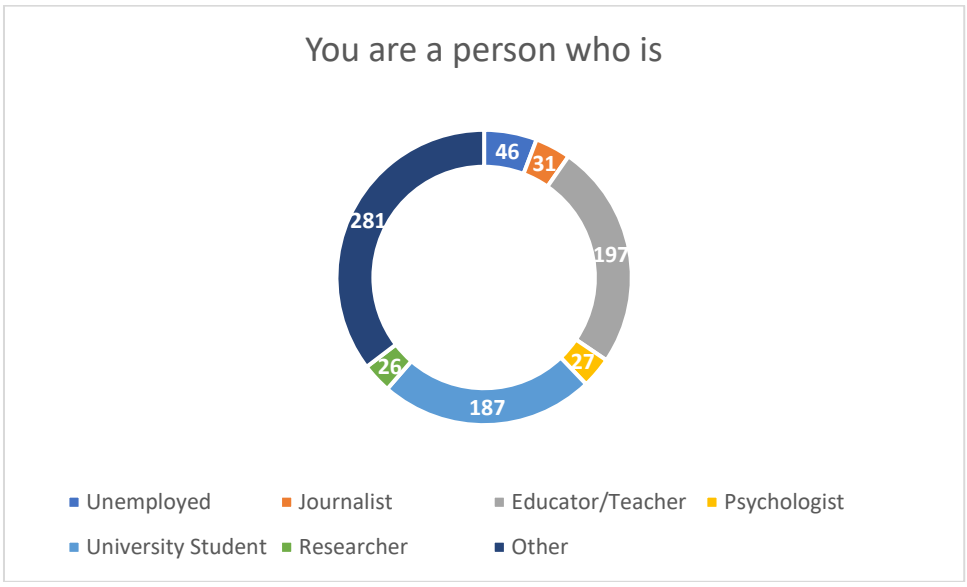
"Educators/Teachers," with 197 respondents, represent a crucial segment, as they are directly involved in teaching media literacy. Their perspectives are vital in understanding the challenges and opportunities in education related to this field.

Smaller segments include "Researchers" (26 respondents), "Journalists" (31 respondents), and "Psychologists" (27 respondents). Researchers provide scholarly insights, journalists contribute perspectives on the impact of disinformation on media, and psychologists offer understanding of the cognitive and emotional effects of disinformation.

Lastly, there are 46 "Unemployed" respondents. While not associated with a specific profession, their inclusion helps capture a broader societal perspective.

Overall, the chart highlights the diverse professional backgrounds of the respondents, each contributing valuable insights into the survey's findings on media literacy and disinformation.

Graph #5



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

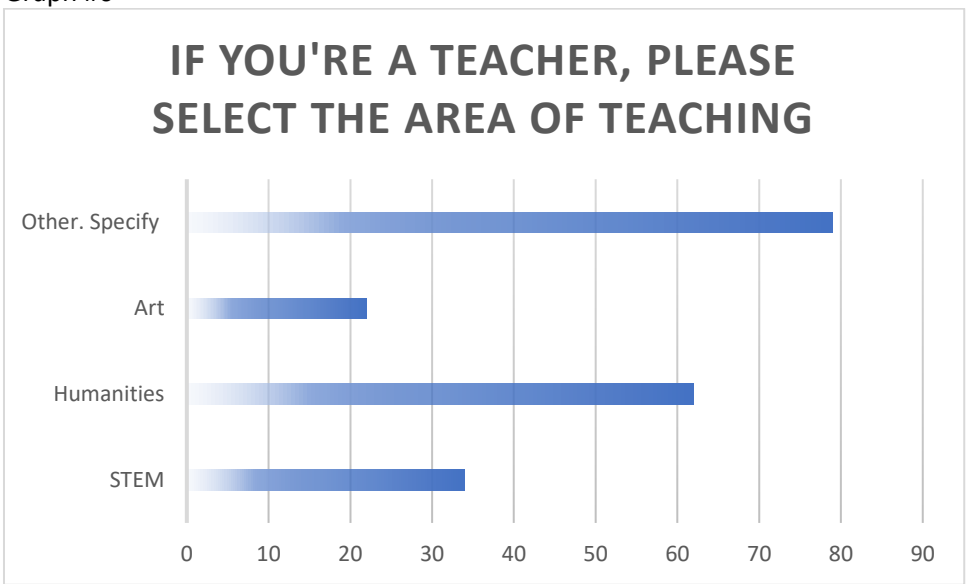
Teaching Expertise

Regarding areas of expertise of teachers, as illustrated in Graph #6, the "Other" category has the highest number of teachers, indicating that many educators specialise in areas not specifically listed in the chart. Following this, "Humanities" also has a significant number of teachers, reflecting a strong representation in subjects like history, languages, and social sciences.

"STEM" (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) has a moderate representation, showing a substantial number of teachers focusing on these technical and scientific disciplines. "Art" has the fewest teachers among the categories, suggesting that it is the least represented area of teaching in the survey.

Overall, the chart shows a diverse distribution of teaching expertise, with a notable emphasis on "Other" and "Humanities," while "Art" and "STEM" have smaller but still important representations.

Graph #6



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

5.8 Exposure to news sources

The pie chart below illustrates the distribution of respondents' primary news sources, allowing for multiple choices. The chart is divided into several segments, each representing a different medium through which respondents primarily consume news.

The largest segment is Social Media, shown in blue, indicating that a significant portion of respondents rely on social media platforms as their primary source of news. This reflects the growing trend of people turning to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for real-time information and updates.

Online Newspapers/Websites, represented in orange, is another major source of news for respondents, highlighting the continued importance of traditional news organisations that have transitioned to digital formats. This suggests that while social media is popular, there remains a strong preference for dedicated news sites for in-depth reporting.

Television is shown in grey and represents a substantial portion of the news consumption habits of respondents. Despite the rise of digital media, television continues to be a crucial source of news, particularly for certain demographics that may prefer visual and live news coverage.

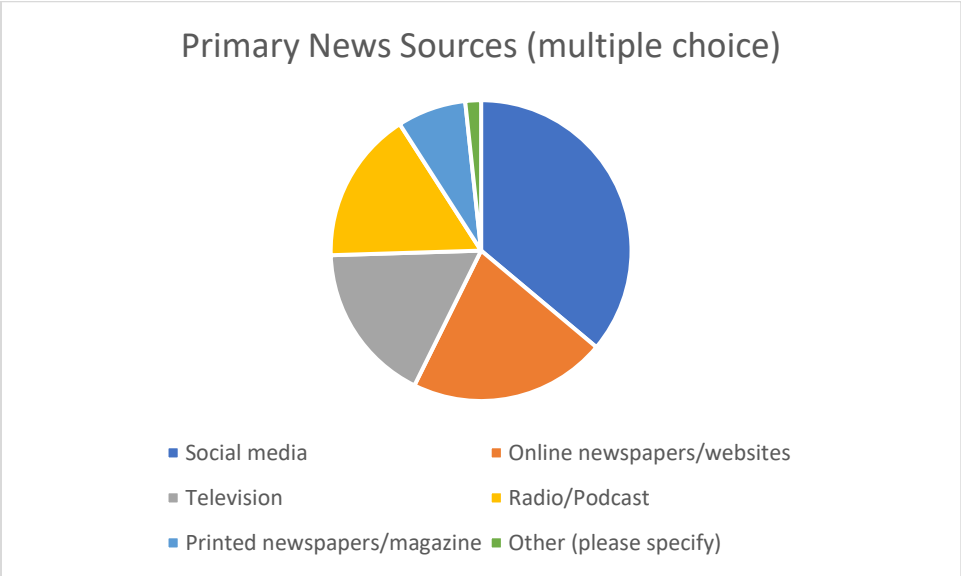
Radio/Podcasts, depicted in yellow, account for a smaller, yet still notable, share of respondents' primary news sources. This indicates that audio media, including both traditional radio broadcasts and modern podcasts, still play a significant role in how people access news.

Printed Newspapers/Magazines are represented in light blue, showing that a smaller group of respondents still prefer traditional print media. This segment, while smaller, underscores the ongoing relevance of physical publications in an increasingly digital world.

Finally, a small green segment labelled Other represents alternative sources of news specified by respondents. This might include niche publications, newsletters, or other forms of media not covered by the main categories.

Overall, the chart reveals a diverse range of news consumption habits among respondents, with a strong emphasis on digital and social media, yet significant portions still relying on traditional platforms like television, radio, and print.

Graph #7



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Frequency of engaging with new contents

The graphic #8 illustrates the frequency with which respondents engage with news content. The chart is divided into four categories: "Daily," "Several times a week," "Weekly," and "Less often," each representing different levels of news consumption.

The largest bar represents the "Daily" category, showing that a significant majority of respondents engage with news content on a daily basis. This indicates a high level of regular interaction with news, suggesting that staying informed is a daily priority for many participants.

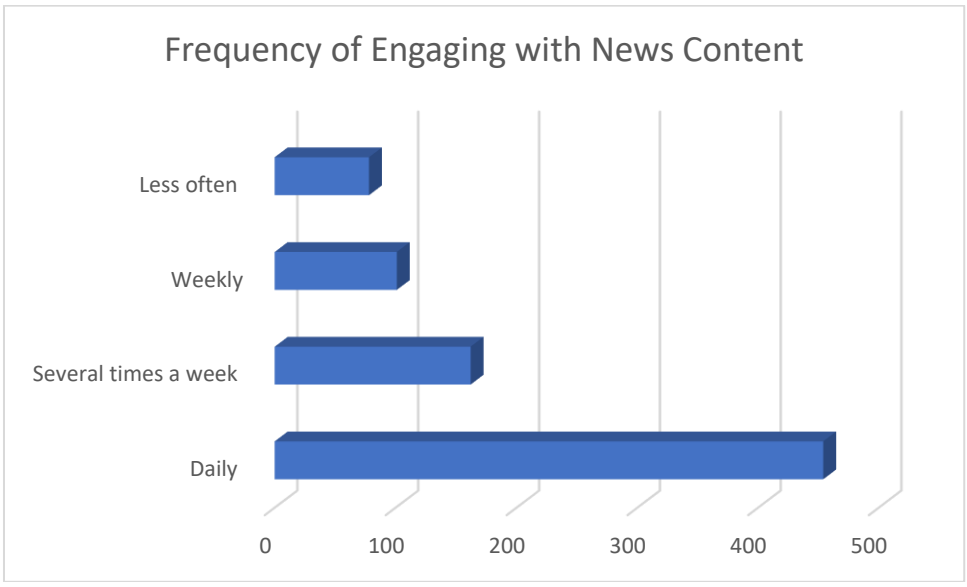
The next largest group is "Several times a week," indicating that a substantial number of respondents access news multiple times throughout the week, but not necessarily every day. This group still maintains a frequent engagement with news content, albeit with slightly less intensity than daily consumers.

"Weekly" engagement is represented by a smaller bar, showing that some respondents prefer to catch up on news once a week. This group may represent individuals who engage with news more selectively or those who prefer to digest news in larger, less frequent sessions.

The smallest bar indicates the "Less often" category, where respondents engage with news content less frequently than once a week. This group likely consists of individuals who either have limited interest in current events or prefer to stay informed through other means or at longer intervals.

Overall, the chart reveals that the majority of respondents are highly engaged with news content on a regular basis, with daily consumption being the most common. This high frequency of engagement reflects a strong interest in staying informed and suggests that news plays an important role in the daily lives of many participants.

Graph #8

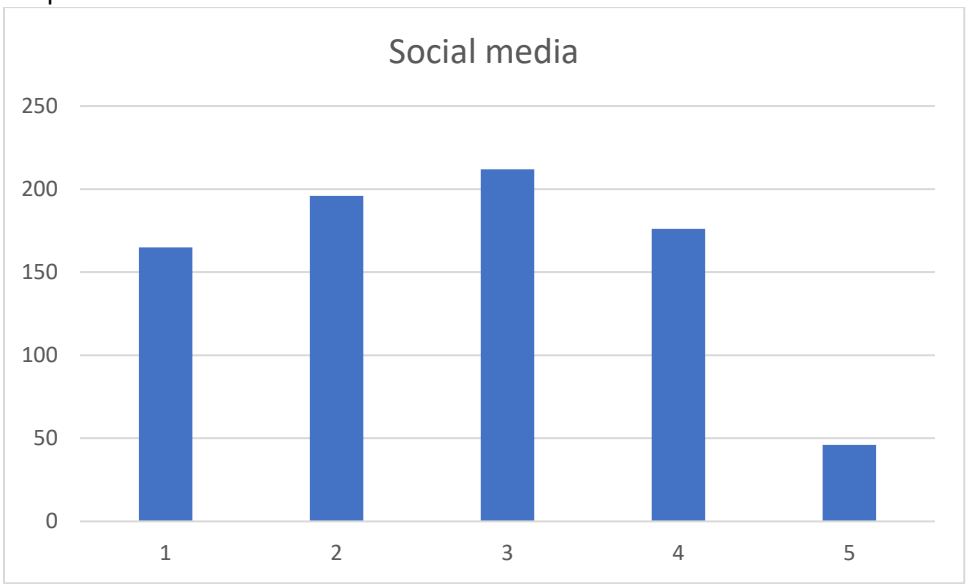


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

News source: Social Media

When asked about their level of confidence in different news sources respondents, in terms of social media, the respondents appear to have different perceptions of reliability in the sources, but this is not aligned with their habits, as some of the most used platforms are not the most trusted ones.

Graph #9

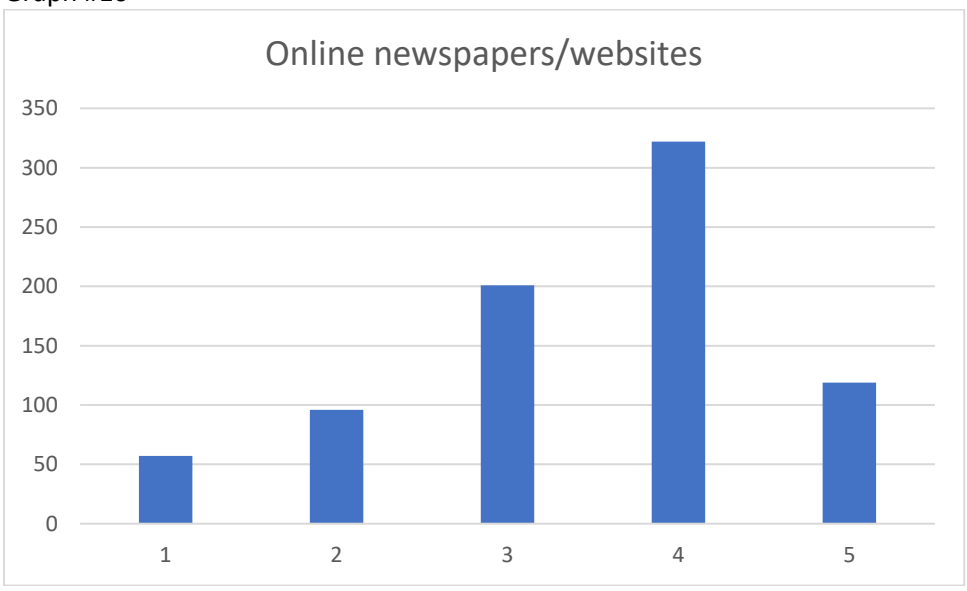


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

News source: online newspapers and website

Chart number 10, illustrates the credibility that respondents have on online newspapers and websites, revealing that while there is some variation in trust levels, the majority of respondents view online newspapers and websites as reliable sources of information, with a significant number placing them in the higher reliability categories. This suggests that digital news platforms play a crucial role in information dissemination and are generally trusted by the survey participants.

Graph #10

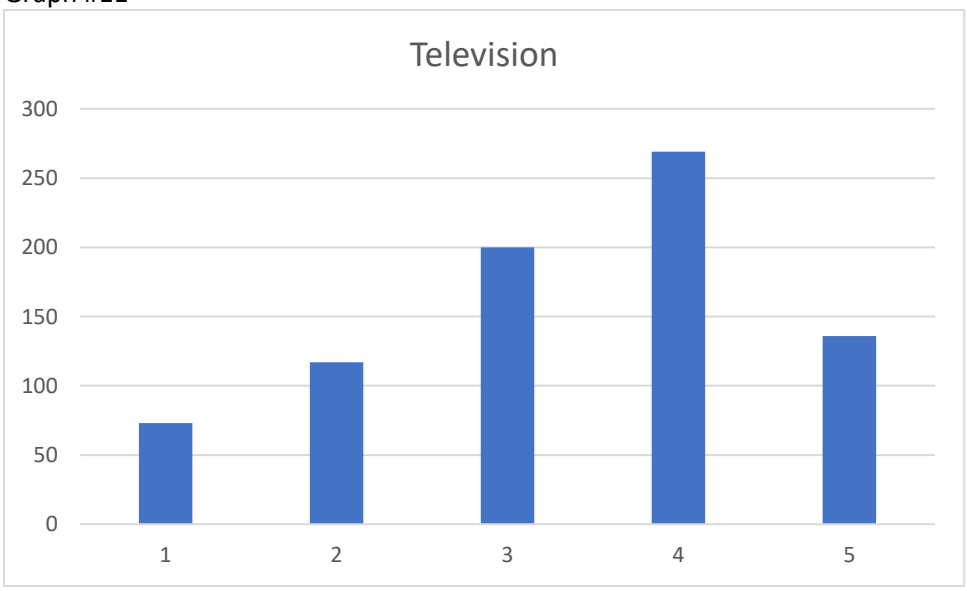


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

News source: television

In summary, the chart number 11, shows that while there is some variation in trust levels, television is generally seen as a reliable source of information by the majority of respondents, with many placing it in the higher reliability categories. This suggests that despite the rise of digital media, television continues to hold a strong position as a trusted news source for many people.

Graph #11

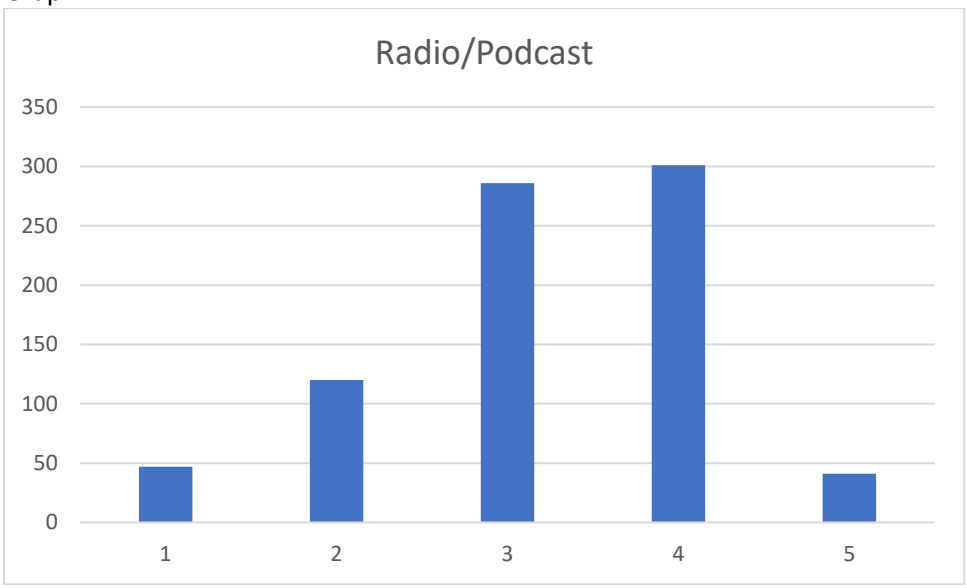


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

News source: radio/podcast

Next chart (Graph #12) shows that the majority of respondents view radio and podcasts as reliable sources of information, with a strong emphasis on moderate to high trust levels. This reflects the ongoing relevance of audio media in providing credible and trusted news and information to a broad audience.

Graph #12

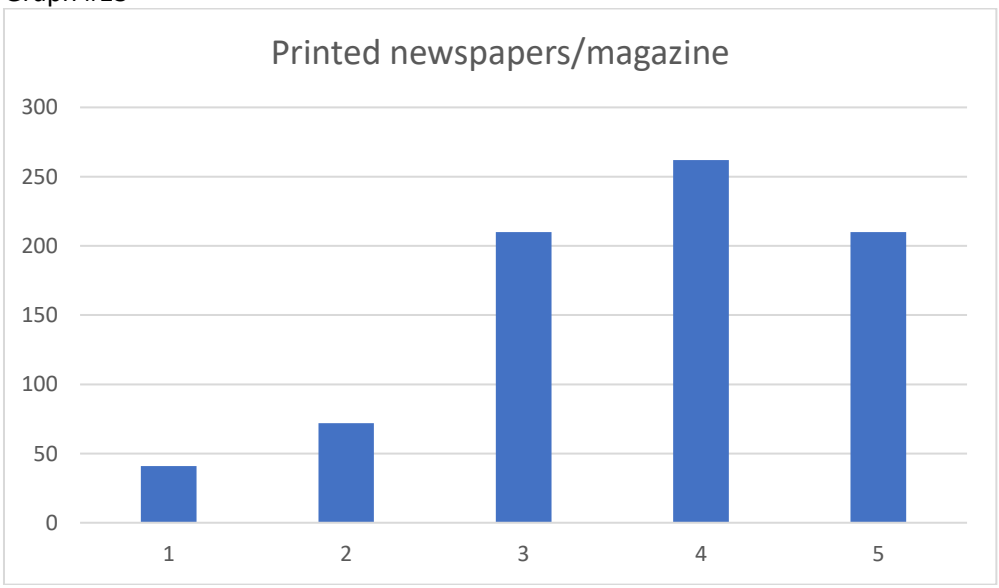


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

News source: printed newspapers/magazine

Overall, the chart number 13 suggests that printed newspapers and magazines are generally regarded as more or less reliable sources of information by the majority of respondents, with many placing them in the higher reliability categories. This indicates that traditional print media continues to hold a strong position as a trusted source of news and information.

Graph #13

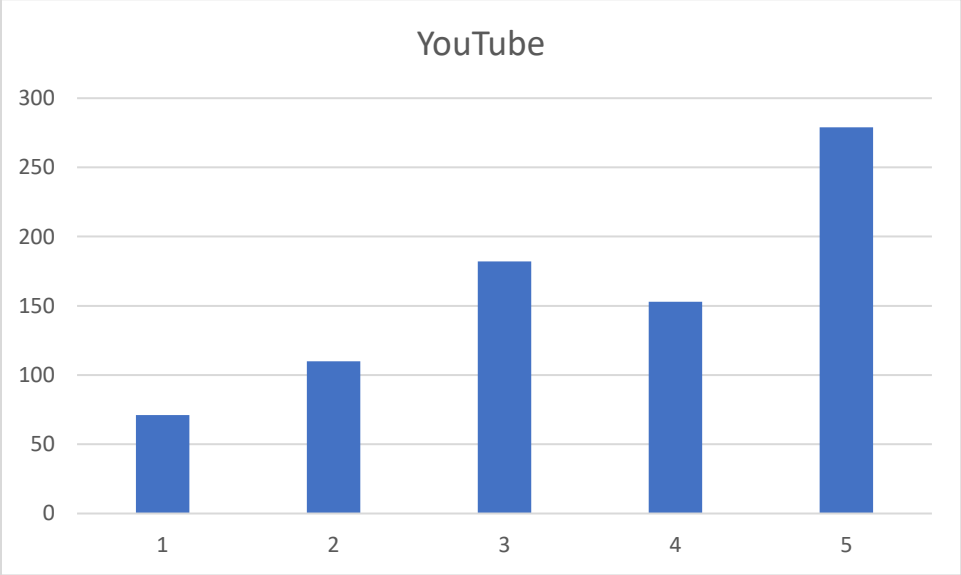


Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Youtube

The bar chart (Graph #14) represents respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of YouTube spreading fake news, using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates the least likelihood and 5 indicates the highest likelihood. The distribution shows that a smaller portion of respondents view YouTube as highly unlikely to spread fake news, suggesting some trust in the platform. However, as the ratings increase, there is a noticeable shift, with a significant number of respondents assigning a rating of 3, indicating a moderate concern that YouTube might spread fake news. The highest ratings, particularly 5, show the tallest bar, reflecting that a considerable portion of respondents believe YouTube is very likely to spread fake news. This suggests that despite YouTube's popularity, there is significant concern among users about the potential for misinformation on the platform, especially due to its vast range of user-generated content.

Graph #14



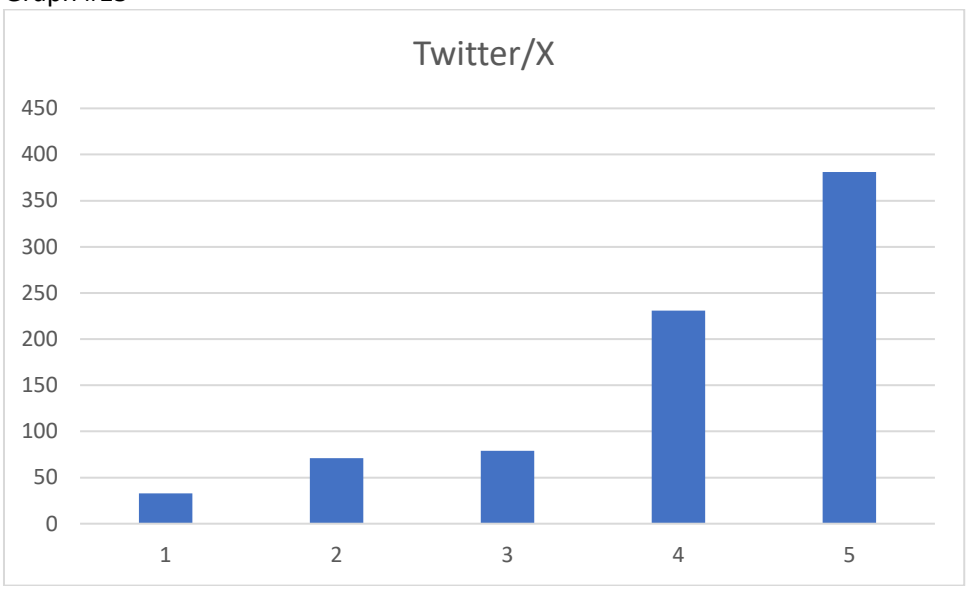
Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Twitter

The bar chart number 15 depicts respondents' perceptions of the likelihood that Twitter (now known as X) spreads fake news, using a scale from 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely). The first bar, representing those who believe Twitter is least likely to spread fake news, is quite short, indicating that few respondents trust the platform to this extent. As the ratings increase, there is a modest rise in the number of respondents who rate Twitter at a 2 or 3, reflecting growing concerns about the platform's potential to disseminate misinformation.

The most significant findings are in the higher ratings: many respondents rated Twitter at 4, and an even larger group placed it at 5, indicating that the majority of respondents believe Twitter is highly likely to spread fake news. This suggests that there is considerable scepticism about the reliability of information on Twitter, likely due to the platform's fast-paced nature, the prevalence of unverified user-generated content, and the frequent spread of rumours and misinformation. This data underscores the challenges Twitter faces in being perceived as a reliable source of information, with many users viewing it as a platform where fake news can easily proliferate.

Graph #15



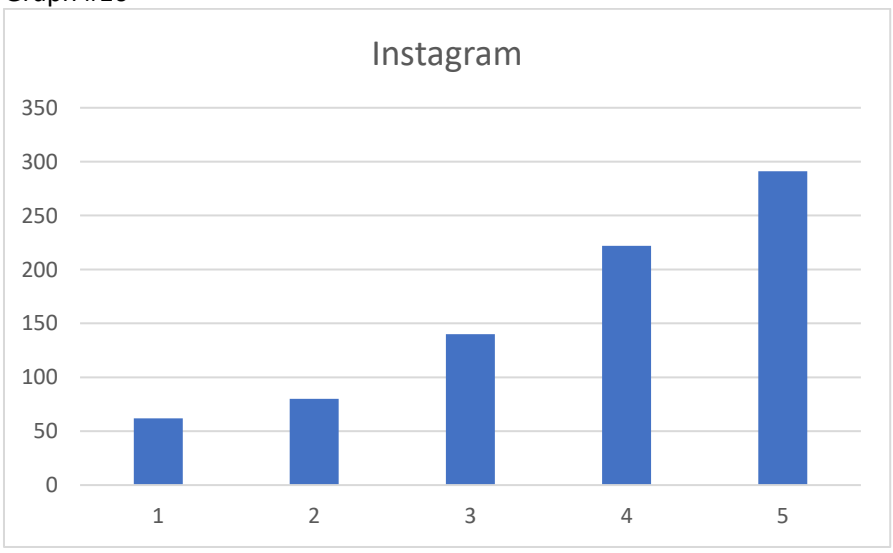
Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Instagram

The next bar chart (Graph #16) illustrates respondents' perceptions of the likelihood that Instagram spreads fake news, with a scale from 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely). The data indicates that fewer respondents believe Instagram is highly unlikely to spread fake news, with some increase in those who consider it somewhat likely, reflecting concerns about the credibility of information shared on a platform heavily driven by user-generated content. As the ratings increase, a significant portion of respondents place Instagram at level 4 or 5, with the highest bar being 5, suggesting that many users
Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Instagram, despite its popularity, has a significant risk of being a platform where misinformation can easily proliferate, especially given its emphasis on visual content and the influence of popular users who may not always verify the information they share.

Graph #16



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

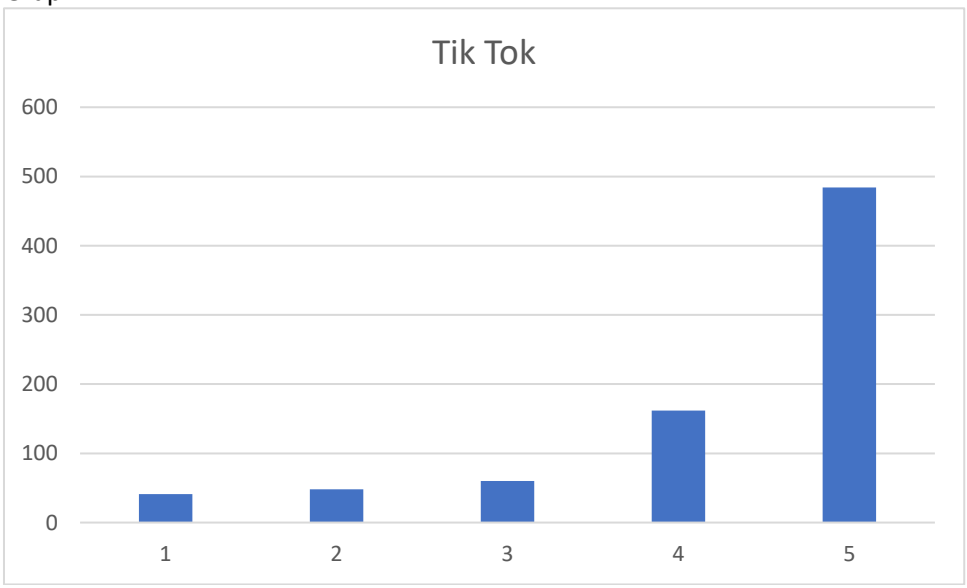
TikTok

The bar chart number 17 illustrates respondents' perceptions of TikTok as a source of fake news, using a scale from 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely). The chart reveals that a small number of respondents believe TikTok is unlikely to spread fake news, as indicated by the shorter bars for ratings 1 and 2. The number of respondents increases slightly at level 3, reflecting a moderate concern about the platform's potential to disseminate misinformation. However, the most striking feature of this chart is the sharp rise in respondents who rate TikTok at levels 4 and 5, with the bar for level 5 being the tallest by a significant margin. This indicates that most respondents believe TikTok is highly likely to spread fake news.

This data highlights a critical issue: despite TikTok's immense popularity, particularly among younger audiences, it is perceived by many as a platform where misinformation can easily spread. TikTok's format, which emphasizes short, engaging videos that are quickly consumed and shared, may contribute to this perception. The rapid consumption of content and the ease with which videos can go viral on TikTok might make it more challenging for users to discern the accuracy of the information presented.

The fact that TikTok is seen as a major source of fake news yet still attracts a vast user base raises important questions about media literacy and the role of social media in shaping public perception. It suggests a need for enhanced efforts in educating users, particularly younger audiences, about critically evaluating the content they consume on such platforms. Furthermore, it highlights the responsibility of platforms like TikTok to implement stronger measures to prevent the spread of misinformation. Despite its reputation as a source of fake news, TikTok's widespread use underscores its significant influence, making it a powerful medium in both positive and potentially harmful ways. This duality presents a challenge for society: how to harness the benefits of such platforms while mitigating the risks associated with the spread of misinformation.

Graph #17



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

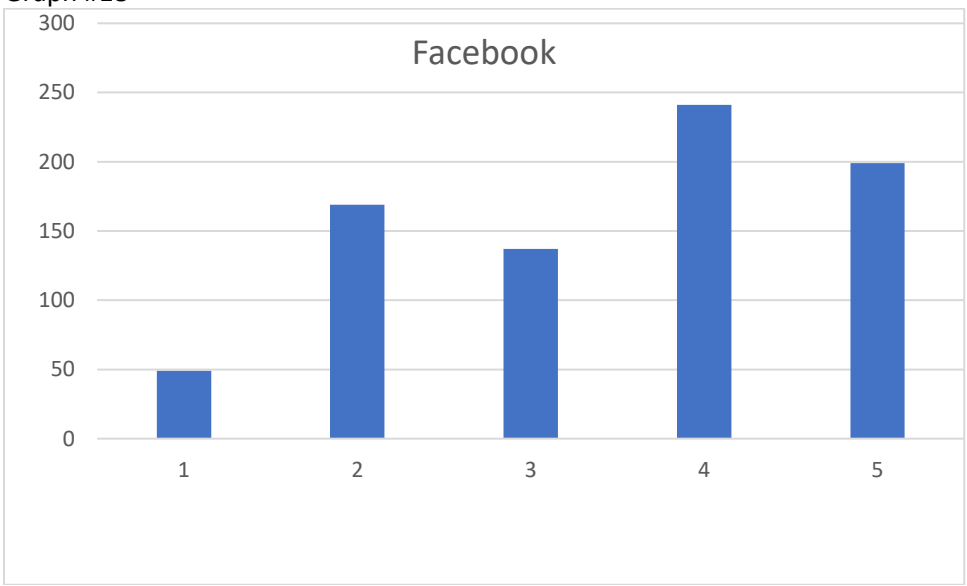
Facebook

The next bar chart (Graph #18) depicts respondents' perceptions of Facebook's likelihood to spread fake news, using a scale from 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely). The chart shows that a small portion of respondents rated Facebook as least likely to spread fake news, as indicated by the shorter bar for rating 1. There is a noticeable increase in the number of respondents who rated Facebook at level 2, suggesting that more participants have some reservations about the platform's reliability. The number of respondents who rated Facebook at level 3 is slightly lower, indicating a moderate concern about the spread of fake news on the platform.

The chart's most significant findings are at levels 4 and 5. The bar for level 4 is the tallest, showing that many respondents believe Facebook is likely to spread fake news. The bar for level 5, while slightly shorter than level 4, still represents a substantial portion of respondents who consider Facebook highly likely to spread misinformation. This distribution suggests that a significant number of users are sceptical about the accuracy of information on Facebook and view it as a platform where fake news is prevalent.

This perception is critical, given Facebook's extensive user base and its role as a major source of news and information for millions of people worldwide. The concern that Facebook is likely to spread fake news reflects broader worries about the platform's ability to manage and filter content effectively, particularly given its history of struggles with misinformation. Despite these concerns, Facebook remains widely used, highlighting the challenge of balancing its role as a vital communication tool with the need to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information it disseminates. This tension underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to improve content moderation and enhance media literacy among users.

Graph #18



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

5.9 Perception and impact of fake news

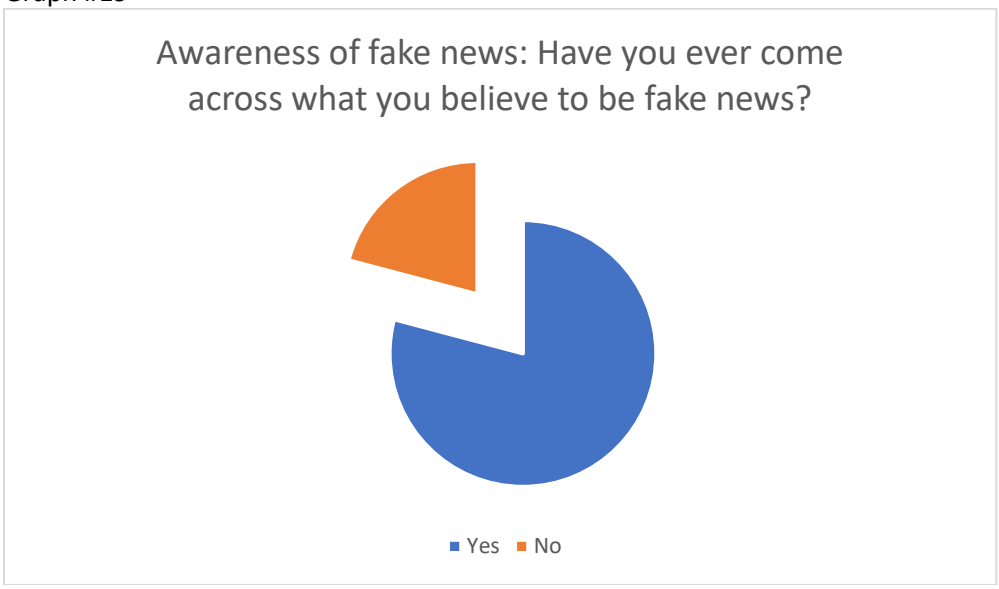
What is a fake news?

Regarding the perception on fake news dissemination and impact, the pie chart (Graph #19) illustrates respondents' awareness of fake news, specifically addressing whether they have ever encountered content they believe to be fake news.

The blue segment dominates the chart, indicating that the vast majority of respondents have indeed come across what they believed to be fake news. This suggests a high level of awareness among the participants regarding the presence of misinformation in the media they consume. The orange segment, while significantly smaller, shows that a minority of respondents have not encountered or recognized fake news in their experience.

Overall, this chart highlights the prevalence of fake news, or at least the perception about fake news dissemination in the information landscape, with most respondents indicating they have been exposed to misleading or false content. This widespread awareness underscores the importance of media literacy and critical thinking skills in helping individuals identify and respond to fake news, or might in fact show that most of our respondents are aware of fake news and how to spot it.

Graph #19



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

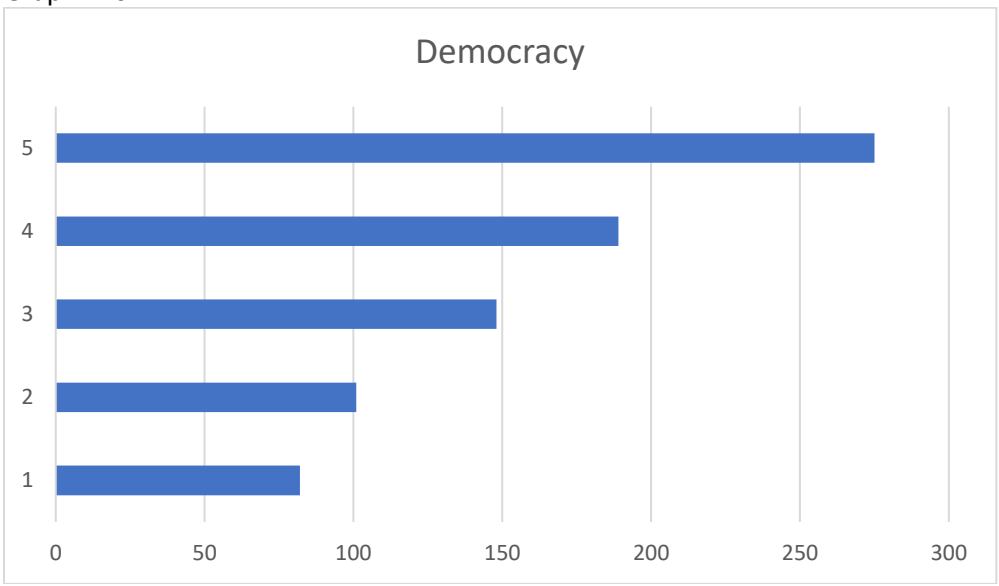
Impact of fake news on democracy

The next bar chart (Graph #20) represents respondents' views on the extent to which they believe fake news impacts democracy. The responses are measured on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates the least impact and 5 indicates the most significant impact.

The chart shows that the majority of respondents believe fake news has a substantial impact on democracy, with the highest number of respondents selecting 5, the maximum impact rating. The second-highest number of respondents rated the impact at 4, further indicating strong concern about the influence of fake news on democratic processes.

Fewer respondents selected ratings of 3, 2, and 1, indicating that while some believe the impact is moderate to minimal, the general consensus is that fake news poses a serious threat to democracy. This suggests a widespread perception that misinformation can undermine democratic institutions and the integrity of elections, leading to a potentially destabilising effect on governance.

Graph #20



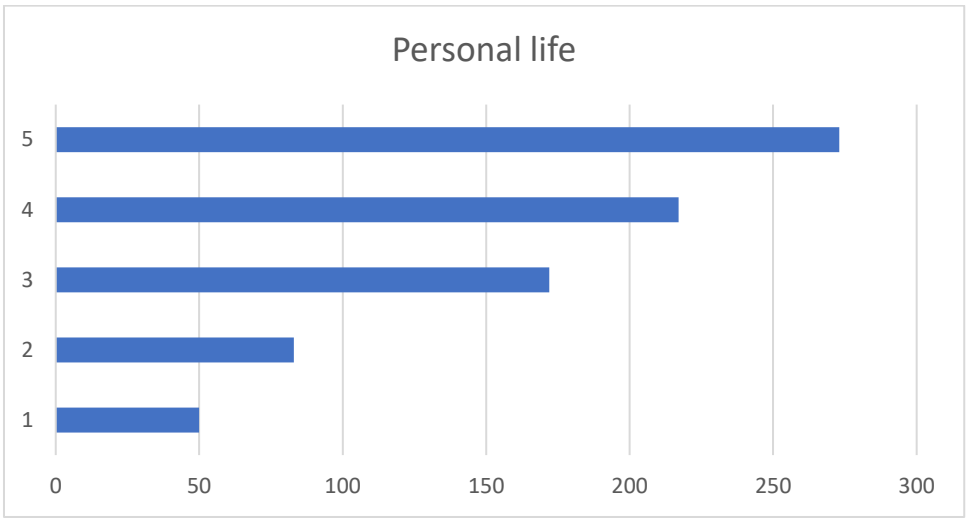
Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Impact of fake news on personal life

The data shows that a considerable number of respondents believe fake news has a strong impact on personal life, as showed by Graph #21, with the highest number of respondents selecting 5, indicating a significant effect. This is followed closely by those who rated the impact at 4, suggesting that many participants feel that fake news can deeply influence personal decisions, relationships, and overall well-being.

Fewer respondents rated the impact as moderate (3), with even fewer selecting 2 or 1. This distribution suggests that while some individuals believe the impact of fake news on personal life is less severe, the majority view it as a serious issue.

Graph #21



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

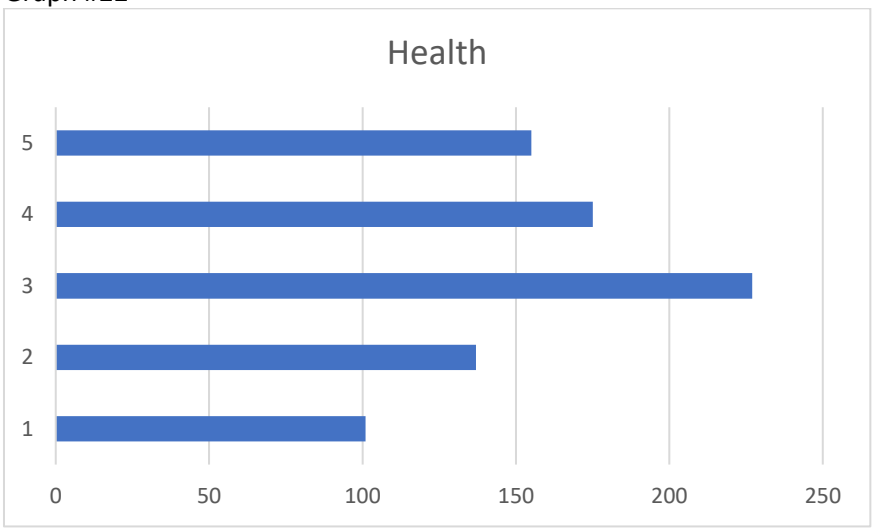
Impact of fake news on health

The most prominent bar in Graph #22 is for the rating of 3, indicating that a significant portion of respondents believe the impact of fake news on health is moderate. This suggests that while respondents acknowledge that fake news can affect health-related decisions and perceptions, many see this impact as neither minimal nor extreme.

The bars for ratings 4 and 5 are also substantial, indicating that many respondents believe fake news has a strong to very strong impact on health. These responses highlight concerns that misinformation can lead to harmful consequences, such as the spread of false health information or hesitation about medical treatments.

Fewer respondents selected ratings 1 and 2, suggesting that only a minority believe the impact of fake news on health is minimal.

Graph #22



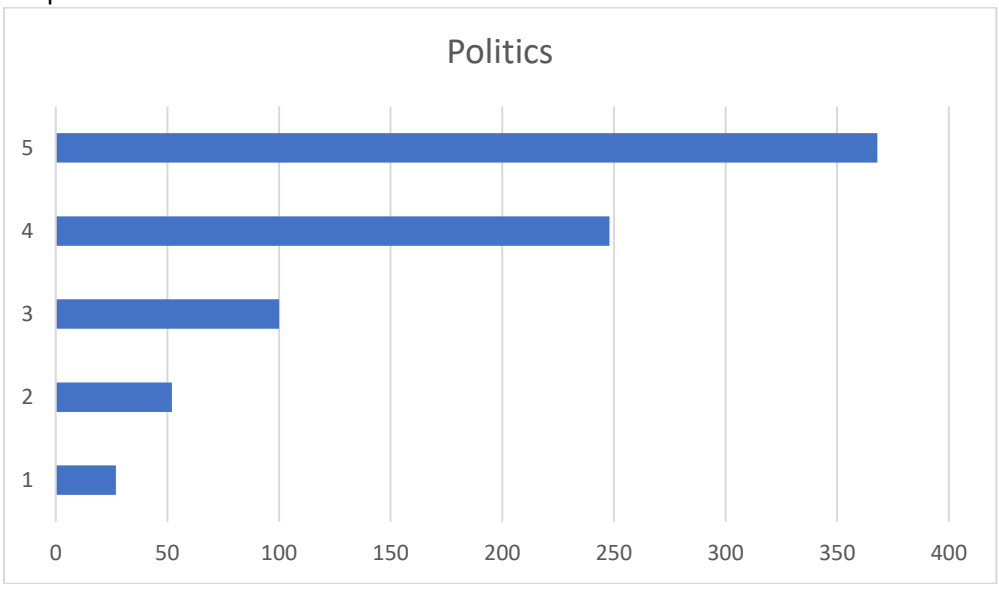
Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Impact of fake news in politics

Next chart (Graph #23) clearly indicates that the majority of respondents believe fake news has a very strong impact on politics, as evidenced by the longest bar at level 5. This suggests widespread concern that misinformation can significantly influence political outcomes, public opinion, and democratic processes. The second most common response is at level 4, further emphasizing that many participants perceive fake news as having a substantial effect on the political landscape.

Fewer respondents rated the impact at level 3, with even smaller numbers selecting levels 2 and 1, indicating that only a minority believe fake news has a moderate to minimal effect on politics. Overall, the data highlights a strong consensus that fake news is a major factor in shaping political discourse and decisions, reflecting deep concerns about its potential to undermine political stability and trust in democratic institutions.

Graph #23



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

How to assess credibility of news

The pie chart (Graph #24) illustrates the methods respondents use to assess the credibility of a news source. The chart is divided into four segments: "Check sources," "Cross-reference with other media outlets," "Engage in an open discussion with others," and "Other, please specify."

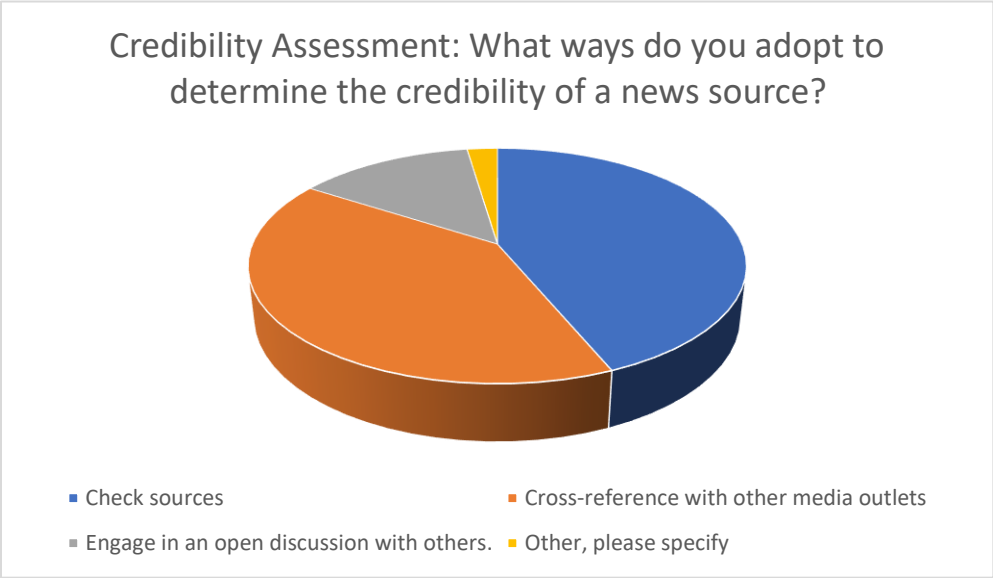
The largest segment indicates that the majority of respondents rely on "Checking sources" as their primary method for determining the credibility of a news source. This suggests that a significant number of participants place importance on verifying the origin and reliability of the information before trusting it, highlighting a critical approach to media consumption.

The second largest segment, represents respondents who prefer to "Cross-reference with other media outlets." This method involves comparing the information across different platforms to see if it is consistent, which further demonstrates a careful and discerning attitude towards the news.

Some respondents "Engage in an open discussion with others" to determine a news source's credibility. This approach indicates that dialogue and the sharing of opinions and perspectives play a role in how some individuals assess information, suggesting a social aspect to credibility assessment.

Overall, the chart number 24 reveals that respondents are actively engaged in verifying the credibility of news sources, with a strong preference for direct source verification and cross-referencing with other media. This careful approach to news consumption is crucial in an era where misinformation is prevalent, and it highlights the importance of critical thinking skills in navigating the modern information landscape.

Graph #24



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Criteria of credibility of news source

The next pie chart, Graph #25, illustrates the criteria that respondents consider important when assessing the credibility of a news source. The chart is divided into several segments: "Title," "Grammatical errors," "Author," "Source," and "Other."

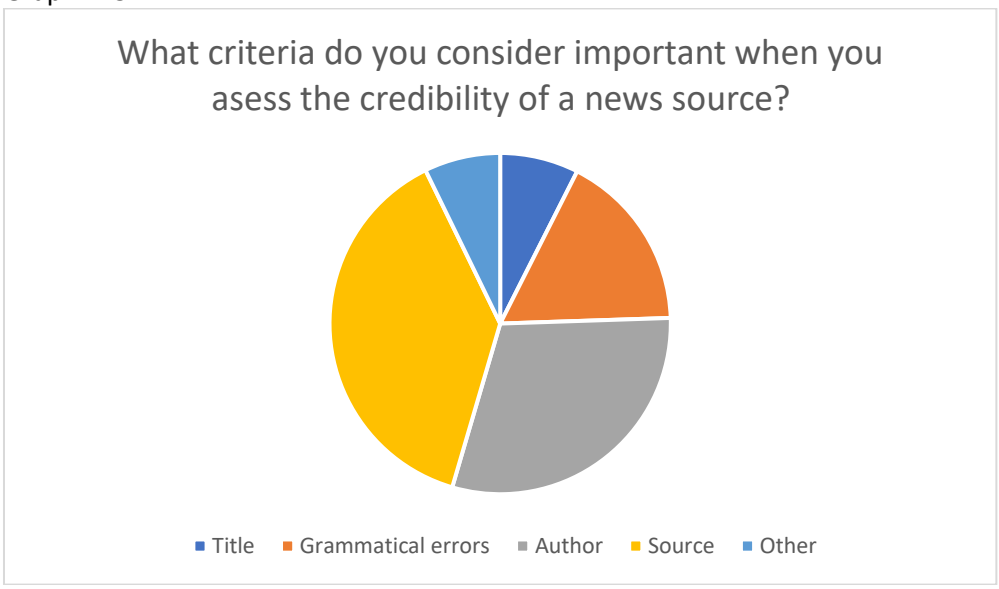
The largest segment represents respondents who prioritize the "Source" of the news. This indicates that the origin of the information is the most significant factor for many individuals when determining the credibility of a news piece. Trust in the source suggests that respondents rely heavily on the reputation and reliability of the news outlet or the publisher.

The grey segment, which is also sizable, represents those who consider "Author" as a critical criterion. This suggests that many respondents value the credibility, expertise, and reputation of the author behind the news article when judging its reliability. The identity and track record of the author are thus seen as important indicators of trustworthy information.

The orange segment, representing "Grammatical errors," shows that some respondents judge the credibility of a news source based on the quality of writing. Poor grammar may signal to these individuals that the content is not professionally produced or trustworthy, which could undermine the perceived reliability of the news.

The blue segment labelled "Title" is the smallest, indicating that few respondents consider the title of the news as a primary criterion for credibility. However, this group may pay attention to whether the title seems sensationalist or misleading, which could affect their perception of the article's trustworthiness.

Graph #25



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

5.10 Information seeking behaviour

Frequency of seeking additional information

The bar chart below (Graph #26) illustrates how often respondents seek additional information to verify the accuracy of news reports or articles. The chart is divided into four categories: "Never," "Frequently," "Very often," and "Always."

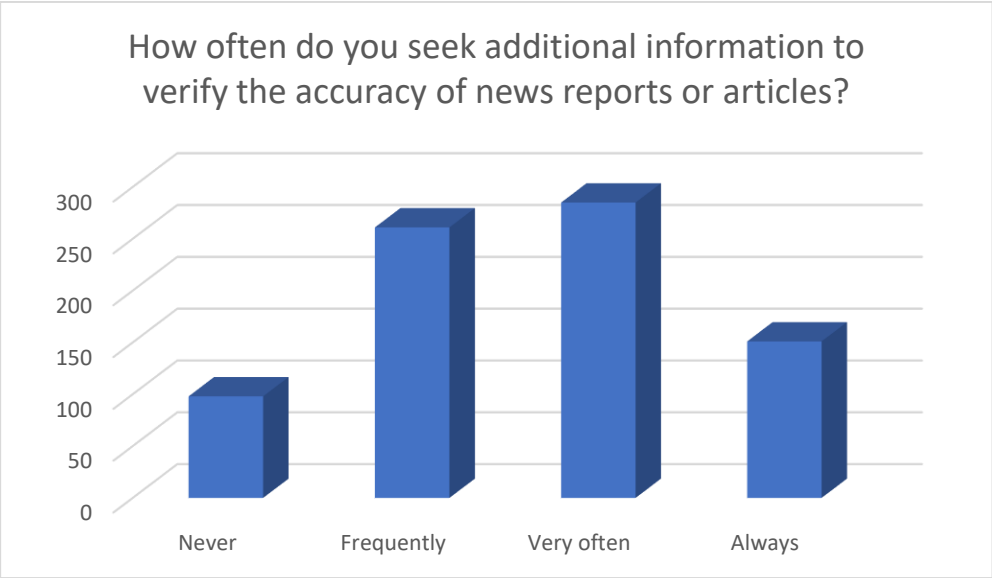
The majority of respondents regularly seek out additional information to verify the accuracy of news. This suggests a strong commitment among these respondents to ensuring that the information they consume is reliable and accurate, reflecting a critical approach to media consumption.

Significant number of respondents states they consistently verify news reports. This group is likely to be highly diligent in fact-checking, suggesting they are very cautious about the information they trust and share, or at least they believe to do so.

Only a small portion of respondents do not engage in verifying the accuracy of news reports, or at least they see themselves acting like this. This suggests that the majority of the participants in this survey are at least somewhat concerned with the accuracy of the information they encounter.

Overall, the chart number 26, reveals that most respondents are actively engaged in verifying news accuracy, with many doing so frequently or very often. This indicates a high level of media literacy among the respondents, as they recognize the importance of cross-checking information in an era where misinformation can easily spread.

Graph #26



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Sources where to find additional information

Graph #27 shows the sources where respondents typically seek additional information to verify the accuracy of news reports or articles, with multiple choices available. The respondents could choose from among five categories: "Official government websites," "Fact-checking websites," "Trusted news," "Academic or research papers," and "Other (please specify)."

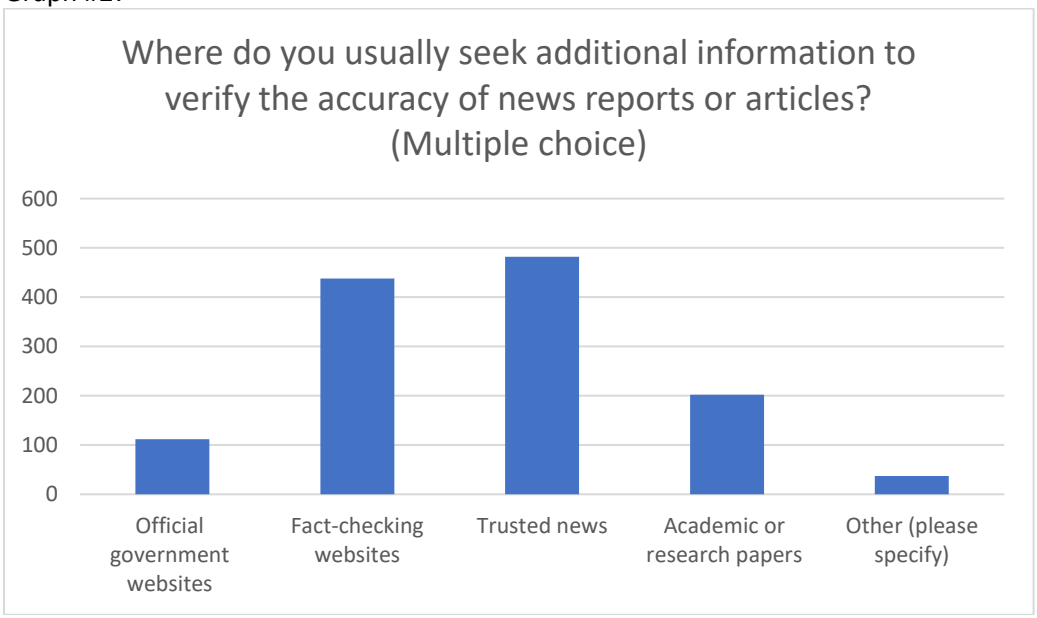
The most popular sources for verification are "Fact-checking websites" and "Trusted news," indicating that many respondents rely on these resources to confirm the accuracy of information. This suggests that respondents place a high value on established fact-checking services and news outlets that they consider reliable.

"Academic or research papers" are also used by a significant number of respondents, though less frequently than the first two categories. This indicates that some individuals turn to scholarly sources for more in-depth or specialized verification, reflecting a preference for evidence-based information.

"Official government websites" answers indicate that fewer respondents use these sites to verify news, perhaps due to concerns about bias or accessibility. Finally, the "Other" category is the least used, suggesting that while some respondents might use alternative methods or sources for verification, these are not as common.

Overall, the majority of respondents prefer using trusted and well-established sources, such as fact-checking websites and reputable news outlets, to verify the accuracy of the information they encounter. This reflects a conscientious approach to media consumption, where verifying facts is a key component of interacting with news content.

Graph #27



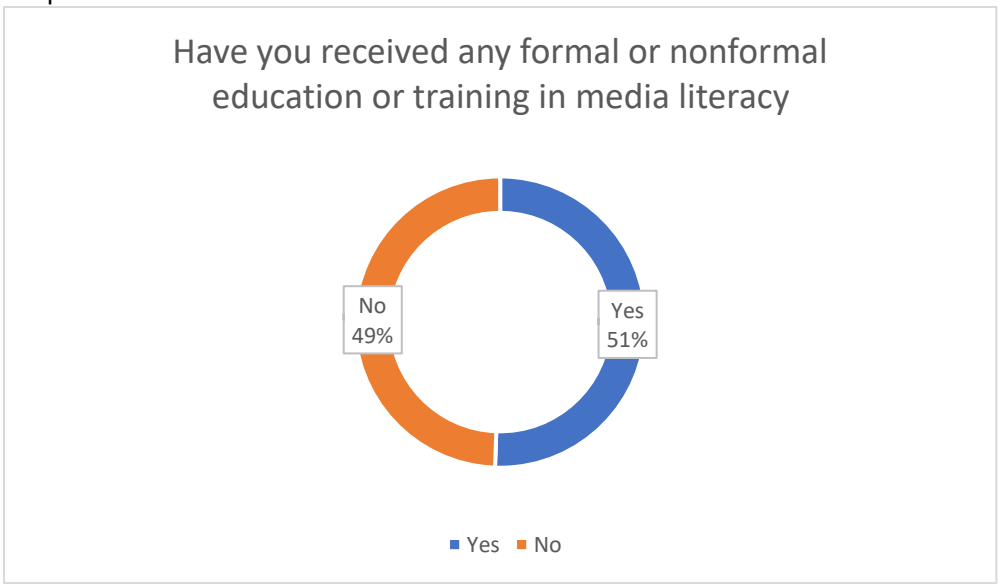
Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

5.11 Media literacy and education

The fact that 51% of respondents have received some form of formal or non-formal education on media literacy is a positive indication that awareness and understanding of media literacy are becoming more widespread. This suggests that a significant portion of the population is equipped with the skills necessary to critically analyse and evaluate the information they encounter in various media, which is crucial in today's digital age where misinformation and fake news are prevalent.

However, this also means that nearly half of the respondents, or 49%, has not received any media literacy education, highlighting a gap that needs to be addressed. The absence of media literacy education for this group may leave them more vulnerable to misinformation and less capable of discerning credible information from falsehoods. This underscores the importance of expanding media literacy programs to reach a broader audience, ensuring that more individuals are prepared to navigate the complex media landscape effectively. Expanding these educational efforts, both formally in schools and informally through community programs or online resources, could significantly enhance the public's ability to critically engage with media and reduce the impact of misinformation. However, combined with the above findings (i.e. a majority believing to have spotted fakes news, understanding the impact of fake news on democracy, life, health etc.) this may in fact suggest that they can do it without formal or non-formal education. Therefore, this could be a sign that people can improve their behaviour in face of disinformation, if they are really willing to protect themselves from fake news, and to prevent dissemination of disinformation, but maybe they would be more effective if they would benefit from some additional training or education. This opens a new discussion, and space for further research about this topic.

Graph #28



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Means used to develop media literacy or critical thinking skills

The pie chart number 29 illustrates the various means respondents have used to develop their media literacy or critical thinking skills. The chart is divided into several segments, each representing different methods of learning or skill development.

The largest segment represents respondents who have participated in "Face-to-face training," with 119 individuals, out of 470, selected this option. This indicates that 25% of respondents value direct, interactive learning environments where they can engage with instructors and peers in real-time.

Following this, the yellow segment represents "Watching videos," chosen by 90 respondents. This suggests that part of the individuals prefer visual and self-paced learning methods, which can be more accessible and flexible.

The orange segment shows that 67 respondents have used "Online courses" to develop their media literacy or critical thinking skills.

The green segment, which represents those who have used "None of the above," accounts for 72 respondents. This indicates that 15,3% of participants may not actively seek to develop these skills, or they might rely on other informal methods not listed in the chart.

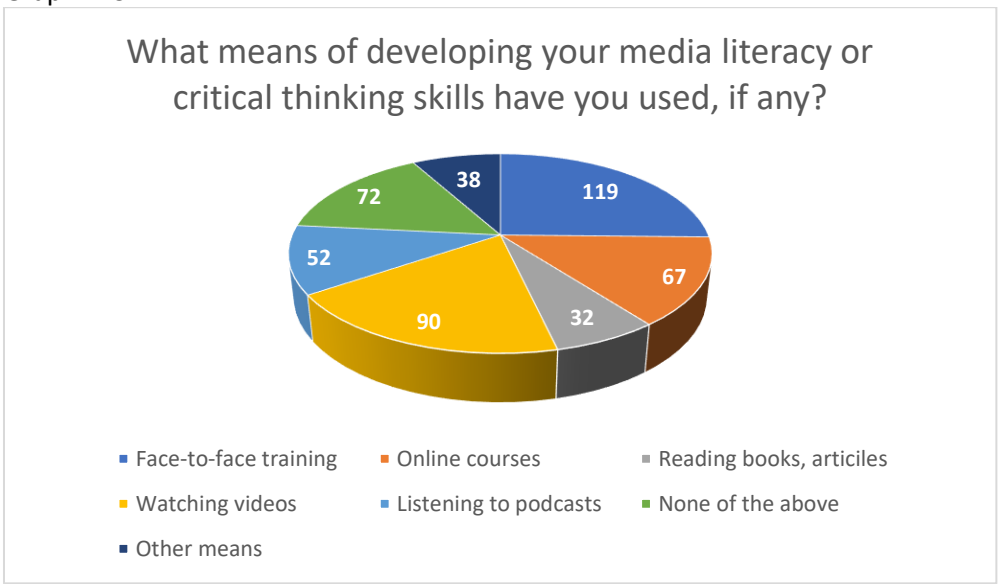
The gray segment, representing "Reading books, articles," was selected by 32 respondents, highlighting that some prefer traditional text-based learning materials to enhance their understanding.

The light blue segment, indicating "Listening to podcasts," was chosen by 52 respondents. This shows that audio content, which can be consumed on-the-go, is also a popular method for skill development.

Finally, the smallest segment, labelled "Other means," represents 38 respondents who might use alternative methods not captured by the other categories.

Overall, the chart reveals that respondents use a variety of methods to develop their media literacy and critical thinking skills, with a notable preference for face-to-face training and visual content. This diversity in learning preferences underscores the importance of offering a range of educational resources to cater to different needs and learning styles.

Graph #29



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Preferred learning formats

The next pie chart represents respondents' preferred learning formats, with multiple choices allowed. The chart is divided into segments that indicate the various formats people prefer when engaging in learning activities.

The largest segment, shown in orange, represents "Online courses," with 308 respondents selecting this option. This suggests that online courses are the most popular learning format among the respondents, likely due to their flexibility, accessibility, and the structured nature they provide.

Following closely, the blue segment indicates that 301 respondents prefer "In-person" learning. This shows a strong preference for traditional classroom settings, where direct interaction with instructors and peers is possible, facilitating a more engaging and dynamic learning experience.

The yellow segment represents "Articles," chosen by 140 respondents. This reflects the popularity of visual learning, where content can be consumed in an easy-to-digest format, often making complex topics more understandable.

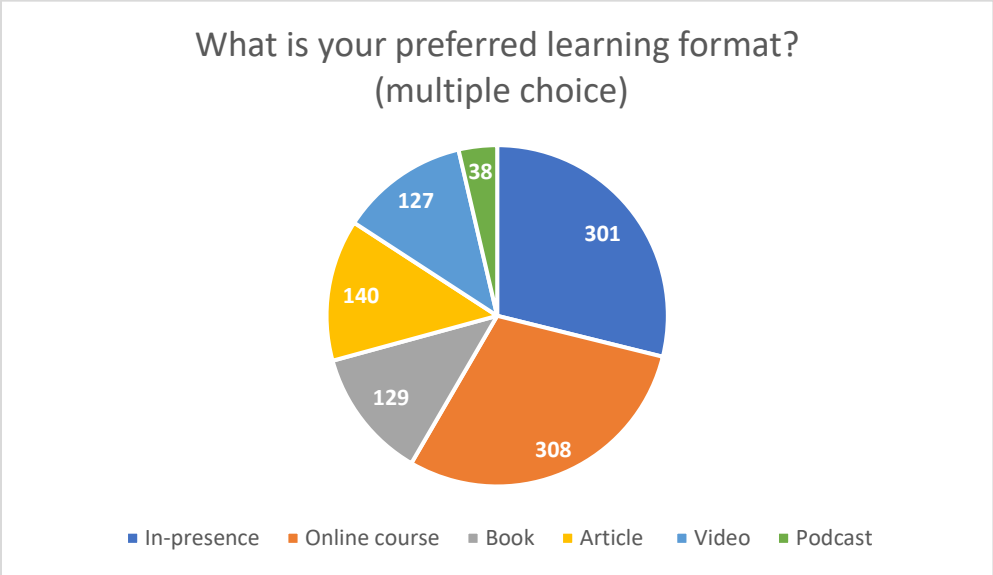
The grey segment indicates that 129 respondents prefer learning through "Books," highlighting the enduring appeal of text-based learning, where in-depth information and detailed explanations are often found.

The light blue segment, representing "Videos" was selected by 127 respondents. This choice indicates that many respondents value concise, focused written content that can be quickly read and understood.

The smallest segment represents "Podcasts," with 38 respondents preferring this format. While less popular than the others, this option shows that some individuals enjoy learning through audio content, which can be conveniently consumed during activities like commuting or exercising.

Overall, the chart reveals that while online courses and in-person learning are the most preferred formats, there is also significant interest in videos, books, and articles. This diversity in preferences underscores the importance of offering a variety of learning formats to accommodate different learning styles and needs.

Graph #30



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Preferences for topics in a course on media literacy and critical thinking skills

The chart below (Graph #31) displays respondents' preferences for topics in a course aimed at developing media literacy and critical thinking skills. The chart presents several topics and shows how many respondents expressed interest in each.

The most popular topic, is "How to identify fake news and misinformation," indicating that a large number of respondents are keen on learning how to recognize and avoid false or misleading information. This reflects widespread concern about the prevalence of fake news and the desire for tools to combat it.

The next most popular topic is "How to access and locate suitable media and information," which also received strong interest. This suggests that respondents want to improve their ability to find reliable and relevant information sources, a key component of media literacy.

Following these, "How to protect yourself from the influence..." and "How to assess quality media" garnered considerable interest as well. Respondents are interested in developing skills to evaluate the credibility and quality of media content, which is essential for informed media consumption.

"How to use media, apps, and other tools in..." and are also notable, though with fewer respondents selecting these topics. These areas likely appeal to those who want to enhance their practical skills in navigating digital tools or who are concerned about the influence of media on their personal decisions.

The least popular topic, is "How to develop lesson plans and include..." indicating that fewer respondents are interested in this educational approach, possibly because it is more specialized or targeted at educators.

Overall, the chart number 30 highlights a strong interest in learning how to identify misinformation and assess the quality of media, underscoring the importance of these skills in today's information-rich environment. The diversity of topics chosen also reflects the varied needs and concerns of respondents when it comes to media literacy and critical thinking.

Graph #31

Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

5.12 Findings from the Students Questionnaire

Regarding the survey to students, the perspectives from 364 youngsters that answered us among ten European countries of project partners, we've got some important insights, as explained in the coming pages.

What is a fake news?

The next bar chart (Graph #32) illustrates respondents' perceptions of what constitutes "fake news." The chart is divided into three categories, each representing a different definition or characteristic of fake news, as questioned to the students.

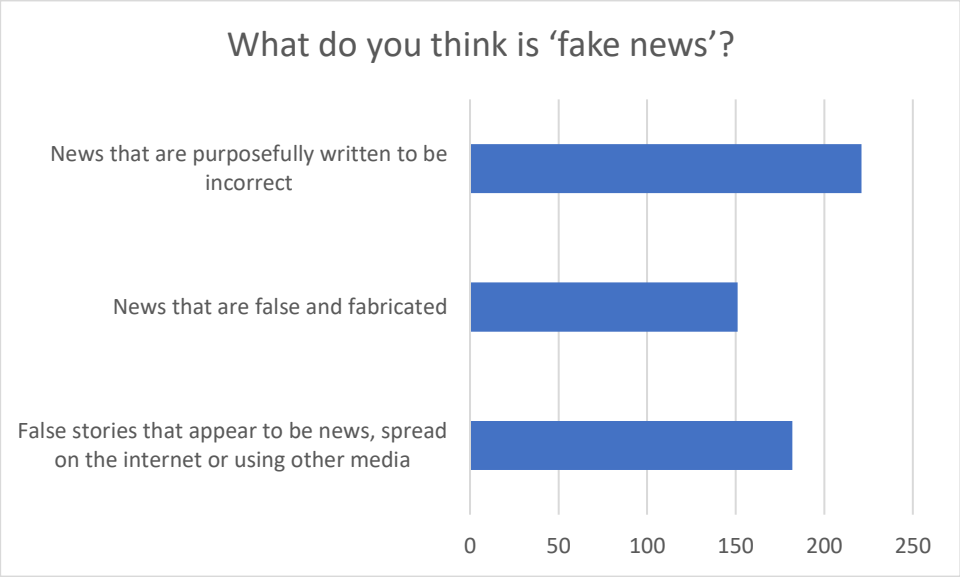
The first category labelled "News that is purposefully written to be incorrect", indicating that a significant number of respondents believe that fake news includes content deliberately created to mislead or provide false information. This highlights a common understanding that intentional deception is a core element of fake news.

The second category, "News that are false and fabricated," reflect a strong agreement among respondents that fake news consists of entirely made-up stories with no basis in fact. This suggests that respondents recognize the difference between inaccurate reporting and news that is entirely invented.

The third category, "False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media," shows that many respondents consider the dissemination of false information, particularly through digital platforms, as a defining characteristic of fake news. This points to an awareness of the role that the internet and social media play in the spread of misinformation.

Overall, the chart number 32 reveals that respondents have a comprehensive understanding of fake news, encompassing deliberate falsehoods, fabricated stories, and the spread of such content through various media channels. This reflects a nuanced view of the different forms that fake news can take and the mechanisms through which it spreads.

Graph #32



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Awareness on a fake news

Next chart (#chart 33) illustrates how respondents determine that a piece of news is fake. The chart is divided into three segments, each representing a different method used by respondents to identify fake news.

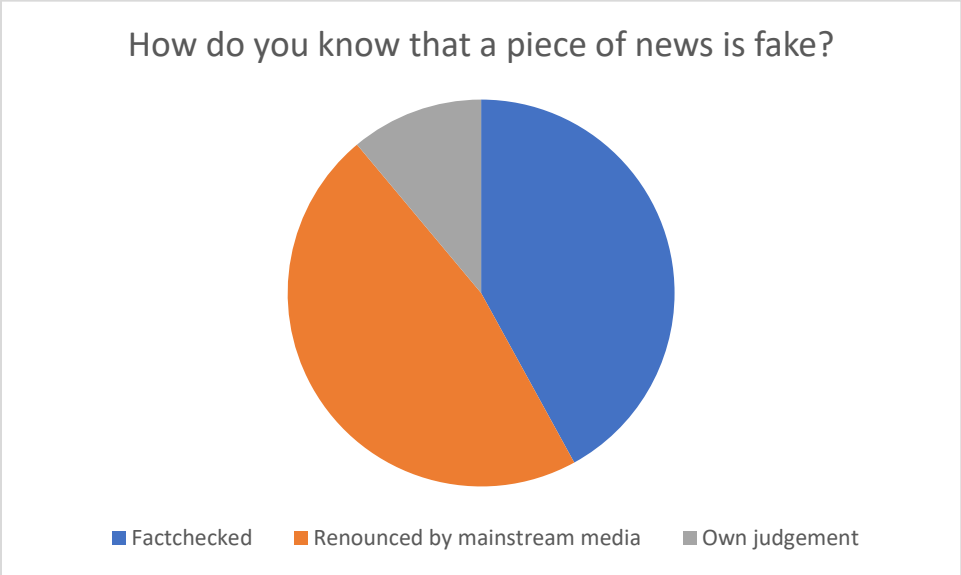
The largest segment, + represents respondents who rely on "Factchecked" information to determine whether news is fake. This indicates that many respondents trust and depend on fact-checking processes or platforms to verify the accuracy of the news they encounter.

Respondents who believe news is fake when it has been "Renounced by mainstream media." this segment is also substantial, showing that a significant portion of respondents rely on mainstream media's denouncement or correction of news stories as a signal that the information is false.

Respondents who use their "Own judgement" to identify fake news, although this is the smallest segment, it still highlights that some individuals rely on their personal assessment or intuition to determine the credibility of a news piece.

Overall, most respondents place a strong emphasis on external verification, either through fact-checking or mainstream media, to identify fake news, while a smaller group trusts their own judgment to make this determination. This distribution reflects the importance of authoritative sources in combating misinformation and the varying levels of confidence individuals have in their own ability to discern the truth.

Graph #33



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Usage of social media platforms

The bar chart (Graph #34) displays the usage of various social media platforms among respondents. Each platform is listed on the vertical axis, with the number of users represented on the horizontal axis.

The most popular platforms among respondents are TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp, with each showing high usage levels. TikTok and Instagram are particularly prominent, with bars that extend the furthest to the right, indicating that these platforms are used by a large portion of the respondents. WhatsApp also shows significant usage, reflecting its popularity as a messaging platform.

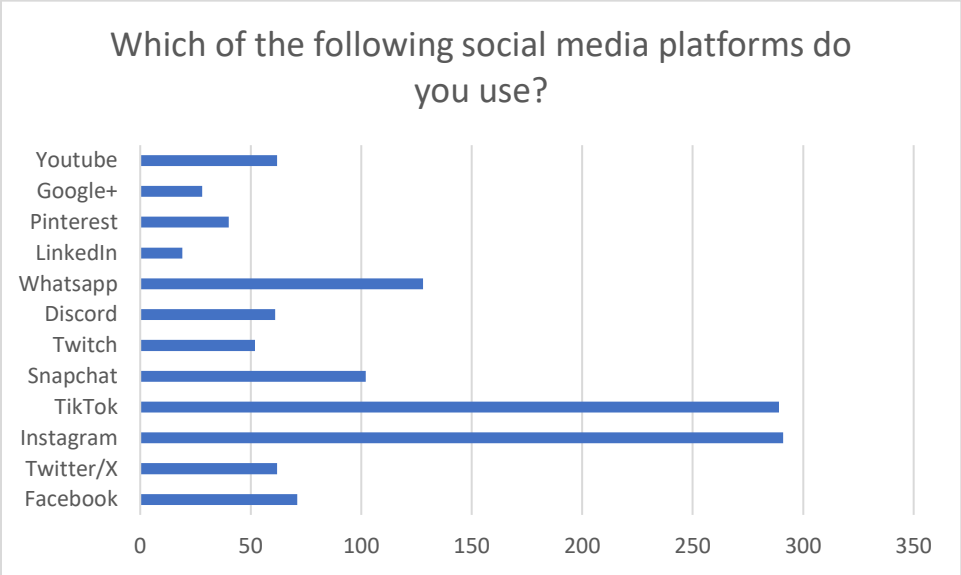
Facebook, while still widely used, shows slightly lower usage compared to TikTok and Instagram, indicating that while it remains a key platform, it may be more popular among different demographics or for different uses.

Other platforms such as YouTube, Snapchat, and Twitter/X also show considerable usage, though less than the leading platforms. This suggests that while these platforms are popular, they are not as widely used as TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp among the survey participants.

Less commonly used platforms include Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Discord, and Twitch, with much shorter bars indicating lower levels of engagement. These platforms may cater to more niche audiences or specific purposes that do not appeal to the broader respondent base.

Overall, the chart reveals that TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp are the dominant social media platforms among the respondents, reflecting broader trends in social media usage where visual content and messaging apps play a central role in daily communication and content consumption.

Graph #34



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

News sources

The most frequently used news source among respondents is "Social media," with a significantly higher number of users compared to other channels. This suggests that social media platforms play a dominant role in how respondents access news, likely due to the convenience and immediacy they offer.

"Online" sources, such as news websites or apps, are the second most popular, though used by far fewer respondents than social media. This indicates that while traditional online news platforms remain important, they are less favoured compared to the instant access provided by social media.

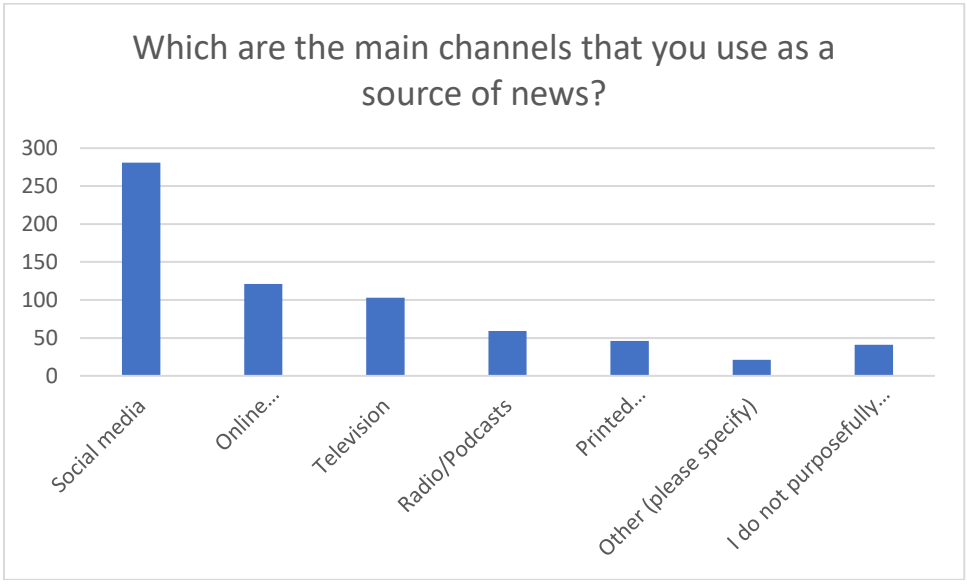
"Television" and "Radio/podcasts" are also utilized as news sources, though to a lesser extent. These traditional media channels still hold relevance, especially for those who prefer more structured or auditory forms of news consumption.

"Printed" news sources, such as newspapers and magazines, are among the least used channels, reflecting a shift away from print media in favour of digital platforms. This decline aligns with broader trends in media consumption where digital access is more prevalent.

The "Other" category, which includes responses where participants specified alternative news sources, and the category "I do not purposefully seek news" both have minimal representation. This suggests that most respondents actively engage with news through specific channels rather than passively encountering it or relying on less conventional sources.

Overall, the dominant role of social media in news consumption among respondents, followed by traditional online sources and television, with print media seeing significantly lower use. This reflects the increasing importance of digital platforms in shaping how people stay informed.

Graph #35



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Awareness of meeting fake news in the past

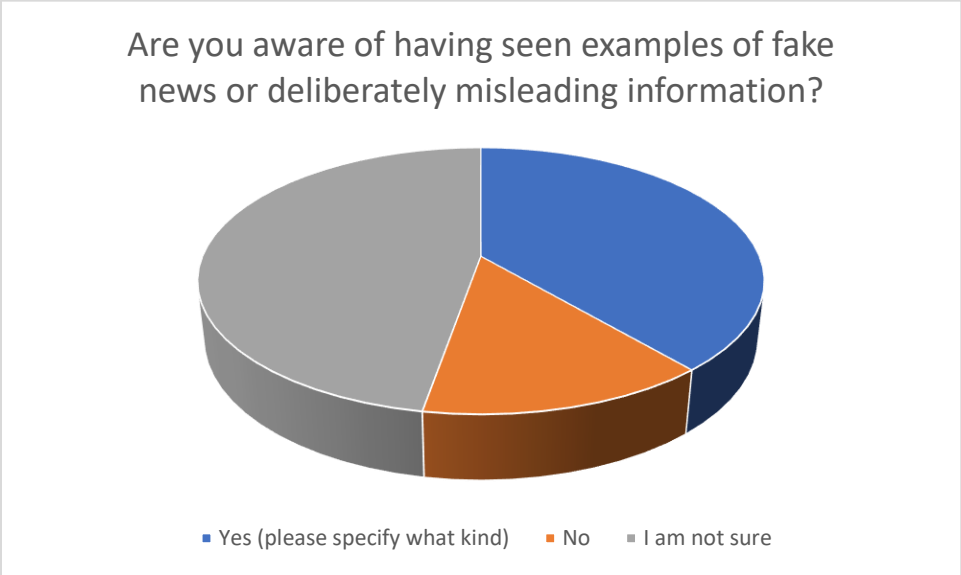
The pie chart (Graph #36) illustrates respondents' awareness of having encountered fake news or deliberately misleading information. Three alternative responses were proposed to the respondents: "Yes (please specify what kind)," "No," and "I am not sure."

The largest segment are respondents who selected "I am not sure." This indicates that a significant portion of respondents are uncertain whether they have encountered fake news or misleading information, reflecting potential challenges in identifying such content or a lack of confidence in their ability to discern it.

The second largest segment, shows respondents who answered "Yes," acknowledging that they have seen examples of fake news or misleading information. This suggests that many respondents are aware of the presence of misinformation in the media they consume and may recognize specific instances of it.

The smallest segment, indicates those who responded "No," meaning they have not noticed or are confident they have not encountered fake news or deliberately misleading information. This could reflect a belief that the sources they engage with are reliable or a lack of exposure to such content.

Graph #36



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Frequency of meeting fake news

However, students are not convinced that they are facing fake news and disinformation often.
The largest bar represents the "Almost never" category, indicating that the majority of respondents report rarely encountering fake news. This suggests that most participants either believe they are not frequently exposed to fake news or are confident in their ability to avoid it.

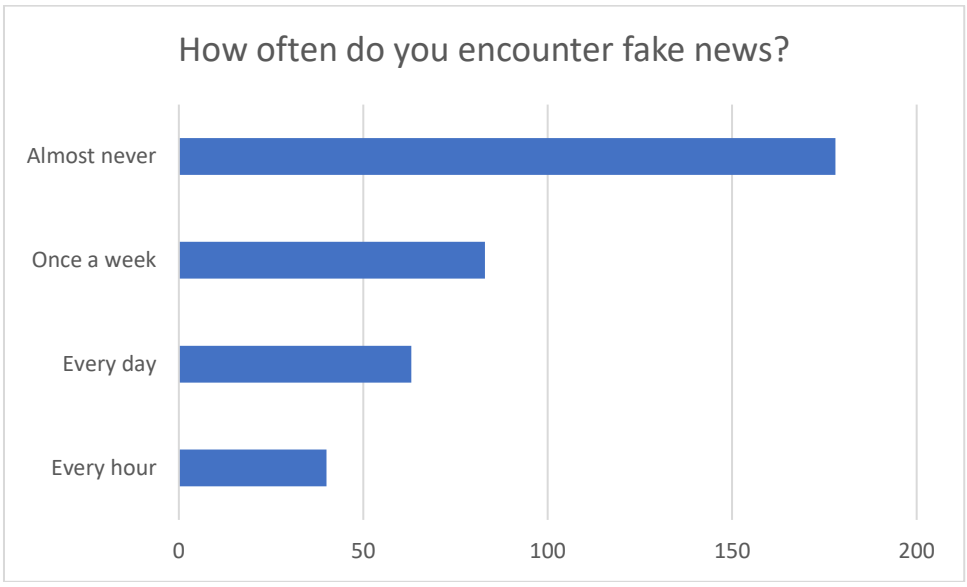
The "Once a week" category indicates that a moderate number of respondents encounter fake news on a weekly basis. This reflects a more regular, but still limited, exposure to misinformation.

The "Every day" category shows that fewer respondents encounter fake news on a daily basis. This group may be more engaged with media or social platforms where fake news is more prevalent.

"Every hour" category, indicates that only a small number of respondents encounter fake news at this high frequency. This could include individuals who are highly active on social media or other online platforms where misinformation spreads rapidly.

Overall, while some respondents believe they encounter fake news regularly, the majority experience it infrequently. This highlights the varied experiences of individuals when it comes to exposure to misinformation and suggests that while fake news is a concern, it may not be a constant presence for most people.

Graph #37



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Friends or relatives sharing fake news

The bar chart (Graph #38) shows respondents' answers to whether they have friends or family who have shared fake news on purpose. The responses are categorized into three options: "Yes," "No," and "I am not sure."

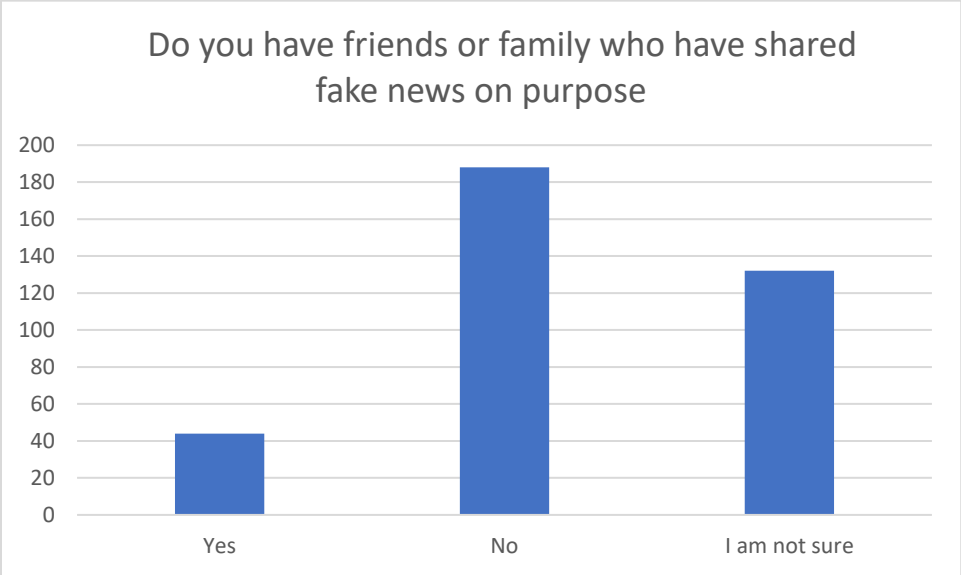
Most answers are under the "No" category, indicating that the majority of respondents believe their friends or family members have not intentionally shared fake news. This suggests a general confidence among respondents that their close social circles do not engage in the deliberate dissemination of misinformation.

"I am not sure" category indicates that a significant portion of respondents are uncertain whether their friends or family members have shared fake news on purpose. This uncertainty might reflect the difficulty in discerning others' intentions or a lack of awareness about the content being shared by those close to them.

"Yes" category, showing that a smaller number of respondents believe they have friends or family members who have intentionally shared fake news. Although this group is the smallest, it still highlights that intentional spreading of misinformation is a concern for some individuals.

Overall, while most respondents trust that their social circles are not deliberately spreading fake news, there is still a notable level of uncertainty and some concern about intentional misinformation within personal networks.

Graph #38



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Experience in flagging fake news

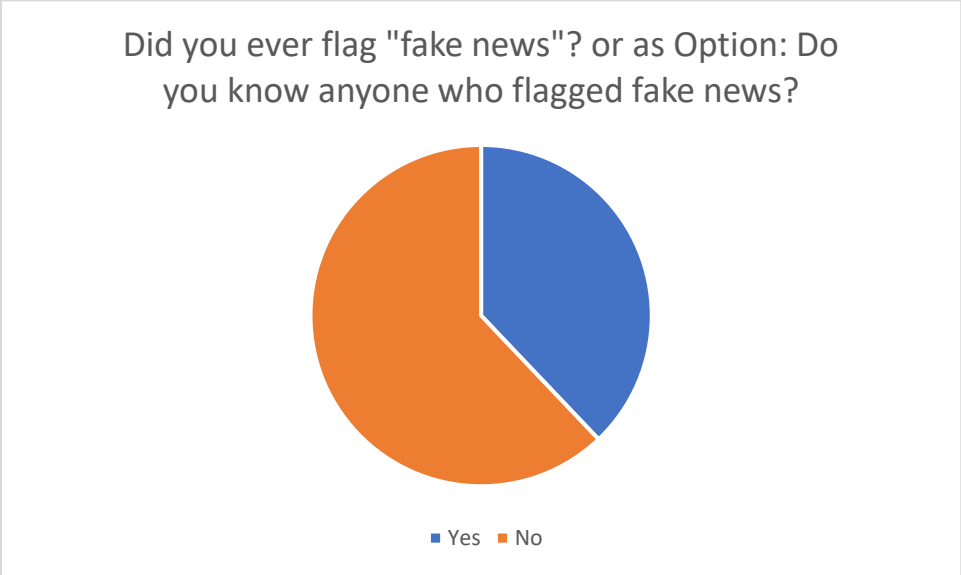
The pie chart (Graph #39) illustrates respondents' experiences with flagging fake news or knowing someone who has done so. The question allowed yes and no answers.

The larger segment, represents respondents who answered "No," indicating that the majority of participants have not flagged fake news themselves or do not know anyone who has. This suggests that while the awareness of fake news may be high, acting to flag or report it is less common among this group of respondents.

The smaller segment represents those who answered "Yes," indicating that a smaller portion of respondents have either flagged fake news or know someone who has. This reflects a proactive approach by some individuals in combating misinformation, although it appears to be a minority behaviour.

Overall, while some respondents are engaged in efforts to identify and report fake news, the majority have not participated in flagging such content. This could point to a need for increased awareness or tools that make it easier for people to take action against misinformation.

Graph #39



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Environment where fake news are discussed

Next bar chart (Graph #40) illustrates the different contexts in which respondents have discussed the topic of fake news. The chart includes several categories: "At school," "With friends," "With the family," "At work," "Other places," and "I haven't discussed fake news."

The biggest group represents discussions that have taken place "At school," indicating that this is the most common setting where respondents have engaged in conversations about fake news. This suggests that educational environments are key spaces for addressing the topic, possibly due to the inclusion of media literacy in curricula or related discussions in classroom settings.

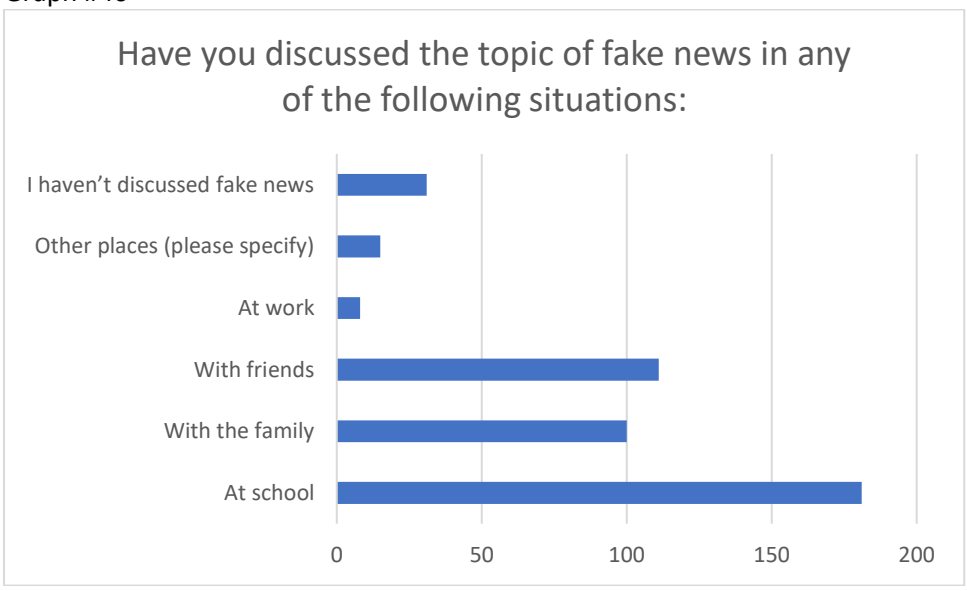
The next most common contexts are "With friends" and "With the family," both of which have substantial bars, showing that many respondents have also discussed fake news in their personal and social circles. This highlights the relevance of the topic in everyday conversations and the importance of peer and family discussions in raising awareness and understanding of misinformation.

The "At work" category has a shorter bar, indicating that fewer respondents have discussed fake news in a professional setting. This could reflect that discussions about fake news are less common or less prioritized in the workplace compared to other environments. Once we are directing this questionnaire to minors, and mostly through schools' channel for dissemination, it's natural that only a very small portion of respondents' work.

The "Other places" category, along with "I haven't discussed fake news," has the short bars, suggesting that a small number of respondents may have discussed fake news in unspecified locations, while an even smaller group has not engaged in such discussions at all.

Overall, the chart indicates that fake news is a widely discussed topic, particularly in educational settings and among friends and family, highlighting its importance in both formal and informal discussions.

Graph #40



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Awareness in managing how to deal with fake news

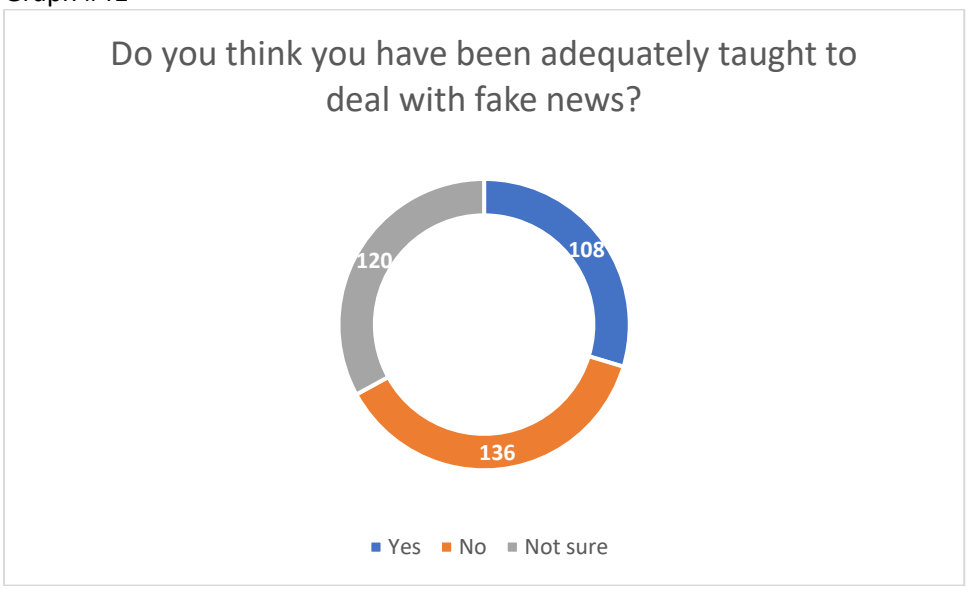
The next chart (Graph #41) illustrates respondents' perceptions of whether they have been adequately taught to deal with fake news. Three possible answers are "Yes," "No," and "Not sure."

The largest segment, represents respondents who answered "No," indicating that a significant share of participants feel they have not been adequately educated on how to handle fake news. This suggests a perceived gap in media literacy education and a need for more comprehensive training or resources to equip individuals with the necessary skills to identify and counteract misinformation.

The "Not sure" answer indicates uncertainty among a considerable number of respondents about whether they have received sufficient education on the topic. This could reflect a lack of confidence in their abilities to deal with fake news or uncertainty about what constitutes adequate preparation.

The smallest segment, represents respondents who answered "Yes," meaning they believe they have been adequately taught to deal with fake news. While this group is smaller, it still shows that some participants feel confident in their ability to navigate and assess information critically, likely due to previous education or personal experience.

Graph #41



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Perception on the impact fake news have in students' life

However, students appear to believe that they are not being tricked by fake news, nor are they victims of it.

The bar chart illustrates respondents' views on the extent to which they believe fake news impacts their behaviour and that of their friends, using a scale from 1 (no impact) to 5 (significant impact).

The most prominent bar is at level 3, indicating that the majority of respondents believe that fake news has a moderate impact on both their own behaviour and that of their friends. This suggests that while respondents acknowledge the influence of fake news, they do not perceive it as positive or negative impact.

Levels 4 and 5, which represent higher impact levels, are shorter but still significant. This indicates that a notable portion of respondents believe fake news has a strong impact on behaviour, either their own or their friends', reflecting concerns about the persuasive power of misinformation.

Levels 1 and 2, which represent the lower end of the impact scale, showing that fewer respondents believe fake news has little to no impact on behaviour. This suggests that while some individuals might feel immune to the effects of fake news, they are in the minority.

Overall, most respondents recognize that fake news has at least a moderate impact on behaviour, with a considerable number acknowledging a stronger influence. This reflects an awareness of the pervasive nature of fake news and its potential to shape perceptions and actions within social circles.

Graph #42

Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Trustworthiness of social media as a news source

The bar chart in the graph number 43 provides an overview of how students rated the trustworthiness of social media as a news source, with ratings ranging from 1 (least trustworthy) to 4 (most trustworthy).

The highest number of students rated social media at level 3, indicating that a significant portion of the respondents find social media to be moderately trustworthy. This suggests that while students may find some reliable information on social media, they remain cautious and do not fully trust it as a primary news source.

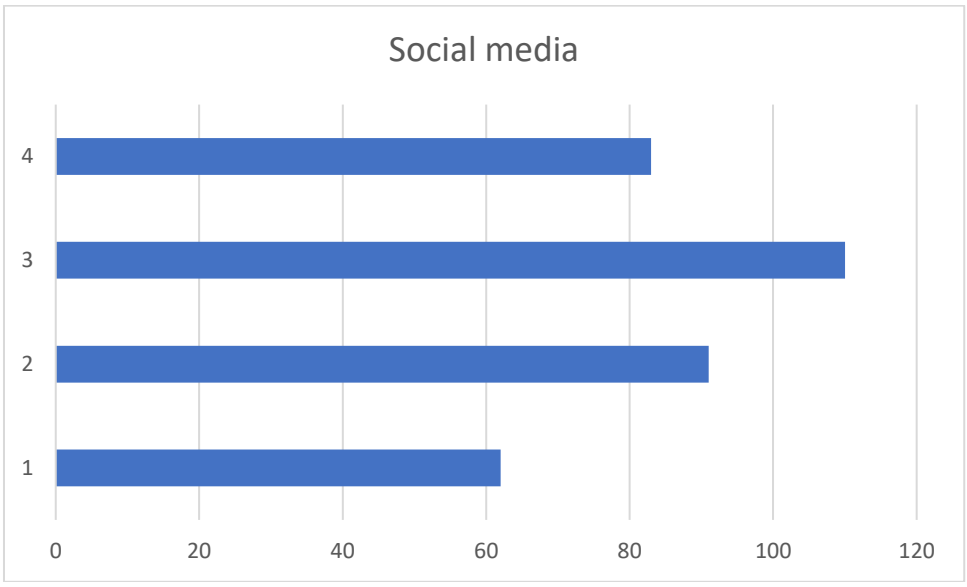
Level 4, which represents the highest level of trust, also has a considerable number of responses, showing that many students regard social media as a trustworthy source. This may indicate that some students have confidence in the specific sources they follow on these platforms or believe in the authenticity of user-generated content.

Level 2, which indicates a lower level of trust, has a notable number of responses as well. This suggests that a significant group of students view social media with scepticism, possibly due to the prevalence of misinformation or the varying credibility of content shared on these platforms.

The least number of students rated social media at level 1, indicating that a smaller portion of respondents find social media to be the least trustworthy source of news. While this group is smaller, it highlights the presence of strong scepticism among some students regarding the reliability of information on social media.

Overall, we have found a mixed perception of social media's trustworthiness among students, with a tendency towards moderate trust, but also significant scepticism.

Graph #43



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Trustworthiness of online newspapers and websites as news sources

Graph number 44 illustrates how students rated the trustworthiness of online newspapers and websites as news sources, with ratings ranging from 1 (least trustworthy) to 5 (most trustworthy).

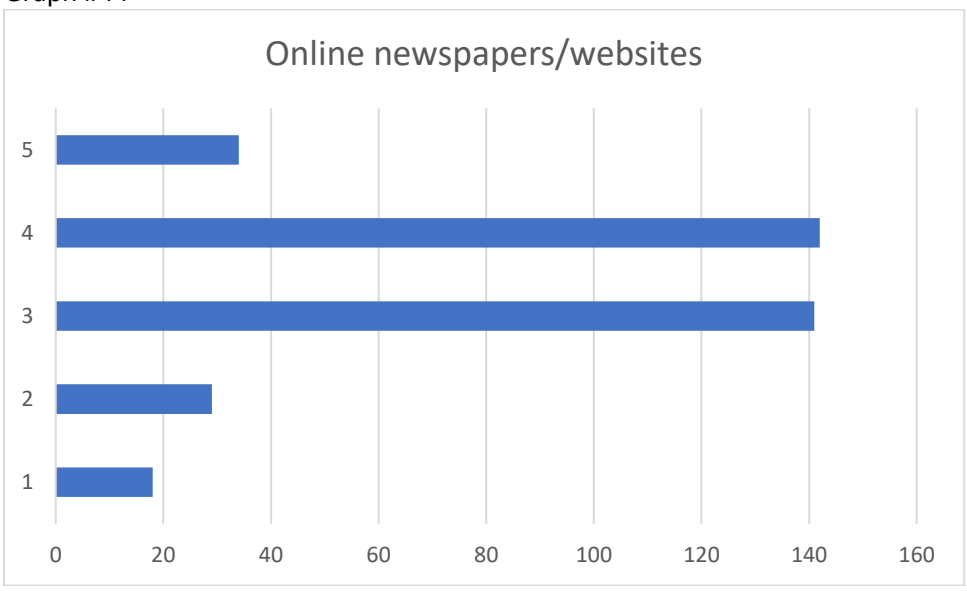
The majority of students rated online newspapers and websites at levels 4 and 3, with level 4 having the most responses. This suggests that a significant share of students consider these sources to be trustworthy, likely due to the established reputations of many online news outlets and the professional journalism standards they follow.

Level 3, which is also highly rated, indicates that many students view online newspapers and websites as moderately trustworthy. This reflects some level of trust but also suggests that students may still approach these sources with a degree of caution, possibly due to concerns about bias or the speed at which news is published online.

Level 2 has fewer responses, indicating that some students are sceptical of online newspapers and websites, perhaps questioning their accuracy or objectivity.

Level 1, the least trustworthy rating, has the fewest responses, showing that a small portion of students have very little trust in online newspapers and websites. This could reflect concerns about sensationalism, clickbait, or specific experiences with unreliable online news sources.

Graph #44



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Trustworthiness of television as news sources

As showed in Graph #45, the highest number of students rated television at level 4, indicating that many students consider television to be a fairly trustworthy source of news. This suggests that despite the rise of digital media, television remains a respected and reliable source of information for a significant portion of the student population.

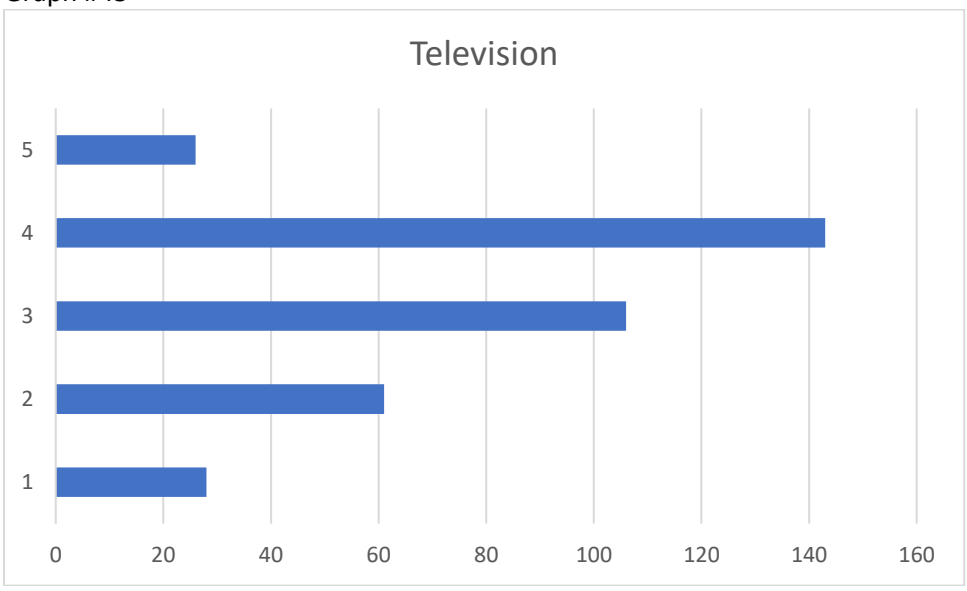
Level 3 also received a substantial number of responses, reflecting that many students view television as moderately trustworthy. This suggests that while television is generally trusted, some students may still approach it with a degree of caution, possibly due to concerns about bias or sensationalism.

Level 2 has fewer responses, indicating that some students are sceptical of the trustworthiness of television news, perhaps questioning the accuracy or objectivity of the content they see on TV.

Level 1, the least trustworthy rating, has the least responses, showing that only a small portion of students have very little trust in television as a news source. This might reflect concerns about sensationalism, perceived bias, or specific negative experiences with television news.

Level 5, representing the highest level of trust, also has a smaller number of responses, indicating that only a minority of students have complete confidence in television as a news source.

Graph #45



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Trustworthiness of radio as news sources

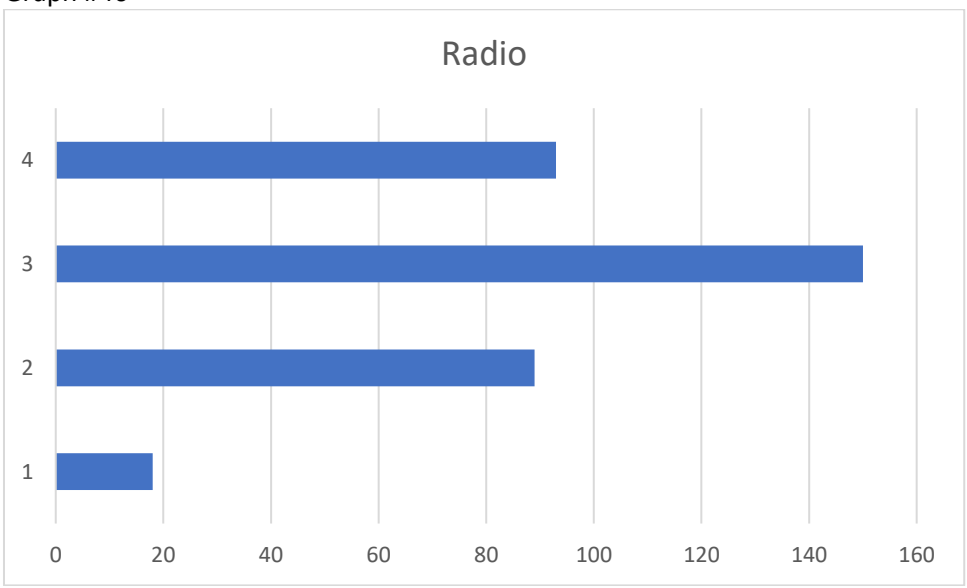
As showed in Graph #46, the majority of students rated radio at level 3, indicating that many students view radio as moderately trustworthy. This suggests that while students generally trust radio as a source of news, they may still approach it with some caution, possibly due to concerns about the quality or objectivity of the content.

Level 4 also has a significant number of responses, reflecting that a considerable portion of students find radio to be a trustworthy source of news. This suggests that radio is still regarded as a reliable medium for news dissemination by many students.

Level 2 has fewer responses, indicating that some students are skeptical of the trustworthiness of radio, possibly questioning its relevance or the accuracy of its content.

Level 1, the least trustworthy rating, has the fewest responses, showing that only a small portion of students have very little trust in radio as a news source. This might be due to specific negative experiences or a general preference for other media.

Graph #46



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Trustworthiness of printed newspapers and magazines as news sources

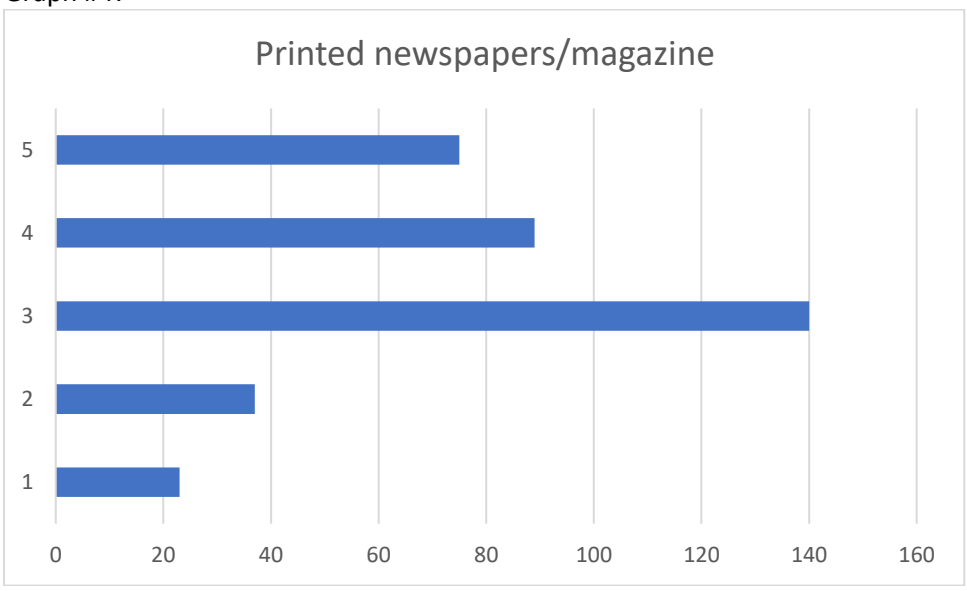
The highest number of students rated printed newspapers and magazines at level 3, indicating that a significant portion of students consider these sources to be moderately trustworthy, as showed in the Graph #47. This suggests that while printed media is generally respected, students may still exercise caution and not fully rely on it as their primary news source.

Level 4 also received a substantial number of responses, showing that many students view printed newspapers and magazines as trustworthy. This reflects a strong degree of confidence in the traditional media's ability to provide reliable and accurate information.

Level 5, the highest level of trustworthiness, has a notable number of responses, indicating that a smaller but significant group of students completely trusts printed newspapers and magazines as their news sources. This could be attributed to the perceived thoroughness and editorial standards associated with print journalism.

Levels 2 and 1, which represent lower levels of trust, have fewer responses. This suggests that while some students are sceptical of printed media, considering it less trustworthy, they are in the minority.

Graph #47



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Age

The next bar chart (Graph #48) illustrates the distribution of respondents across three different age groups: 12-15 years, 16-18 years, and 18+ years.

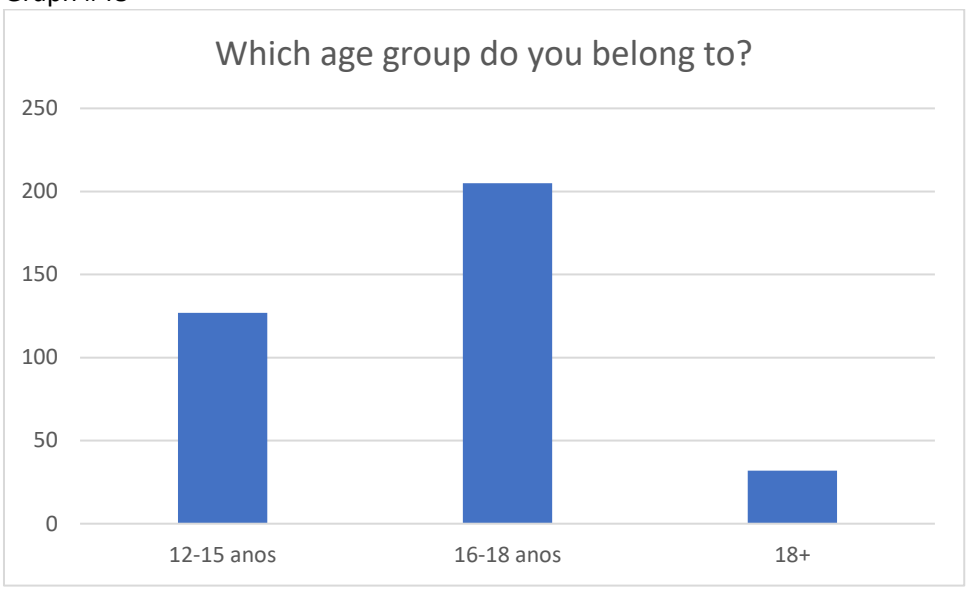
The majority of respondents fall into the 16-18 years age group, as indicated by the tallest bar. This suggests that the survey was primarily completed by individuals in this age range, making it the most represented demographic in the study.

The next largest group is the 12-15 years age category, showing that a significant number of younger adolescents also participated in the survey. This group, while smaller than the 16-18 years category, still represents a substantial portion of the respondents.

The smallest bar represents the 18+ age group, indicating that the fewest respondents belong to this category. This suggests that older adolescents or young adults were less represented in the survey.

Overall, the chart highlights that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 16 and 18, followed by those aged 12-15, with the 18+ group being the least represented. This age distribution provides context for interpreting the survey results, as the views and behaviors reported are likely to be most reflective of those in the 16-18 years age group.

Graph #48



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Gender

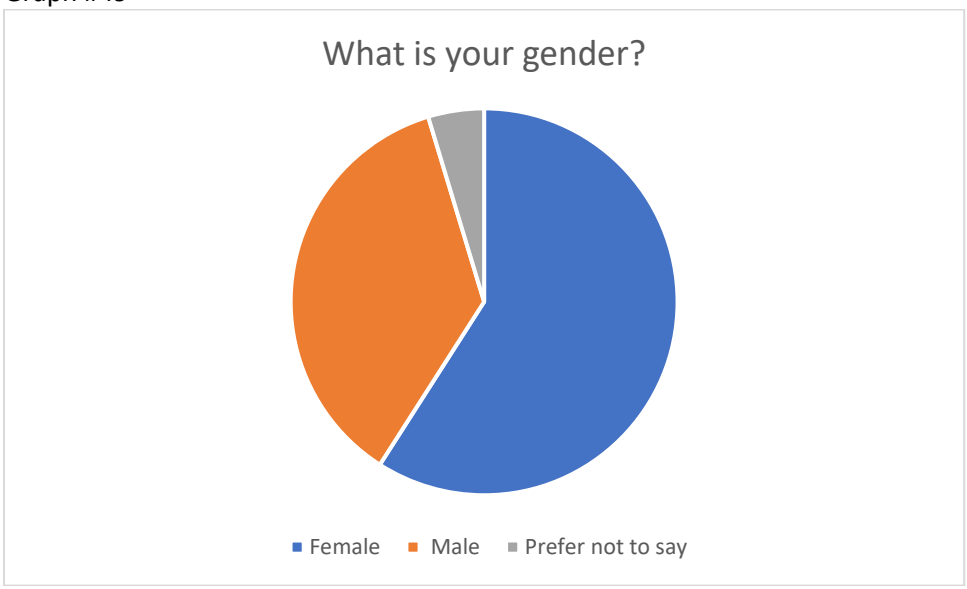
The pie chart displays the gender distribution of respondents to the survey. The chart is divided into three segments representing "Female," "Male," and "Prefer not to say."

The largest segment represents female respondents, indicating that the majority of survey participants identified as female. This suggests a higher level of participation from female students compared to other genders.

The second-largest segment represents male respondents. This segment is smaller than the female group, indicating that fewer males participated in the survey, but they still make up a significant portion of the respondents.

The smallest segment represents those who preferred not to disclose their gender. This group is the least represented, suggesting that only a small number of respondents chose to keep their gender confidential.

Graph #49



Source: Data collected by MILES project partners. Graphic edited by OLAE.

Challenges and Future Directions

The spread of fake news and disinformation across Europe has become a critical issue, threatening democratic processes, undermining trust in institutions, and disrupting social cohesion. This report explores the needs, challenges, and promising practices associated with combating disinformation at the European level. By analysing existing strategies and identifying gaps, the report offers recommendations for strengthening efforts to counter disinformation and promote media literacy across the continent. In recent years, the issue of fake news and disinformation has become increasingly pervasive across Europe, with far-reaching consequences for democratic societies.

The rise of digital media has revolutionized the way information is disseminated, but it has also facilitated the rapid spread of false and misleading content. This phenomenon has been particularly evident during election periods, public health crises, and major socio-political events, where disinformation has been used to manipulate public opinion and erode trust in democratic institutions.

The impact of fake news is not confined to any single country; it is a pan-European problem that requires coordinated efforts to address. While some European countries have been proactive in implementing measures to combat disinformation, others are still grappling with the challenges posed by the digital information landscape. This report aims to provide a detailed analysis of the needs, challenges, and promising practices in combating fake news across Europe. By understanding these factors, policymakers, educators, and media

organizations can develop more effective strategies to counter disinformation and enhance media literacy.

In recent years, Europe has witnessed significant disinformation campaigns targeting elections and referendums. For example, the 2017 French presidential election was heavily influenced by disinformation spread through social media, aiming to undermine the integrity of the electoral process. Similarly, Germany's federal elections have seen a surge in fake news, often used to sway voter opinions on sensitive issues like immigration and national security.

The Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom also highlighted the power of disinformation in shaping public opinion, with misleading claims about the European Union playing a significant role in the outcome. In Eastern Europe, countries like Hungary and Poland have faced challenges with state-sponsored disinformation campaigns aimed at bolstering authoritarian narratives and discrediting the European Union.

The impact of fake news extends beyond the political sphere, affecting public health, safety, and social trust. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Europe saw a massive wave of disinformation about the virus and vaccines, leading to public confusion and hesitancy. Anti-vaccine movements in countries like Italy and France have been fuelled by false information, contributing to lower vaccination rates and increased public health risks.

Media Literacy is a critical component in the fight against fake news and disinformation. It involves equipping individuals with the skills needed to critically evaluate information, understand the sources of news, and differentiate between credible and false content. In Europe, there is a significant need to enhance media literacy, particularly among younger populations and those with lower levels of formal education. Finland has been a leader in media literacy education, integrating it into the national curriculum from an early age. This proactive approach has resulted in a population that is better equipped to resist disinformation. By contrast, other European countries have only recently begun to prioritize media literacy, and there is a pressing need to expand these initiatives to reach broader segments of the population. Enhancing media literacy also involves addressing the specific challenges posed by social media. Given that many people, especially younger individuals, consume most of their news through social media platforms, it is essential to teach them how to navigate these platforms responsibly. This includes understanding how algorithms influence the content they see, recognizing the signs of fake news, and knowing how to verify the information before sharing it. The European Union has recognized the importance of media literacy in combating disinformation. The EU's Media Literacy Policy emphasizes the need for a coordinated effort across member states to improve media education, particularly in the digital age. Initiatives like the European Media Literacy Week aim to raise awareness and promote best practices in media literacy across the continent.

Another critical need in combating fake news is the establishment and strengthening of **regulatory frameworks** that can effectively address the spread of disinformation. In Europe, the European Union has taken significant steps to create a safer online environment through initiatives such as the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Code of Practice on Disinformation.

These regulations aim to enhance the transparency of digital platforms and hold them accountable for the content they host. The DSA represents a major advancement in the EU's approach to regulating online platforms. It introduces stricter requirements for platforms to monitor and remove illegal content, including fake news, and imposes penalties for non-compliance. This regulatory framework is designed to protect consumers, ensure transparency, and create a more accountable digital ecosystem. Furthermore, the EU's Code of Practice on Disinformation, launched in 2018, has been a voluntary agreement with major online platforms like Facebook, Google, and Twitter to tackle disinformation. Although it has made progress, the effectiveness of this Code has been limited by its voluntary nature, leading to calls for more binding measures. There is also a need for greater cooperation between European countries to create a unified approach to regulating digital platforms. Disinformation knows no borders, and a fragmented regulatory approach will be less effective in combating its spread. European countries should work together to harmonize their regulations and enforcement mechanisms, ensuring that disinformation is tackled consistently across the continent.

Public awareness is another crucial element in the fight against fake news. Educating the public about the dangers of disinformation and how to recognize it is essential to fostering a more informed and vigilant society. Public awareness campaigns can play a significant role in mitigating the impact of fake news by encouraging individuals to critically assess the information they encounter and to seek out credible sources. The European Commission has supported several initiatives aimed at raising public awareness about the dangers of disinformation. These include the EU's "#ThinkBeforeSharing" campaign, which encourages social media users to verify the accuracy of information before sharing it online. Such campaigns are crucial in creating a culture of critical thinking and scepticism towards unverified information. Public awareness campaigns should be tailored to different demographic groups, taking into account the varying levels of media literacy and digital engagement across Europe. For example, younger audiences may benefit from campaigns that use social media influencers to promote media literacy, while older adults may respond better to traditional media channels, such as television and print. Moreover, public awareness campaigns should not only focus on the negative aspects of fake news but also promote positive behaviours, such as fact-checking, responsible sharing of information, and supporting credible news sources. By fostering a culture of critical thinking and scepticism towards unverified information, these campaigns can help to reduce the spread of fake news and its impact on society.

One of the most significant challenges in combating fake news is **the role of social media platforms in its dissemination**. Social media has transformed the way people consume news, allowing information—both true and false—to spread rapidly and widely. The algorithms used by these platforms often prioritize content that generates engagement, which can include sensational or misleading information. The European Union has recognized the challenge posed by social media platforms and has taken steps to address it through regulations like the Digital Services Act. However, regulating social media remains complex due to the vast

amounts of content generated daily and the need to balance free speech with the prevention of harmful disinformation. Social media's role in the spread of fake news is further complicated by the echo chamber effect, where users are more likely to be exposed to information that reinforces their existing beliefs. This can lead to the entrenchment of false narratives and make it more difficult to correct misinformation. Addressing this challenge requires not only regulatory measures but also efforts to promote digital literacy and critical thinking among social media users. The European Union's efforts to engage with social media companies have led to some improvements, such as the introduction of more stringent content moderation policies. However, these measures are often reactive rather than proactive, and the effectiveness of self-regulation by these platforms has been questioned. The need for more rigorous oversight and accountability is clear, as the spread of fake news through social media continues to be a significant concern.

Trust in media and public institutions is another critical challenge in the fight against disinformation. Across Europe, there is a growing mistrust of traditional media outlets, driven by perceptions of bias, sensationalism, and political influence. This mistrust can lead individuals to seek out alternative sources of information, which may be less reliable and more prone to spreading fake news. The decline in trust in traditional media is a complex issue influenced by several factors, including the rise of populism, the increasing polarization of political discourse, and the proliferation of digital media. In some European countries, this mistrust has been exacerbated by state-sponsored disinformation campaigns that aim to undermine public confidence in democratic institutions and the media. Rebuilding trust in media and public institutions requires a multifaceted approach. Media organizations must prioritize transparency, accuracy, and accountability in their reporting. They should also engage in fact-checking and provide context for complex issues to help audiences better understand the news they consume. At the European level, initiatives like the European Media Freedom Act aim to protect media independence and pluralism, which are crucial for maintaining public trust. By ensuring that media outlets operate free from undue political and commercial pressures, the EU seeks to create an environment where credible journalism can thrive. Moreover, public institutions must improve their communication strategies to provide clear, factual, and timely information to the public. This includes being transparent about their sources of information and decision-making processes. By doing so, they can help to counteract the spread of disinformation and restore public confidence in their authority.

Educational disparities across Europe present a significant challenge in promoting media literacy and critical thinking skills. In countries with well-developed education systems, students are more likely to receive instruction in media literacy, equipping them to navigate the digital landscape more effectively. However, in countries where education systems are less robust, or where media literacy is not prioritized, individuals may be more vulnerable to disinformation. The European Union has recognized these disparities and has called for greater efforts to integrate media literacy into educational curricula across member states. Initiatives like the EU's Digital Education Action Plan emphasize the need for all citizens to acquire digital skills, including the ability to critically evaluate online content. Addressing these

disparities requires a coordinated effort between governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. It is essential to ensure that media literacy education is accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic background or geographic location. This includes providing resources and training for teachers, developing age-appropriate curricula, and supporting lifelong learning opportunities. Educational disparities also extend to adult populations, many of whom may not have had the opportunity to develop digital literacy skills during their formal education. For these individuals, community-based learning programs and public awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in bridging the gap and equipping them with the skills needed to identify and resist disinformation.

Several European countries have implemented **successful strategies to combat fake news**, providing valuable lessons for others. Finland, for instance, has been a pioneer in media literacy education, incorporating it into the curriculum from primary school onwards. This approach has led to a population that is more resilient to disinformation and serves as a model for other countries. Germany's Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG), introduced in 2017, requires social media platforms to remove illegal content, including fake news, within 24 hours. This law has been instrumental in holding platforms accountable and ensuring that harmful content is quickly addressed. Germany's approach highlights the importance of strong regulatory frameworks in the fight against disinformation. In France, the government has taken steps to counter disinformation through the establishment of a national task force dedicated to monitoring and combating fake news. The French law against the manipulation of information, passed in 2018, allows authorities to take legal action against those who spread false information that could affect the outcome of an election. This proactive approach has set a precedent for other European countries. Italy has also been active in combating fake news, particularly in the context of public health. The Italian government has partnered with fact-checking organizations and social media platforms to counteract disinformation related to COVID-19. These efforts have included public awareness campaigns and the promotion of accurate information through official channels.

Collaborative efforts between governments, media organizations, and civil society are essential to effectively combat disinformation. In the European Union, the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) plays a key role in bringing together fact-checkers, media literacy experts, and researchers to tackle disinformation. EDMO supports the monitoring and analysis of disinformation across Europe and promotes best practices in media literacy and fact-checking. The EU's Action Plan against Disinformation, launched in 2018, has also fostered collaboration between member states and the private sector. This plan emphasizes the importance of a coordinated response to disinformation, including sharing best practices, enhancing cross-border cooperation, and promoting the development of new tools to detect and counter fake news. Moreover, the EU has established rapid alert systems to facilitate the exchange of information between member states on disinformation threats. These systems enable countries to respond more quickly to emerging disinformation campaigns and to coordinate their efforts in countering them. Collaborative efforts are also evident in the work of international organizations like UNESCO, which has developed guidelines for media literacy

and the promotion of fact-based journalism. By partnering with governments and NGOs, UNESCO aims to enhance global efforts to combat disinformation and support the development of media literacy programs.

Technological innovations play a vital role in combating fake news. Tools such as AI-driven fact-checking algorithms, browser extensions that flag suspicious content, and platforms that aggregate fact-checked information are becoming increasingly important in the fight against disinformation. These technologies can help individuals identify fake news and make more informed decisions about the information they consume. In Europe, several initiatives have leveraged technology to combat disinformation. The European Union's Horizon 2020 program has funded research into new technologies for detecting and combating fake news. These innovations have the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness of efforts to address disinformation, particularly when combined with educational and regulatory measures. For example, AI technology is being used to analyse vast amounts of online content and identify patterns that indicate disinformation. Fact-checking organizations across Europe have also developed tools that allow users to quickly verify the accuracy of information they encounter online. These tools are often integrated into social media platforms or available as browser extensions, making them easily accessible to the public. So, we can say that technological innovations are not limited to detecting fake news; they also include efforts to improve the transparency and accountability of online platforms. For instance, blockchain technology is being explored as a way to verify the authenticity of news sources and track the origins of information. By enhancing transparency, such technologies can help to reduce the spread of disinformation and restore trust in online media.

One of the primary challenges identified is the inconsistent integration of media literacy across different subjects and educational levels. Educators often face difficulties incorporating media literacy into the curriculum due to a lack of structured guidelines and resources. This inconsistency leads to significant gaps in students' knowledge and skills in evaluating digital information critically.

Teacher training and support present another major challenge. Many educators lack sufficient training in media literacy and critical thinking, resulting in varied levels of preparedness among teachers. The need for continuous professional development programs is critical, as current training often does not keep pace with technological advancements and evolving media landscapes. Resource constraints further complicate the effective teaching of media literacy. Schools often struggle with limited access to modern technology and updated educational materials. This limitation hinders the implementation of comprehensive media literacy programs, making it difficult for educators to engage students in critical thinking about online information. Educators also face the challenge of engaging students who are heavily reliant on the internet for information. Students often accept online content at face value without critical analysis, influenced by the convenience and immediate availability of digital sources. This reliance on digital information without scrutiny exacerbates the spread of

misinformation. The rapid advancement of technology is another significant challenge. Educational systems struggle to keep up with these changes, making it hard to maintain up-to-date media literacy education. This issue is compounded by the influence of social media algorithms and echo chambers, which limit exposure to diverse perspectives and hinder critical evaluation of information.

To address these challenges, a multi-faceted approach involving comprehensive strategies and systemic support is necessary. One of the key future directions is the development and implementation of standardized media literacy curricula that span all educational levels. These curricula should focus on critical thinking, source evaluation, and bias recognition, ensuring students are equipped with the skills needed to navigate the digital landscape responsibly. Continuous professional development for teachers is crucial. Training programs must be designed to cover both the technical aspects of digital tools and the pedagogical strategies for discussing controversial topics and misinformation. Such programs should aim to enhance teachers' media literacy expertise and keep them updated with the latest tools and methodologies. Resource allocation is another critical area for future improvement. Ensuring equitable access to digital tools and updated educational materials across schools is essential. Increased funding and support for media literacy initiatives can help bridge the gap in resources, enabling schools to implement more effective programs. Parental and community involvement is also important. Engaging parents in media literacy efforts can complement school initiatives and provide a consistent message about the importance of critical thinking and responsible media consumption. Creating partnerships between schools, parents, and community organizations can foster a supportive environment for students.

Finally, fostering a culture of critical inquiry and media literacy through collaborative efforts is essential. Stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, media professionals, and civil society, must work together to promote media literacy and critical thinking. Such collaboration can lead to the development of cohesive policies and the allocation of resources necessary for sustained impact.

Recommendations & Conclusions

In **Italy**, the report emphasizes the need for integrating media literacy into school curricula across all levels. Structured educational programs are recommended to teach critical thinking, source verification, and the impact of misinformation. Continuous professional development for teachers is crucial, focusing on equipping educators with skills to teach media literacy effectively through hands-on activities and practical exercises. Adequate funding and resources should be allocated to support these initiatives, including resources for teacher

training, digital tools, and educational materials. Collaboration with external experts, such as journalists and media professionals, is encouraged to provide students with practical insights into the news-making process and the importance of verifying information. Promoting critical thinking through interdisciplinary programs that combine scientific and humanistic elements is also highlighted. Policymakers are advised to develop clear policies and guidelines to support the consistent implementation of media literacy education across all schools, creating a unified framework for adoption.

In **Austria**, the focus is on modernizing education to integrate digital literacy comprehensively. Continuous professional development for teachers is deemed essential, covering both technical aspects of digital tools and pedagogical strategies for discussing controversial topics and misinformation. The report highlights the importance of engaging, gamified learning experiences to make media literacy education more appealing to students. Collaborations between schools, parents, and community organizations are vital to creating a supportive ecosystem for students. Encouraging a critical approach to information and promoting the use of fact-checking resources are key strategies in combating the spread of fake news.

The report from **Cyprus** calls for comprehensive professional development programs tailored to equip teachers with the pedagogical tools needed to integrate media literacy into their teaching practices effectively. This includes strategies for content analysis, source evaluation, and practical application of critical thinking in diverse subject areas. There is a consensus on the necessity to embed media literacy education into the core curriculum, with schools encouraged to establish media literacy clubs and extracurricular activities that foster hands-on learning experiences. Systemic reforms are essential to institutionalize media literacy education across all educational levels in Cyprus, advocating for coherent education policies that mandate the inclusion of media literacy as a core competency. Public awareness campaigns are recommended to raise awareness about the importance of media literacy among policymakers, educators, parents, and the broader community.

In **Greece**, the need for a cohesive strategic plan to promote media and information literacy and combat disinformation through a holistic approach is highlighted. Starting media education from the primary school level is emphasized, with parameterized interventions adjustable to age needs and intensified as students progress from primary to secondary education. The report calls for addressing systemic barriers, such as bureaucratic constraints and the lack of specialized media educators, to enhance the effectiveness of media literacy education.

The recommendations and conclusions from the report on media literacy and combating disinformation in **Portugal** emphasize the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach. The primary recommendation is to embed media literacy across all educational disciplines, starting early in children's lives and continuing through higher education. This integrated

approach ensures that students develop critical thinking skills necessary for navigating the digital landscape effectively. Continuous professional development for teachers is also highlighted as crucial, with an emphasis on training in areas such as disinformation, artificial intelligence literacy, and algorithmic literacy.

The involvement of families and the broader community is considered essential in creating a supportive learning environment. Initiatives like the Digital Academy for Parents and the Digital Leaders project are recommended as promising practices that empower parents with digital skills and engage students in promoting the safe and conscious use of digital technologies. The report also stresses the importance of pre-emptive measures to combat disinformation, such as pre-bunking strategies and demonetizing sites that propagate false information.

Additionally, the report calls for better coordination and integration of various initiatives to avoid the overload caused by fragmented projects. Long-term, contextualized projects developed by school groups and local authorities, which promote continuous and collective learning, are suggested as effective strategies. The involvement of students in these projects is essential to ensure a collaborative and inclusive approach.

Technological advancements and legislative measures also play a pivotal role in combating disinformation. The Portuguese Digital Rights Charter and the European Digital Media Observatory's IBERIFIER project provide frameworks for addressing the legal and technical aspects of disinformation. The report underscores the need for a robust policy support framework to foster a media-literate society capable of critical thinking and informed decision-making.

Governments should prioritize the integration of media literacy into national education systems, ensuring that students receive instruction in critical thinking, fact-checking, and responsible media consumption from an early age. This education should be made available not only to students but also to adults through lifelong learning programs. European countries should work together to strengthen regulatory frameworks that hold digital platforms accountable for the spread of disinformation. This includes enforcing existing regulations, such as the DSA, and developing new policies that address emerging challenges in the digital landscape. Public awareness campaigns that educate citizens about the dangers of fake news and how to identify disinformation should be expanded and sustained. These campaigns should be tailored to different demographic groups and delivered through a variety of channels, including traditional media, social media, and community outreach programs. Collaboration between governments, media organizations, educational institutions, and civil society is essential for creating a coordinated response to disinformation. European countries should support and participate in initiatives like EDMO and other collaborative efforts that bring together stakeholders to share best practices and develop innovative solutions.

Investing in technological innovations that can help detect and combat fake news should be a priority. Governments and private sector partners should support research and development in this area, ensuring that new tools and technologies are widely available and accessible to the public. The challenge of combating fake news and disinformation in Europe is complex and multifaceted, requiring a comprehensive and coordinated approach. While significant progress has been made in countries like Finland, Germany, and France, much work remains to be done to ensure that all European citizens are equipped with the tools and knowledge they need to navigate the digital information landscape. By enhancing media literacy, strengthening regulatory frameworks, promoting public awareness, encouraging collaboration, and leveraging technological innovations, European nations can build resilience against the spread of fake news and ensure the integrity of their information ecosystems.

In conclusion, the **recommendations highlight a holistic approach involving robust teacher training, community involvement, legislative measures, and technological advancements**. The integration of media literacy across the educational spectrum, supported by advanced research and coordinated efforts, is essential for fostering a media-literate society capable of critical thinking and informed decision-making.

Overall, these reports collectively underscore the **importance of integrating media literacy into educational curricula, providing ongoing professional development for teachers, securing adequate funding and resources, fostering collaborations with external experts and community organizations, and developing clear policies and guidelines to support media literacy education**. By addressing these recommendations, the goal of fostering a well-informed and critically thinking youth capable of navigating the digital landscape responsibly can be achieved.

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Annex 1 - List of people involved in the interview phase & their profile

Policy Makers				
N°	**Initials**	**Short Profile**	**M/F/non-binary**	**Date of involvement**
1	VT	Visiting researcher: CIES-ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon. Assistant Professor – Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa. Expert: Council of Europe Focal point (CIES-ISCTE) in IBERIFIER – Iberian Media Research and Fact-checking.	M	20/06/2024
2	MJH	Deputy Director General for Education – Directorate General for Education	F	31/05/2024
3	MFS	Policy Maker. Expert at the Portuguese Authority for Communication (ERC). University professor.	M	08/06/2024
4	CRM	Policy Maker. Expert at the Information Centre Jacques Delors in Portugal. University professor	M	02/06/2024
5	MRM	Policy Maker. Expert in legal rules to tackle disinformation and fake news.	M	06/06/2024
6	S.O.	CNR Researcher	F	27/05/2024
7	L.D.M.	Media expert, founder of an association for media literacy.	M	31/05/2024
8	M.M.	Project Manager, Project Designer and member of Rete INA.	F	18/06/2024
9	M.B.	Project Manager and Journalist	M	13/06/2024
10	G.C.	Dean of the secondary school	M	5/052024
11	LC	Researcher at the Institute for Educational Sciences, national curriculum developer for history, university professor, University of Bucharest	F	19/04/2024
12	MF	University professor of philosophy, volunteer manager of Philosophy Club for children, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj	F	19/04/2024
13	CL	Director of the Centre for Independent Journalism (NGO), Bucharest	F	26/04/2024

14	BR	Program coordinator at the Centre for Independent Journalism (NGO), Bucharest	F	26/04/2024
15	NV	Program developer, manager, trainer at Centre for Public Innovation (NGO), Bucharest	F	17/04/2024
16	LT	Academic & Founder of the Fact Check Cyprus (private university)	F	29/5/2024
17	CK	Academic (private university)	F	29/5/2024
18	NK	Director -Institute for Mass Media (public authority)	M	4/6/2024
19	DT	Lecturer in Journalism and Media (public university)	M	30/6/2024
20	LT	Academic & Founder of the Fact Check Cyprus (private university)	F	29/5/2024
21	BP	Expert on media, radicalisation, visual language, polarisation and propaganda at Mediawijs. The Flemish Knowledge Centre for Digital and Media Literacy	M	05/06/2024 Online
22	OVD	He is a former teacher, now works at the Knowledge Center Digisprong within the Flemish government	M	17/06/2024 focus group online
23	SS	Works for the City of Antwerp in the department of Social Safety, focusing on preventing dangerous radicalization	F	17/06/2024 focus group online
24	JB	Senior researcher and lecturer at Artevelde University of Applied Sciences. His research currently focuses on news use and disinformation among children and adolescents.	M	24/06/2024 focus group online
25	JS	After years as a history teacher, she became a lecturer and researcher at the Artevelde University abbreviated secondary teacher training programme.	F	24/06/2024 focus group online
26	OC	He is a specialist in the detection of (online) radicalisation. He is the Head of Textgain Academy, a spin-off from the University of Antwerp specialising in artificial intelligence, particularly natural language processing.	M	19/06/2024 answered questions through recording
27	S. P.	Head of Department, Educational Radiotelevision and Digital Media Dept., Ministry of Education	F	01/05/2024
28	I. G.	Representative of the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Attica	M	02/05/2024
29	A. A.	Vice-Mayor of Education, Piraeus Municipality	F	02/05/2024

30	A. M.	Vice-Mayor of Education, Paiania Municipality	M	30/05/2024
31	K. G.	Vice-Mayor of Education, Ag. Paraskevi Municipality	M	31/05/2024
32	A. G.	Vice-Mayor of Education, Nea Philadelphia Municipality	M	7/06/2024
33	DK	Worker of Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	F	22/05/2024
34	MK	Worker of Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	F	22/05/2024
35	PS	Worker of Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	F	22/05/2024
36	AK	Worker of Rzeszow Regional Development Agency	F	22/05/2024
37	MD	Worker of Voivodeship Labour Office in Rzeszów	M	22/05/2024
38	IOB	International Project Manager at IP Center	F	14/05/2024 online
39	AR	University Assistant, Post Doc at University of Vienna	F	15/05/2024 online
40	MS	Unit for Media education at Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research	F	16/05/2024 online
41	BB	Pedagogical head at Saferinternet.at	F	17/05/2024 online
42	MS	Head of Public & Communication Affairs at Teach for Austria	F	24/05/2024 online
	Actors working in school			
N°	**Initials**	**Short Profile**	**M/F/non-binary**	**Date of involvement**
1	CB	Extracurricular activities teacher University Student	F	05/06/2024
2	LC	University professor. Project manager and coordinator.	M	01/06/2024
3	AVN	High-school teacher	M	05/06/2024
4	JMV	University professor. Expert on economic impacts of fake news and disinformation.	M	06/06/2024
5	JS	University professor.	M	05/06/2024
6	SP	Media educator in schools as a mission of the local community radio	M	03/06/2024
7	UP	Lecturer at the University for Media Education	F	04/06/2024
8	TS	CPD developer	M	29/05/2024

9	FG	Secondary school teacher and coordinator of sciences department	M	07/06/2024
10	FD	Principal and teacher trainer	M	28/05/2024
11	C	Secondary school teacher	F	02/06/2024
12	S	Teacher and AE trainer for German as a foreign language	F	07/06/2024
13	BB	Secondary school teacher	F	29/05/2024
14	SS	School teacher in VET	F	30/05/2024
15	G.G.	Teaches Italian and History in secondary school.	F	29/05/2024
16	T.V.	Teacher of biological sciences and earth sciences at a secondary school.	F	29/05/2024
17	A.M.	Teaches applied general psychology to students in secondary-level school, and also social sciences and communication.	F	29/05/2024
18	M.R.A.	French teacher at secondary school, with extensive experience.	F	29/05/2024
19	B.L.D.	Administrative officer at secondary school. Works primarily in accounting, within the school system.	M	6/06/2024
20	CS	Teacher of social studies	F	19/04/2024
21	AG	Teacher, director of education in a private school, former journalist	F	19/04/2024
22	HC	Teacher of Romanian language and literature, school inspector, trainer, textbook author, regular contributor to a journal, Cluj County	M	17/04/2024
23	MH	Teacher of Romanian language and literature, school principal, trainer, textbook author, Bistrita-Nasaud County	F	17/04/2024
24	DM	Teacher of Romanian language and literature, trainer, Bucharest	F	23/04/2024
25	MK	Undergraduate Student - Representative of the Journalism Club of the University of Cyprus	F	29/5/2024
26	EM	Secondary teacher	F	8/6/2024
27	HN	Researcher-Trainer	F	8/6/2024
28	KA	HR-Trainer	F	8/6/2024

29	AM	Trainer	M	8/6/2024
30	EA	Secondary teacher	F	8/6/2024
31	LA	Secondary teacher	M	8/6/2024
32	TA	Teacher	M	8/6/2024
33	AS	Trainer	F	8/6/2024
34	AK	Trainer	F	8/6/2024
35	BA	Trainer	M	8/6/2024
36	KS	Youth worker-Teacher	M	8/6/2024
37	NL	Entrepreneurship teacher	M	8/6/2024
38	SVB	Teacher history, geography, and humanities	F	12/06/2024 focus group online
39	CEF	Islamic religious education teacher	M	12/06/2024 focus group online
40	HK	Teacher active citizenship	M	12/06/2024 focus group online
41	MZ	Student secretary	F	12/06/2024 focus group online
42	EVH	Teacher active citizenship	F	14/06/2024 online
43	Z. T.	Teacher	F	12/04/2024
44	T. L.	Teacher	F	12/04/2024
45	T. E.	Teacher	F	12/04/2024
46	P. C.	Teacher	F	12/04/2024
47	F. K.	Teacher	F	12/04/2024

48	A. M.	Teacher	M	12/04/2024
49	K. T.	Teacher	M	12/04/2024
50	MJM	University Assistant, PhD at Rzeszow University of Technology	F	22/05/2024
51	NP	University Assistant, MSc at Rzeszow University of Technology	F	22/05/2024
52	JSR	University Assistant, PhD at Rzeszow University of Technology	F	22/05/2024
53	AMW	University Assistant, PhD at Rzeszow University of Technology	F	22/05/2024
54	BZ	University Assistant, PhD at Rzeszow University of Technology	M	22/05/2024
55	JH	Trainer	F	30/04/2024 online focus group
56	TZ	Trainer	M	30/04/2024 online focus group
57	VD	Trainer	F	30/04/2024 online focus group
58	MK	Trainer	F	30/04/2024 online focus group
59	VS	Teacher	F	06/05/2024 online
Stakeholders				
N°	**Initials**	**Short Profile**	**M/F/non-binary**	**Date of involvement**
1	BA	Media literacy educator. Worked as an international expert at the Forum on Media and Information Literacy for UNESCO's Communication and Information Section. Founder of the International Symposium on Media Literacy Research. President of the International Council for Media Literacy (IC4ML). Author of Media Literacy for Justice (ALA: Neal Schuman, 2022), Teaching Media Literacy (ALA: Neal-Schuman, 2019) and editor of Media	F	31/05/2024

		Literacy, Equity and Justice (Routledge 2023), among other publications. Awarded the National Prize for Media Education 2021 Consultant to the Informal Media Literacy Group (GILM)		
2	CM	Vice-president of the Parent´s Association of the São João de Brito School |Journalist |	F	07/06/2024
3	VC	SUPERIOR TECHNICIAN/PSYCHOLOGIST – Psychologist at the Multidisciplinary Office for Prospecting and Investments - Vila Franca de Xira City Council	F	6/06/2024
4	SS	Representative of parents' association	M	
5	LF	University employee and trainer	F	
6	PS	Media expert	M	03/06/2024
7	L.S.	Journalist	M	28/05/2024
8	L.G.	NGO	F	13/06/2024
9	ES	Professor of education, Al I Cuza University Iasi	F	16/05/2024
10	LM	Professor of education, Lucian Blaga University Sibiu	F	16/05/2024
11	NF	Head of communication/Journalist	F	29/5/2024
12	MC	Member of the Parents' Association and the Federation	M	3/6/2024
13	TV	Journalist and expert on digital media for VRT NWS	M	11/06/2024
14	TVL	UX researcher and EduTech expert at VRT Sandbox	M	12/06/2024
15	H. V.	Fact-Checker, Hellenic Hoaxes	F	11/04/2024
16	L. G.	Director of Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence, Homo Digitalis	F	11/04/2024
17	E. D.	Head of Department, Dept. of innovative actions and strategy, Cyber Crime Division, Hellenic Police	F	18/04/2024
18	D. T.	Project Manager, Athens Technology Centre	F	24/04/2024

19	AŁ	Student at University of Rzeszow	F	22/05/2024
20	ZH	Student at University of Rzeszow	F	22/05/2024
21	GT	Media Content Developer	F	18/04/2024 face-to-face
22	PR	Media Expert	M	18/04/2024 face-to-face

Annex 2 – Template for interviews

1.Stakeholders

Introductory questions:

- Can you tell us more about yourself and the work you do connected to fake news, disinformation and media literacy?

- What is your view on the state of the art in your context regarding these topics?

Main Questions:

- What is the role of schools in combating disinformation?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of school education on media literacy and disinformation?
- Do you know any good practice and/or resources that can be useful and effective, to tackle the spread of disinformation or help with the integration of media literacy in schools' environment, with young people and with teachers?
- What challenges are young people facing on this matter and/or what danger do you see related to it?
- Can you share examples of successful initiatives or projects that have empowered educators and/or students to combat fake news and disinformation in educational settings?
- Is there something else you would like to add?

**if a parent, additional question can be: do you think you yourself have to teach your child how to deal with fake news and disinformation?*

1.2. Policy Makers

Introductory questions:

- Can you tell us more about your work and the work you do connect to fake news, disinformation, and media literacy?
- What is your view on the state of the art in your context regarding these topics?

Main Questions:

- What is the state of the art in the national context? Is media literacy a cross approached in a transversal manner, across the curriculum, or does it stand on its own if it exists in the national curriculum?
- Do you know any strategies, action plans or policies in your country to tackle disinformation and/or to promote media literacy?
- Are there any guidelines for teachers/educators to be implemented in the curriculum concerning media literacy?
- Is there any support for the implementation of those guidelines?
- Do you think teachers/educators need some training or are they already trained, if the latter, how is the training implemented?

- Is there any monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and/or learning of media literacy? If so, what are the findings?
- What measures do you propose to empower educators with the necessary tools and training to effectively address fake news and promote media literacy?
- What role do you see technology playing in enhancing media literacy education and combating fake news in schools?
- What barriers do you see in implementing media literacy initiatives in schools, and how do you propose to overcome them?
- How can partnerships between government agencies, NGOs and educational institutions be strengthened to support media literacy initiatives?
- What specific tools and skills do you know, if any, that can be considered useful resources?

3. Actors working in school

Introductory questions:

- Can you tell us more about your work and the work you do connect to fake news, disinformation, and media literacy?

- What is your view on the state of the art in your context regarding these topics?

Main Questions:

- Is the topic of media literacy and disinformation addressed in your school? If yes, what ways?
- Do you encounter challenges on addressing media literacy and disinformation in your school?
- What needs do you identify, regarding prevention of disinformation and fake news?
- Can you tell us about a personal event regarding this topic that you dealt with?
- Do you want to share any tools and best practices that can support training on media literacy and tackling disinformation?
- In your experience, what kind of methodology works best with students?
- Can you identify some existing resources that could be used in a wider form by other teachers?
- Are there any guidelines for teachers?
- Are there any training programmes? If so, can you tell us more?
- Do you think the existing trainings are sufficient for the current needs?
- What form of training do you think would be more useful?
- Can you share with us some resources if you know any?
- Have you seen any evolution on this topic in the last 5 or 10 years?

Annex 3 – Questionnaires addressed to adults

Section 1: Sociodemographic Profile

1.1 Age

- 19-24 years
- 25-35 years
- 36-45 years
- 46-55 years
- +55 years

1.2 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Rather not say

1.4 Level of Education

- Elementary education
- High School education
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD
- Vocational education

Other _____

1.7 – You are a person who is:

- Unemployed
- Journalist
- Educator/Teacher
- Psychologist
- University Student
- Researcher
- Other:

1.7.1 - If you've selected you're a teacher, please select the area of teaching:

- STEM
- Humanities
- Mathematics
- Art
- Other. Specify _____

Section 2: Exposure to News Sources

2.1 Primary News Sources (multiple choice):

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Online newspapers/websites
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio/Podcast
- ☐ Printed newspapers/magazine
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2.2 Frequency of Engaging with News Content:

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Weekly
- Less often

2.3 - Trust Level in Different News Sources: Rate your trust in the following sources on a scale of 1 (low trust) to 5 (high trust):

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Online newspapers/websites
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio/Podcast
- ☐ Printed newspapers/magazine
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2.4- Which of the following social networks do you consider the fake news and disinformation are most likely to spread?

Please rate from 1 meaning „least likely“ to 5 meaning „most likely“

- YouTube 1-2 -3 – 4 -5
- Twitter/X 1-2-3-4-5
- Instagram 1-2-3-4-5
- Tik Tok 1-2-3-4-5
- Facebook 1-2-3-4-5

Section 3: Perception and Impact of Fake News

3.1 - Awareness of fake news: Have you ever come across what you believe to be fake news?

- Yes
- No

3.2 To what extent do you think the fake news have an impact on the following?
Please rate from 1 to 5, 1 meaning „not at all“ and 5 meaning „extremely“

- Democracy
- Personal life
- Health
- Politics
- Economy
- Other

3.3 Credibility Assessment: What ways do you adopt to determine the credibility of a news source?

- Check sources.
- Cross-reference with other media outlets.
- Engage in an open discussion with others.
- Other, please specify

3.3. What criteria do you consider important when you asess the credibility of a news source?

- Title
- Grammatical errors
- Author
- Source
- Other

Section 4: Information Seeking Behavior

4.1 - How often do you seek additional information to verify the accuracy of news reports or articles?

- Never
- Frequently
- Very often
- Always

4.2 Where do you usually seek additional information to verify the accuracy of news reports or articles? (Multiple choice)

- Official government websites
- Fact-checking websites
- Trusted news
- Academic or research papers
- Other (please specify) _____

Section 5: Media Literacy and Education

5.1 - Have you received any formal or nonformal education or training in media literacy

- Yes
- No

5.1.1 - What means of developing your media literacy or critical thinking skills have you used, if any?

- Face-to-face training
- Online courses
- Reading books, articiles
- Watching videos
- Listening to podcasts
- None of the above
- Other means

5.2 – What is your preferred learning format? (multiple choice)

- In-presence

- Online course

- Book

- Article

- Video

- Podcast

- Other:

5.3 - What kind of topics would you loke to have in a course aiming to develop media literacy and critical thinking skills?

- how to access and locate suitable media and information sources

- How to identify fake news and misinformation
- how to assess quality media
- how to use media, app and other tools in daily life
- how to protect yourself from the influence of fake news
- how to develop lesson plans and include tools in classrooms
- Other:

Section 6: Needs, Best Practices and Examples

6.1 - Are there any specific tools, resources, or initiatives you believe could be effective in combating the spread of fake news? If you're a teacher, please give some resource information you know already:

6.2 - What specific training or educational materials do you need or think would be useful to improve MIL and counter disinformation?

Thank you for your contribution!

Annex 4 – Questionnaire addressed to young people

As a young person today, you are growing up in a globalised world and processing information from a wider variety of sources than ever before. There is an increasing amount of fake news and false information being spread on social media and the internet. We would like to ask you to complete this questionnaire to find out what you think about this. It should take you no more than 5 minutes.

A. FAKE NEWS KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

1. What do you think is 'fake news'? (you can choose more than one option)

False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media
News that is false and fabricated
News that is purposefully written to be incorrect
Other

2. How do you know that a piece of news is fake?

Factchecked
Renounced by mainstream media
Own judgement
Other

3. Which of the following social media platforms do you use?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter/X
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Twitch
- ☐ Discord
- ☐ Whatsapp
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Google+
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. Which are the main channels that you use as a source of news?

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Online newspapers/websites
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio/Podcasts
- ☐ Printed newspapers/magazine
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ I do not purposefully use any source of news

5. **Are you aware of having seen examples of fake news or deliberately misleading information?**
   - ☐ Yes (please specify what kind)
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ I am not sure

You can see several examples here (each partner to find current national examples):

- *Supermodels apply these 3 simple tricks to look young. Click to know what they are.*
- *BREAKING: Obama and Hillary now promising amnesty to any illegal that votes democrat*
- *A species of spider new to the U.S. has a lethal bite which killed five people in the summer of 2018*

6. **How often do you encounter fake news?**
   - ☐ Every hour
   - ☐ Every day
   - ☐ Once a week
   - ☐ Almost never

7. **Do you have friends or family who have shared fake news on purpose?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ I am not sure

8. Did you ever flag "fake news"? or as Option: Do you know anyone who flagged fake news?

Flagging: Process of identifying or marking contente as potentially false, misleading or unreliable.

   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

9. **Have you discussed the topic of fake news in any of the following situations:** (you can choose more than one option)
   - ☐ At school
   - ☐ With the family
   - ☐ With friends
   - ☐ At work

☐ Other places (please specify)
☐ I haven't discussed fake news

10. Do you think you have been adequately taught to deal with fake news?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I am not sure

11. Do you think fake news has an impact on your behavior and your friends' behavior?

Please rate from 1 meaning "very impactful" to 5 meaning "no impact at all"

- Impact of fake news 1-2-3-4-5

12. Rate the following news source from the most trustworthy to the least trustworthy

Options:

Social media
Online newspapers/websites
Television
Radio
Printed newspapers/magazine

13. **What else do you associate with "Fake News"?** (open question – not mandatory

- **<u>GENERAL INFORMATION</u>**

14. Which age group do you belong to?

☐ 12-15
☐ 16-18
☐ 18+

15. What is your gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say