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State of art of social
and civic competences
and values awareness

BULGARIA



Introduction

As nationalism and xenophobia are increasing in Europe, the RAIN.BOW project aims to promote social inclusion and positive European values through the introduction of non-formal education and methods into the school education. The project will create a heterogeneous community which will be trained to carry out European Values campaign and to promote empathy and understanding.

Thanks to the RAIN.BOW approach each project target group (secondary school teachers and students) will interiorize concepts and strategies becoming able to promote common values and civic competences.

This report is based on the results of two inquiries that have been carried out between May and September 2020 in Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Romania and Spain.

Those inquiries were addressed to secondary-level teachers and students from 12 to 19 years old and aimed at studying among others:

- Teachers' awareness of the characteristics of the media processes,
- Teachers' needs of methodological support and teaching materials,
- Teachers' knowledge and competences on civic education,
- Teachers' knowledge on the connection between civic awareness and hate speech and intolerance,
- Students' perception on prejudices, tolerance, civic competences, social media, ...
- Students' needs for material.

Those inquiries gathered 1741 answers at the European level (254 for teachers, 1487 for students). At the Bulgarian level, the inquiries gathered 51 answers for teachers and 192 for students.

The present report aims at establishing a full picture of the needs, perceptions and awareness of teachers and learners from Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Romania and Spain. It also includes an analysis of non-formal methodologies and tools applicable for training on civic education, media literacy and critical thinking in secondary level schools.

"The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



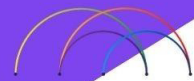
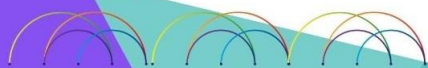


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Part 1/ Secondary level teachers' perceptions on social and civic education and media processes

Civic and social education in Bulgaria

1. Topics addressed by civic and social education in Bulgaria

Currently, social and civic education in Bulgaria is implemented using the subjects of the cultural and educational domain: Social Sciences and Civic Education. This domain encompasses different subjects from the curriculum in all school stages and its mission is to develop the social culture of the students and to contribute to the fulfillment of the civic mission of education.

In the lower stages of education, these subjects are integrative – they cover topics that provide basic social knowledge about the society, democracy and social culture, starting from concepts like family and community, and gradually expanding them.

In primary education, the subjects are: "Homeland" (1st grade), "Surrounding world" (2nd grade; it gives the basic prep also to the subjects in the field of the domain "Natural sciences and ecology") and "Human and society" (3rd and 4th grades). In middle school (5th to 7th grades), those integrative subjects transform to "History and civilization" and "Geography and economics".

During the high-school stage, in addition to the subjects from the middle school, come the subjects from the cycle "Philosophy" ("Psychology and logic" in 9th grade, "Ethics and law" in 10th grade, "Philosophy" in 11th grade). The cycle is closed by another integrative subject - "World and individual", which has the mission to finalise the training in Social sciences and Civic Education in 12th grade, building on the previously gained knowledge and preparing students for "responsible participation in social life".

According to the State educational requirements for educational content (issued by the Ministry of Education and defining the contents of the textbooks and the curriculum), civic education is "an interdisciplinary element of the compulsory general education in school".

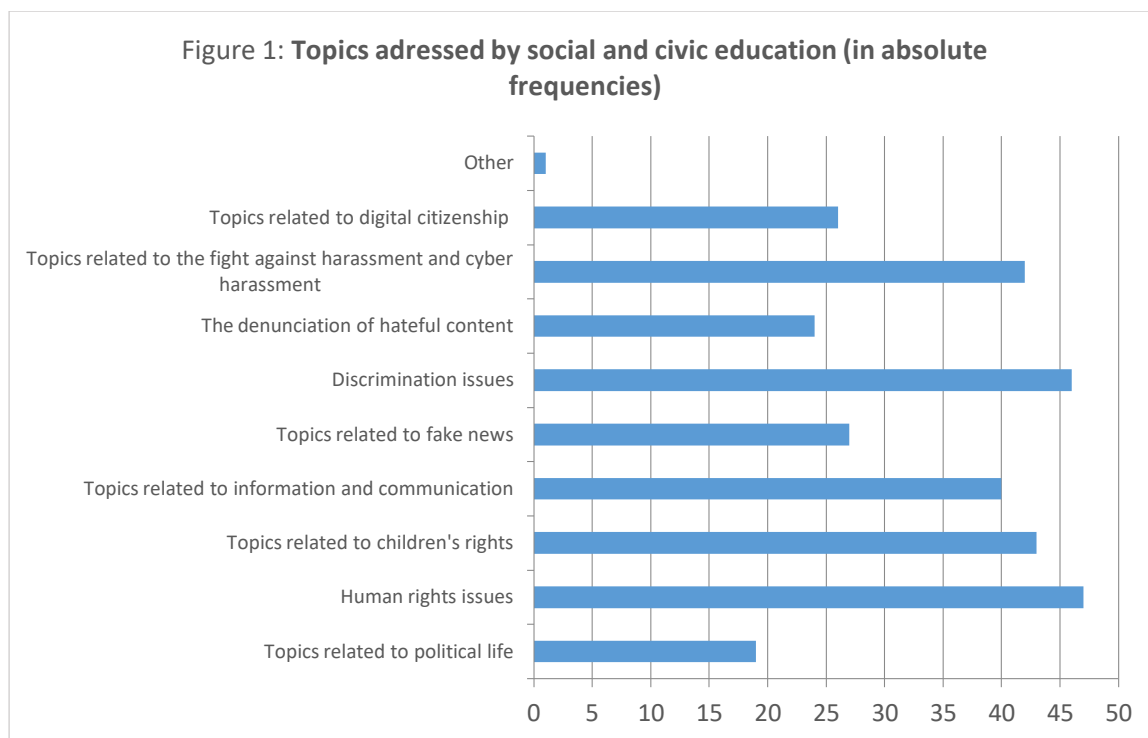
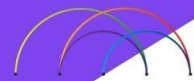
That is why separate topics and problems from the field of civic education can be discussed, treated and taught in the context of other subjects, such as Bulgarian language and literature, information and communication technologies, etc. For instance, somewhere in between those two subjects falls the training in media literacy.

Additional school time during which civic education is planned to take place are the hours of the class supervisor teachers (1 academic hour weekly). More information on this is available on p. 34 of this report.

Respondents who took part in the RAINBOW inquiry recognise that all topics listed in Q1 of the teachers' questionnaire are covered in the process of civic education in Bulgarian schools.

Those with the **least coverage** are topics related to:

- political life (37,3%);
- denunciation of hateful content (47,1%)
- online citizenship - support causes, sign petitions... (51%)
- fake news (52,9%)



Although the percentages seem pretty high even for the least covered topics, we should mention that the prevailing part of the teachers who took part in the RAINBOW inquiry work in schools which had adopted cloud technologies and successfully use them for teaching and school administrative processes in the last 3 – 4 years. This inevitably brings to the fore topics pertaining to online citizenship, fake news, cyberbullying, etc. Among teachers from other schools that use technologies in a more traditional way, those results might have been different.

2. Level of sufficiency of civic and social education provided to secondary level students

When asked “Do you consider that the civic and social education provided to pupils is sufficient?”, 37,25% of the teachers who answered consider that the social and civic education provided is sufficient. Most of the respondents (41,18%) gave answers in the middle of the scale and 22% gave a negative answer.

3. Current strengths of social and civic education

Only a few of the respondents provided feedback about the **strengths** of civic education in Bulgaria. Among these positive points are mentioned: *availability of good quality educational content; well prepared teachers.*

The fact that *the scope of civic education is expanding* through recent years is also mentioned as a positive factor. The same respondent however calls for more dynamic and flexibility *that would allow covering “issues of the day”, specific to the community / society at any given moment.*

A special mention deserves the fact that two respondents mentioned the **distance (online) education** in their answers. One of the respondents particularly specified that online education is a **strength** in teaching civic competences. The other respondent did not clarify if it is a **strength** or a circumstance that *requires improvements*, but taking in consideration the feedback of that respondent to other questions, we would consider this as an affirmative vote.





The Covid19 pandemic, which highlighted the importance of new topics in the domain of civic education – topics related to health, responsible behaviour, credibility of sources, fake news, etc, should be seen as the key to correct interpretation of the positive feedback which determines the **online teaching** as a **positive factor** for the social and civic education.

It is worth mentioning that both respondents are not teaching subjects from the *Social Sciences and Civic Education* domain, but are foreign language teachers. In this context, we would assume that the *online education* provided additional opportunities for *interdisciplinary* links of their work with social and civic education.

Four respondents did not give a particular answer: one of them wrote he/she does not understand the question and the others that they have no answer to it. This might result from their positions, which do not provide them with opportunities to engage actively in civic education, but might be also due to the way the question was formulated – addressing two contradicting hypotheses simultaneously: asking feedback regarding the *strengths* and suggestions for *improvements* of the civic education.

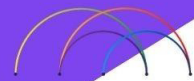
4. Possible improvements that could be implemented

Regarding possible improvements of the ways civic competences are taught teachers give the following recommendations:

- Many respondents consider that ***discussions / conversations / open and sincere dialogue*** with students will be the most effective improvement. Some comments show that by suggesting a “dialogue”, teachers recommend giving a voice to students, paying attention to their opinion and to controversial viewpoints too. Organising debates and discussions between students from different schools is also among the suggested improvements;
- Equally numerous are suggestions for more ***practically oriented education*** – with clear and concrete examples from real life, real cases, cases that students would encounter in their life, as well as engaging students in *projects* (including eco-initiatives, charity campaigns, protests, etc.). One of the respondents suggests more active engagement of students in the school life as a form for boosting their civic competences (for instance: school parliament, students’ advisory board, students’ parliament, self-government, etc.);
- Several respondents comment on the ***importance of the teachers’ competences*** for improving the ways civics are taught. While one of them considers that Bulgarian teachers are well qualified, other respondents point out the need of raising teachers’ qualification as a provision for improving civic education. A couple of respondents state in particular that teachers’ media literacy competences should be increased as a precondition for students’ media literacy education. In the context of this question several respondents pointed out that ***civic education should cover media literacy in a better way***;
- At least 6 respondents think that the improvement of civic education would require ***involvement of specialists / experts / external partners***. These comments can be viewed from different perspectives: from one side – as a consideration that teachers’ competences are not sufficient and they should be supported by specialists in various (specific) fields, on the other side – as a call to open up education in order to make it more relevant to real life and real civic causes;
- The need for an interdisciplinary ***approach*** to civic education was also mentioned by a teacher in Bulgarian language and literature. One respondent states that civic education should be the aim of more school subjects. Another respondent emphasizes the role of the teacher who can (should) provoke thoughts, reflections on various topics in order to develop the civic competences of students at any convenient moment.

Several respondents mention the need for ***more hours / more topics*** dedicated to civic education. An ***update (actualization) of the topics*** subject of social and civic education is also recommended.





Critical reference is also made to the fact that civic education is addressed with students when they are quite grown-up (i.e. in high-school). A couple of respondents consider that civic education should start from a much **earlier age / early childhood**. In this context, one of them suggests involvement of parents in the process by providing them with materials and methods to facilitate the early start of civic education.

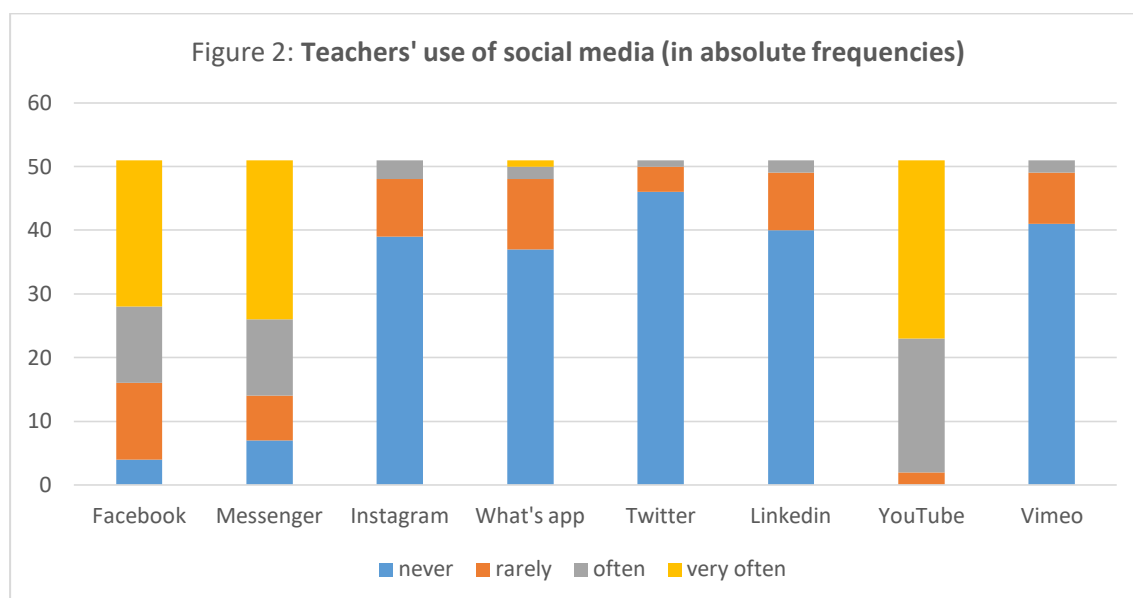
Taking in consideration that, according to the State educational requirements for educational content (mentioned in I.1. above), the social sciences and civic education are covered by the curriculum since the primary school stage¹, recommendations of this kind show that there is a lack of continuity in the curriculum between the school stages and that high-school teachers who were addressed through the RAINBOW inquiry do not see a clear connection between their work in the field of social and civic education and the efforts of the teachers in the previous school stages.

In the frames of Q16, which provides open space for additional comments on the topics of the inquiry, one of the respondents shared the following observation: *“Many teachers in different subjects still do not understand HOW to develop civic and social competencies in the context of their subject. Some of them consider it impossible and conclude there are special subjects for that purpose.”*

5. Teachers' perception on the connections between civic awareness and hate speech

Teachers have a positive opinion regarding the **role of civic education for tackling hate speech**. 45% of the respondents gave answers in the positive part of the scale (8 to 10 grades out of 10) and 45% gave answers in the middle of the scale (5 to 7 grades including). The negative opinion (meaning: *civic education can't tackle hate speech*, expressed with answers in the range 1 to 4) is supported by only 10% of the respondents.

Secondary level teachers' personal and professional use of social media

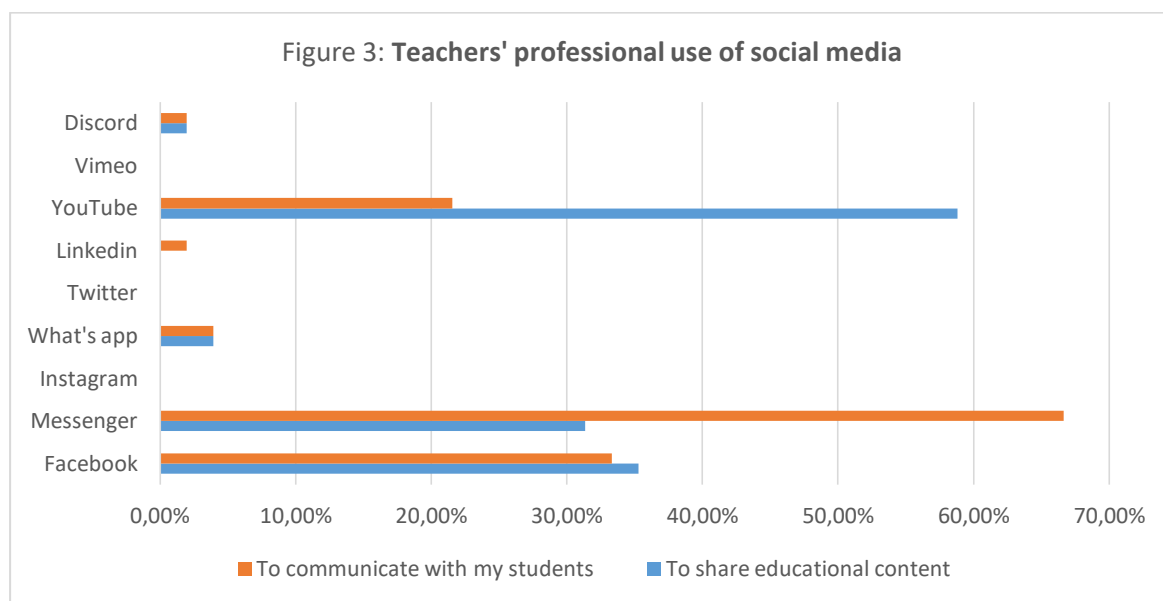


¹ Social and civic competences are developed also during the early childhood education through age-appropriate methods for which the Ministry of education and science issued Ordinance No 5/03.06.2016 on the pre-school education



Bulgarian teachers use YouTube (54,9%), Messenger (49%) and Facebook (45%) very often. Those applications are mentioned also as often used. In total 96% of the respondents say that they use YouTube *often* or *very often* (with cumulative results for Messenger – 72,6% and for Facebook – 68,6%).

On the opposite side of the scale – the least frequently used social media – are: Twitter (90,2% *never*), Vimeo (80,4% *never*), LinkedIn (78,4% *never*), Instagram (76,5% *never*), What'sApp (72,6% *never*). Teachers report that they use LinkedIn to keep contact with their ex-students after graduation.



According to the RAINBOW inquiry, the application used most often by teachers for communication with students is **Messenger** (66,7%), followed by **Facebook** (33,3%) and **YouTube** (21,6%). One respondent states using **Discord**² for communication with his/her students, another respondent uses **Discord** to share educational content with them.

For sharing educational content with students, Bulgarian teachers most often use **YouTube** (58,8%), **Facebook** (35,3%) and **Messenger** (31,4%).

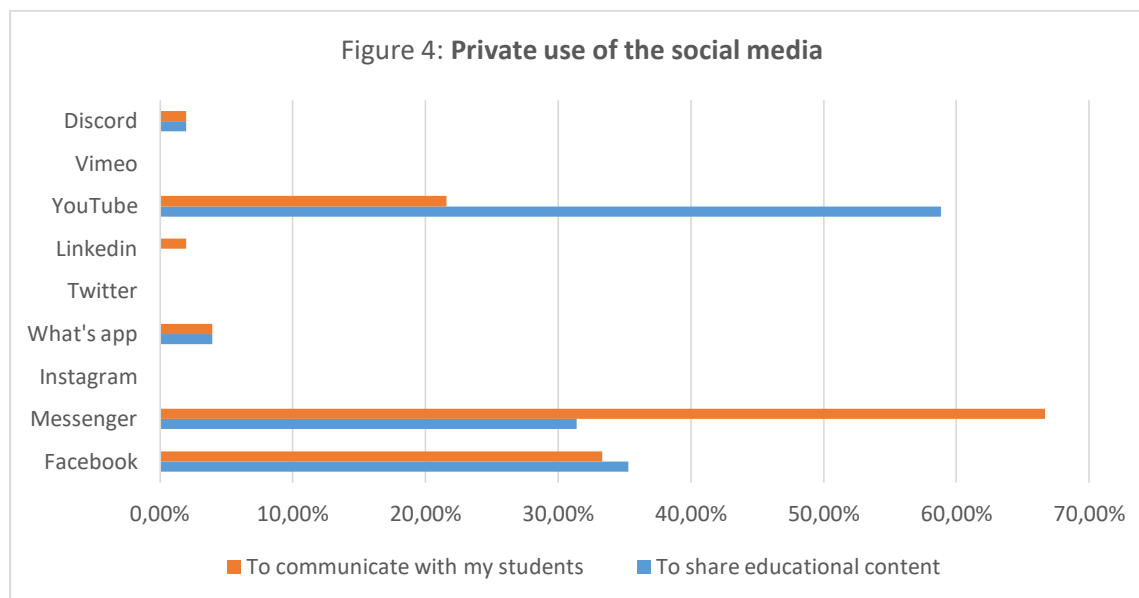
Two respondents use **What'sApp** for communication with the students. Another two respondents use **What'sApp** to share educational content. Although What'sApp is not very popular (at least among the respondents who took part in the inquiry) **Viber**, which has similar functionalities, is used by the Bulgarian teachers – both for communication with students, and with parents.

Facebook and **Messenger** groups are often used by teachers who are class supervisors for communication with students and their parents. As of the 2019-2020 school year, this trend finds competition in the *electronic school registers*, which are now compulsory to use by the schools. However, since different school register applications have different functionalities and teachers are still getting acquainted with them, communication through registers did not entirely substitute the Facebook and Messenger groups at this stage.

As feedback to the question “Do you use social networks with your students?” one of the respondents used the option *other* to clarify that for professional purposes he/she works with G Suite applications

² Discord is a freeware instant messaging application which is particularly popular among gamers. It allows text, image, video and audio communication between users in a chat channel.

(Google cloud for education), which eliminates the need to use social media. All in all, respondents who **do not use** or **rarely use** social media for professional purposes are less than 14%.

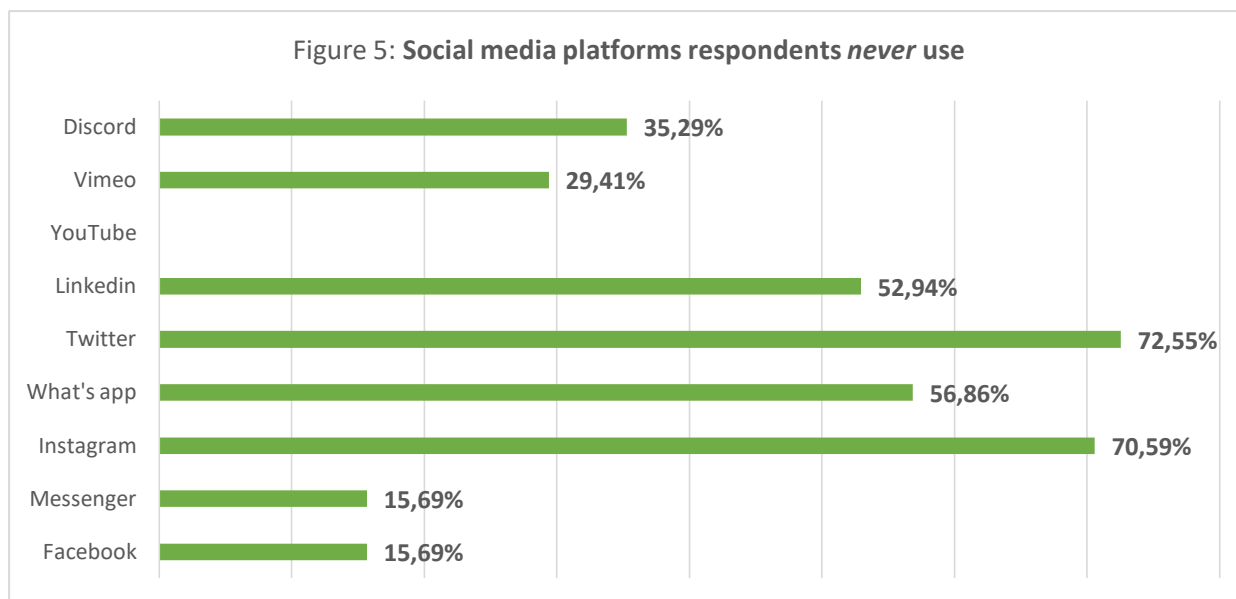


By social media applications:

- *Facebook* is the most widely used social media, applied for different purposes. Respondents declare they most often use it for: *self-expression* (60,8%), *sharing content* (pictures and other – 56,9%) and for *informing themselves* (56,9%).
- It is the *second most popular* application for professional use by the teachers: 35,3% of them use it to share information with the students and 33,3% use it to communicate with the students;
- YouTube is the second most widely and comprehensively used application. For private use it is employed for *watching videos* (88,2%) and *spending free time* (60,8%). It is also used for *receiving information* (47%) and for *sharing content* (47%). Taking in consideration that only 9,8% of the respondents declare they use YouTube *to express themselves*, we can make a conclusion that the predominant part of the content shared through YouTube is not created by the respondents, but found online and forwarded;
- For professional use, teachers employ YouTube for *sharing educational content with their students* (58,8%). How much shared content is created by the teachers themselves and how much was already available online can't be established by the present inquiry.
- However, the common practice shows that Bulgarian teachers very rarely use YouTube as a media channel for sharing videos which they have created.
- *Messenger* is the *most popular application* as a means for private communication (with the family and friends – 84,3%) and for professional communication (with the students – 66,7%)

The only application that has been used by all respondents is YouTube.

The least used applications by Bulgarian teachers are Twitter, Instagram and What'sApp.



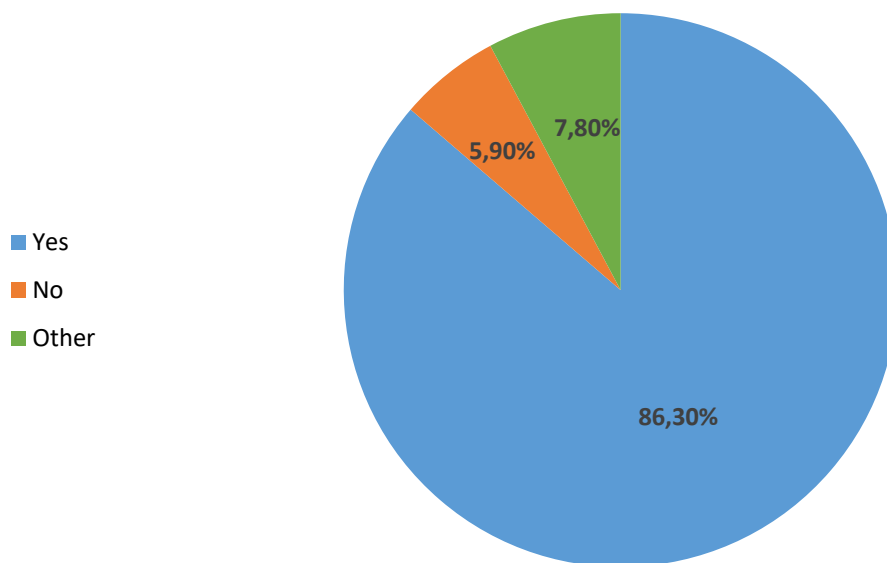
Most of the teachers who took part in the inquiry declare that they **work with their students on social media use** (86,3%); 5,9% of the respondents testify they don't. Those respondents are: a teacher in *biology*, a teacher in *geography and economics*, and a teacher in *Russian language*. All of them work in the upper stage of high-school (with 16-19 years' olds), only the language teacher works also with younger students (14-15 years' olds).

The logical conclusions that could be made are that: approaching the end of the school education, the topics' coverage of the school subjects narrows and the content taught becomes more specialised. Social and civic education at this stage of the Bulgarian school is covered by especially dedicated subjects - *social sciences and civic education* in 12th grade and *philosophy* in 11th grade, so teachers in other subject domains limit the coverage of such topics during their classes;

Russian language curriculum needs an update as it seems to be less inclusive and wide-ranging, compared to the curriculum in other foreign languages.

7,8% of the respondents used the option "other" and provided details that they work with their students on the social media use *sporadically* or *partially*. Two of the respondents who gave an alternative answer provided additional details: one of them states that as an arts *teacher in arts* they have occasional opportunities to discuss social media use *from time to time* with his/her students; another respondent explained that works with very young students and has limited options to include social media in the school work.

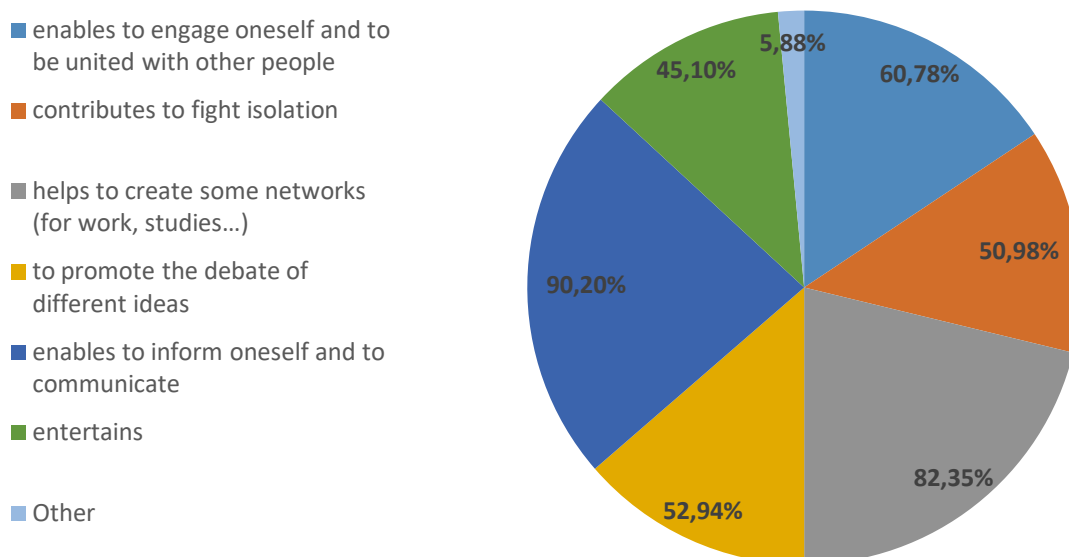
Figure 6: Do you work on social media use with your students?



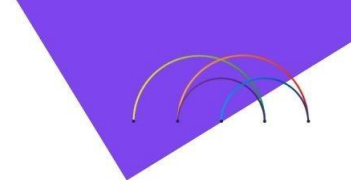
Secondary level teachers' perception of social media and their processes

1. The benefits of social media according to teachers

Figure 7: In your opinion, what are the benefits of social media networks?



According to the Bulgarian teachers who took part in the RAINBOW inquiry, social networks are beneficial for *spreading information and for communication* (90,2%), for *creating various networks*, incl. professional ones (82,35%) and for *engaging with other people* (60,78%). Approximately 53% of the respondents consider social media beneficial for *promoting debate between different ideas*. A bit



more than 50% of the respondents think that social media helps *to fight isolation*. Taking in consideration that the inquiry was organised right after the end of the Covid19 lockdown period, we assume that this particular response was influenced by the social distancing imposed by the situation linked to the pandemic.

Only about 45% of the respondents consider that social media is also a source *of fun*.

Some respondents used the opportunity to tick the option *other* and to provide particular comments. Their opinions about social media are:

- means of information;
- quite powerful PR tool;

"Social networks are the most useless field for debating ideas, especially political ones. This is a "talking room" of people who use the opportunity to pour all their negativity on others."

2. Teachers' perception of the connection between social media and hate speech

More than 58% of the respondents think that *social media facilitates the spread of fake news and violent content*. Less than 6% of the respondents have the opposite opinion. Approximately a third of the respondents hesitate in their opinion and marked options in the middle of the scale.

Reflecting on reasons why do the interactions on social media facilitate the spread of fake news and violent content, most of the respondents think that reasons are:

- because of the anonymity (80,4%),
- because of the instantaneity of shares and comment content (74,5%) and
- because of the huge number of users (60,8%).

(The sum of the responses exceeds 100% because respondents had the right to choose more than one option).

Two respondents that chose the option *other* provided the following comments on why *social media facilitate the spread of fake news and violent content*:

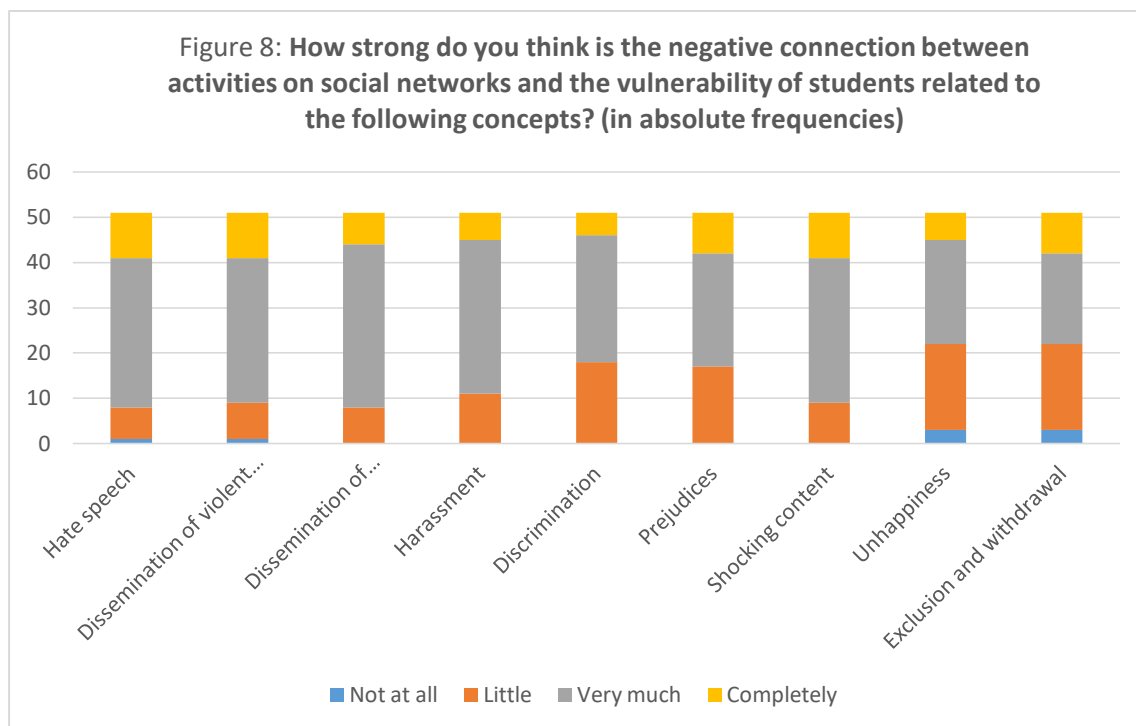
Some new sharing settings help for anonymity - the original author of the post "disappears";

"Although they facilitate the spread, social media also filter, block, and so on."

In estimating the negative connection between social networks and the vulnerability of students, the majority of teachers **very much** agrees on there being a link between social media and all inquired indicators (from 40% to 70%). However, only between 10% to 20% of the respondents **completely** agree that there is a direct link.

Among all inquired indicators, the highest negative connection is seen between social networks and:

- Dissemination of conspiratorial content and false information (**very much** 70%);
- Harassment (**very much** 67%);
- Hate speech (**very much** 65%);
- Violent content and Shocking content (**very much** 63%).



About a third of respondents believe that there is *little* relevance between social networks and students' vulnerability indicators such as:

- Unhappiness (37%);
- Exclusion & withdrawal (37%);
- Discrimination (35%);
- Prejudices (33%).

Just a handful of respondents consider that there is no influence at all of social media on some of the vulnerability indicators:

One person considers that there is *not at all* a connection between social networks, *hate speech* and *dissemination of violent content*;

Three other respondents are unanimous that there is *not at all* a connection between social networks and youth *unhappiness*;

The same number of respondents consider that there is *not at all a connection* between social networks and youth *exclusion & withdrawal*.

3. Media literacy: the answer against fake news and online hate speech?

Teachers' opinion regarding students' media literacy for counteracting fake news and online hate speech is quite dispersed over the rating scale, but is predominantly negative.

Just about 12% of the respondents gave answers in the positive part of the scale meaning – they believe that **student's media literacy is sufficient to counteract against fake news and online hate speech**. Even these results should be considered critically, given the way the question was phrased – in particular because the question did not specify if teachers should consider the current state of the media literacy of the students they work with or the student's media literacy in principle.



The cumulative sum of the answers in the negative part of the scale (from 1 to 4 including) is 47% and those who choose an answer in the middle of the scale (5 to 7 including) are 41%. Hence, most of the respondents consider that students' media literacy is *not at all* or *somewhat not sufficient* to fight against fake news and online hate speech.

Furthermore, in their answers, several respondents pointed out that civic *education should cover media literacy in a better way* (see section I.4 of the report). In the context of the same question a couple of the respondents state that teachers' media literacy competences should be increased as premises for improvement of the students' media literacy education.

Secondary level teachers' needs of methodological support and teaching materials to tackle civic and social issues

1. State of art of the sufficiency of the existing tools/trainings to work both on civic and social issues and on hate speech and fake news

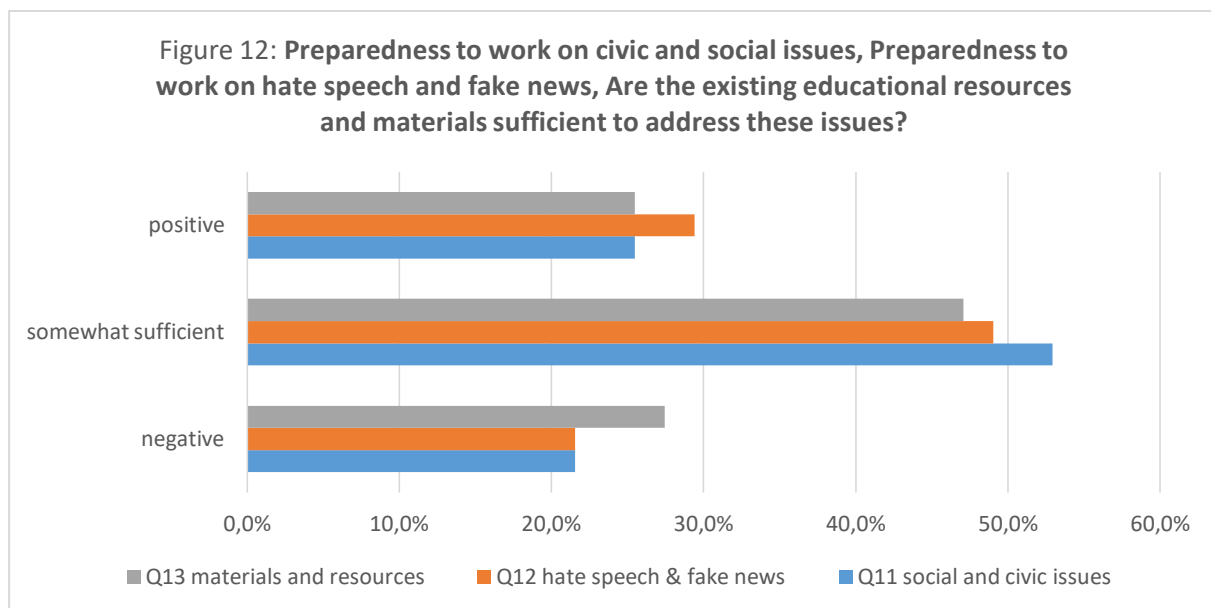
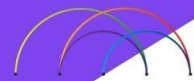
Asked to estimate their **readiness to work on civic and social issues** with their students, respondents show different levels of confidence. Only 25,5% of them state they are *sufficiently equipped and trained* to work on civic and social issues, especially online. Although none of the respondents estimate that he/she suffers a complete lack of readiness, 21,6% of them choose an answer in the negative part of the scale (2 to 4 grades). Most of the respondents (52,9%) choose a grade in the middle of the scale.

The self-assessment of the teachers' **preparedness to work on hate speech and fake news with students** shows similar results: 29,4% consider themselves well equipped; 21,6% choose a negative answer and 49% choose a grade in the middle of the scale (see Fig.12).

Quite similar is the scale spread of the answers to *the question "Are the existing educational resources and materials sufficient to address these issues?"*, where 52,9% of the answers are in the middle of the scale.

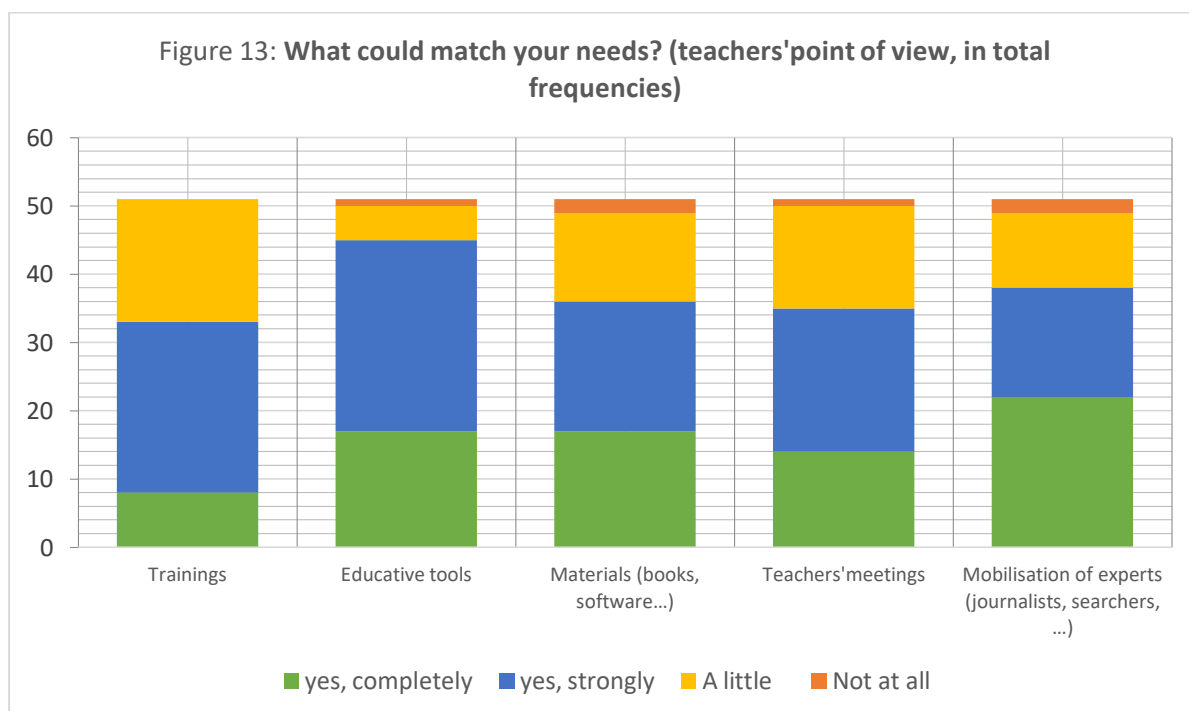
It is worth mentioning that respondents who consider themselves the most *well equipped and trained*, give an average assessment to the teaching resources and materials (with one respondent striking 1, which is the minimum in the suggested 10-level scale). Hence, although teachers acknowledge the availability of teaching materials and tools on civic education and hate speech, they consider that there is a need of improvement.





2. Some materials that match teachers' needs

Respondents unanimously declare that all options of support listed in the RAINBOW questionnaire are **very much** important for them to practice their profession.



The option of **Experts interventions** (by journalist, researchers, university professors, YouTubers...) gains most answers in the category **completely agree** (43,1%). Together with the answers **very much agree** (31,4%), this option is one of the most preferred types of professional support with an overall positive score of 74,5%.

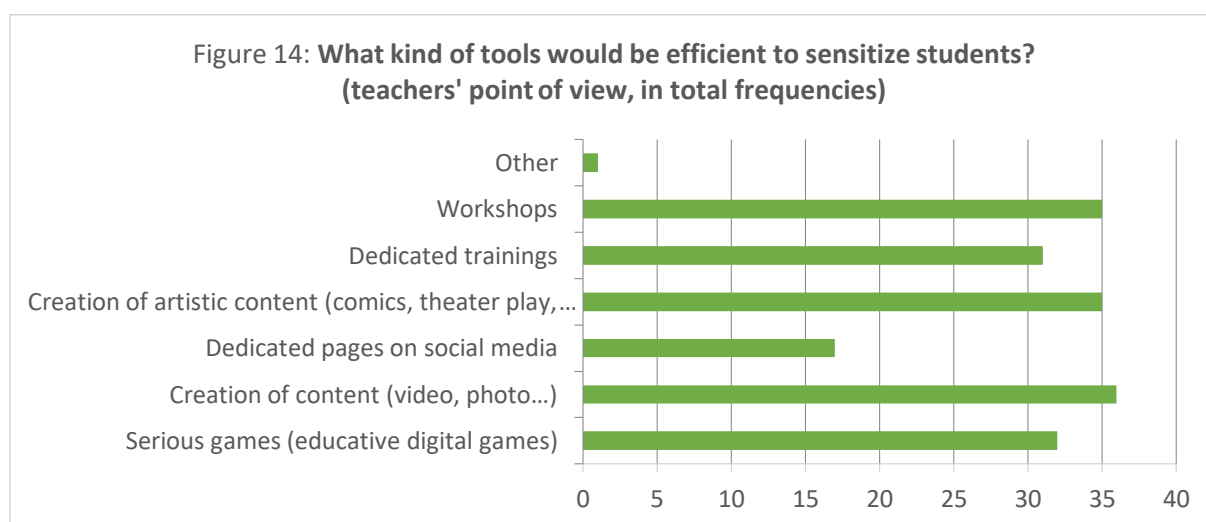


It is surpassed only by the **educational tools** option, which gathers 88,2% positive score (54,9% votes **very much agree** and 33,3% **completely agree**).

To some surprise, the third option with a very high positive score of 70,6% (37,3% votes **very much agree** and 33,3% **completely agree**) is **equipment (computers... etc)**. Certain influence leading to this result might be seen in the fact that the RAINBOW study was conducted at the end of a school year, closed in the conditions of *distance learning* due to the Covid19 outbreak.

Strangely enough, the option **training courses** received some ambivalent assessment. Although 49% of the respondents qualify them as **very much** useful and 15,7% qualify them as **completely** useful (thus scoring to 64,7% positive votes), yet 35,3% of the respondents consider that **training courses** would be of **little** help. This result could be interpreted as a remark pertaining to the abundance of qualification offerings at present by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education. It runs in parallel two EU funded projects, which provide free qualification trainings to the pedagogical staff in Bulgarian schools.

Teachers' meetings are another option that was relatively underestimated. Although 41,2% of the respondents identify them as **very much** useful, the second biggest group of responses (29,4%) define teachers' meetings as **not very** useful. These results are indicative regarding the quality of teachers' meetings in Bulgarian schools, which have a more administrative character and are less often related to sharing good practices, discussions and exchange of professional experience.

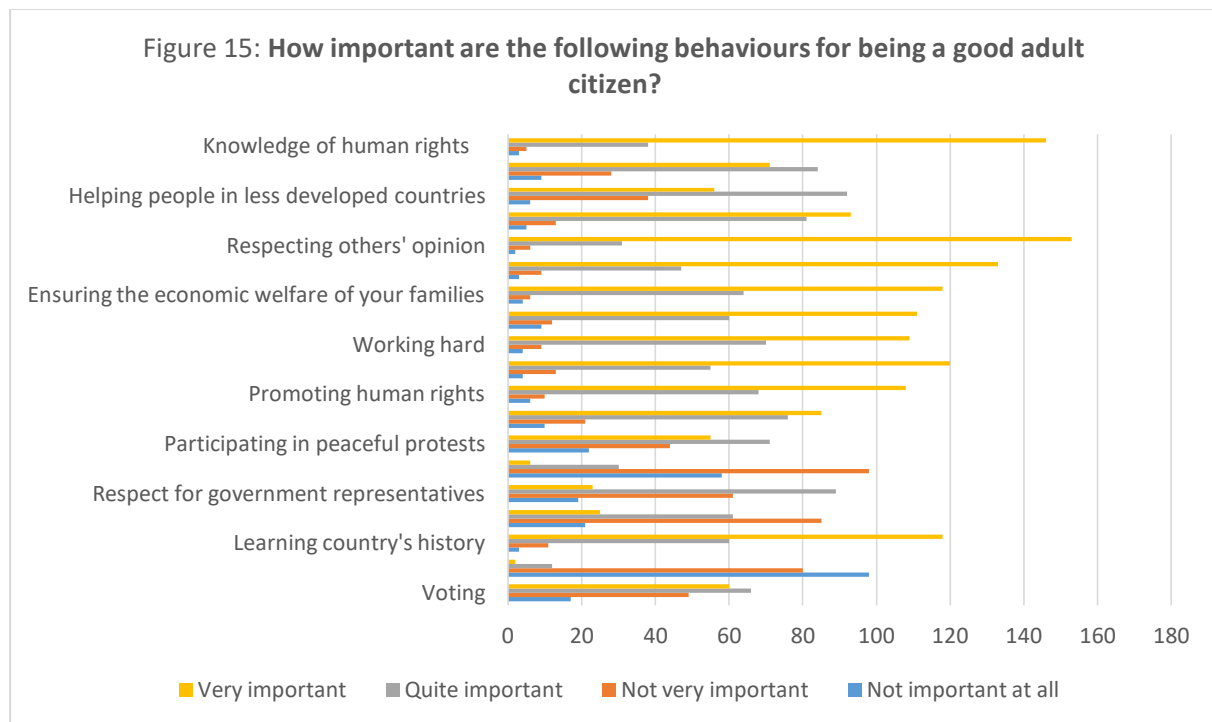


Estimating the **effectiveness of suggested awareness-raising tools** that might be effective for developing civic competences, respondents consider that most of the creative activities, such as: **creating video & photo products** (70,6%), and **creating artistic content** (68,6%) would be beneficial. These are followed by **workshops & work in groups** (68,6%), **serious (educative digital) games** (62,7%) and **dedicated trainings** (60,8%). Among the suggested tools, the **creation of pages on social media** (33,30%) are considered as the **least effective** option. One of the respondents, using the option **other**, suggests working in the intellectual and spiritual development of students as everything else “would address the consequences, not the reasons”.

Part 2/ Secondary level students' perceptions on prejudices, tolerance, civic competences, social media

Secondary level students' perception of civic and social competences

1. Being a good adult citizen: what does this mean for students?



Most of the behaviors that have been listed in the RAINBOW questionnaire receive positive qualifications. As a general pattern, we can say that young people are slightly apolitical and do not view *political causes* and *voting* as important, unlike issues that impact their life directly – such as those concerning their *community and family*, *ecology and the environmental issues*.

As **very important** behaviors for being a good citizen are qualified: Respecting the rights of others to have their own opinions (approx. 80%), Knowledge of human rights (76%), Making personal efforts to protect natural resources (69%) and Environmental protection (62,5%). Other types of behavior mentioned as **very important** include: Learning about a country's history, Ensuring the economic welfare of your families, Always obeying the law, Working hard. Most of these types of behavior are qualified as **quite important** by another substantial group of respondents.

On the opposite side of the scale is: *Joining a political party*, which accumulates 92,7% negative vote (51% - *not important at all*, 42% - *not very important*). *Engaging in political discussions* sees similar results, gaining a bit more than 81% negative vote (distributed as: 51% *not very important* and other approx. 30% *not important at all*).

Following political issues in the media gets ambivalent feedback – although 44% of the respondents consider it as **not very important**, approx. 32% qualify it as **quite important**. At the bottom line, this behavior gets 55% negative and 45% positive votes.

The feedback on these two behaviors tells us about the political environment and the perceived quality of democracy in Bulgaria.

Another two behaviors show some dispersing of the votes: *Participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust* and *Voting in every election* receive approx. 34% (each) negative votes and 56% (each) votes in the positive part of the scale.

However, when analysing the feedback, we should not forget that the question [Qs16] addresses the behaviors the good adult citizen in principle, which is an abstraction and does not necessarily mean that those behaviors will correspond to the personal choice of the respondents in real life.

2. Students' awareness of social and civic competences

Almost 70% of the student-respondents consider that educating young people on civic competences is necessary. Those that choose grades in the middle of the scale, which shows some hesitance, represent 27,6%. Only 2,6% consider that such education is not necessary.

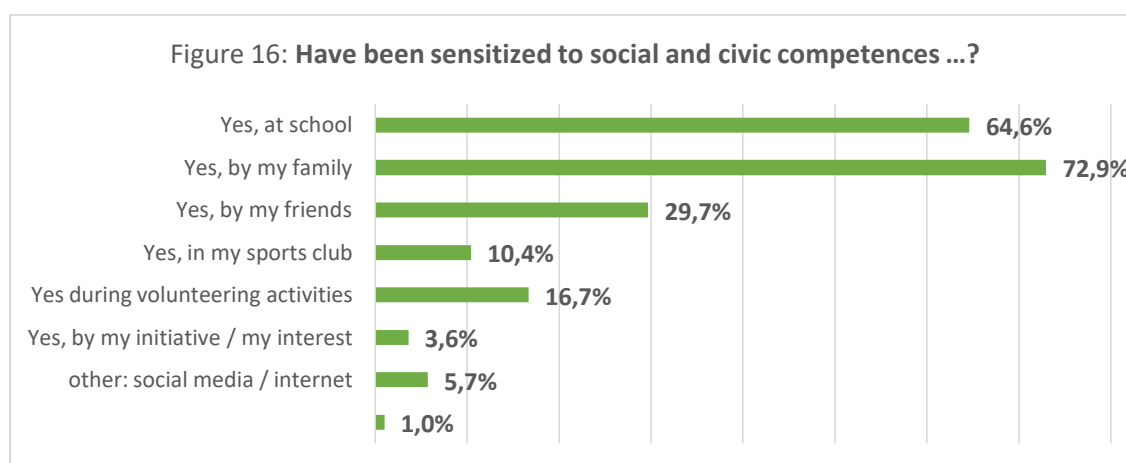
The information regarding their own practice - which respondents share - depicts an interesting picture: most of the respondents have been sensitised, receiving information in more than one way. That is why the cumulative sum of all responses in Fig. 16 shows more than 100%.

For most of the respondents, *family* (72,9%) played the biggest role. The *school* comes at second place (64,6%). However, the fact that about **35% of the respondents did not indicate the school** as a sensitising factor for social and civic competences is an expressive indicator, which requires attention. An interesting input to the question *Have you been sensitized to social and civic competences ...?* is the comment, provided by one of the respondents:

"Yes, but from my research and interests. We are not taught any of these things at school, although they think they do it." (female, 15 years old).

This respondent is among the 3,6% of students who testified they had been sensitised as a result of their own *interests, personal initiative and searches*.

Another 5,7% pointed out that they had been sensitised from / through the internet and the social networks.



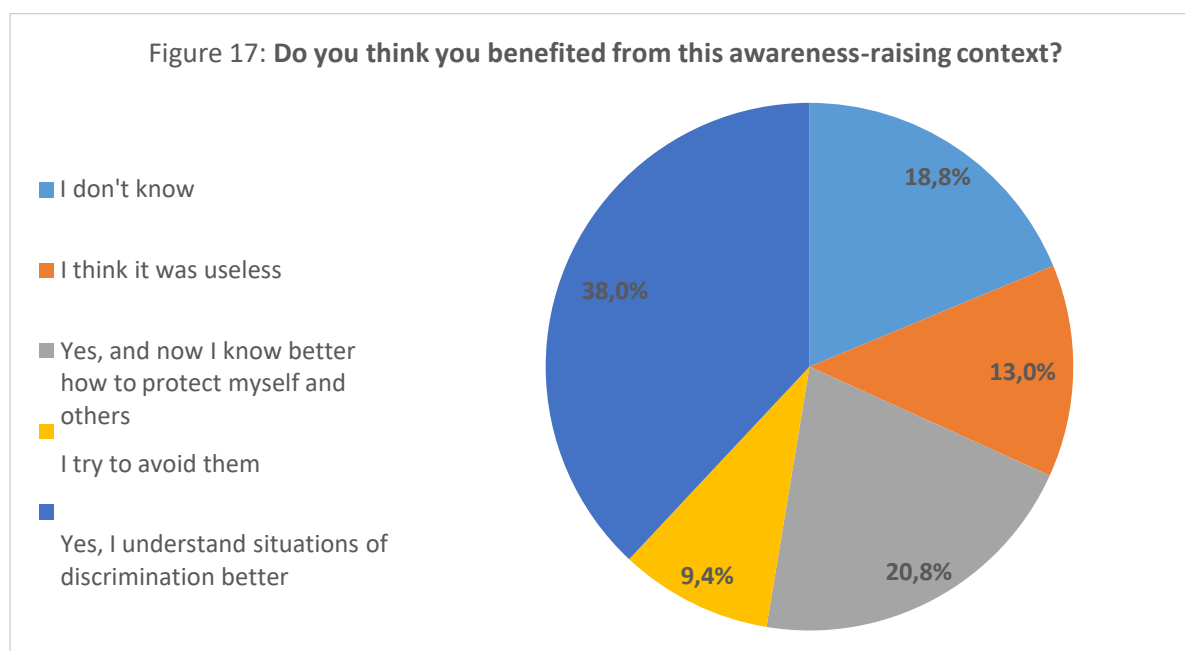
Although friends' influence is very important for young people in that age, only about a third of the respondents (29,7%) admitted that their friends were a factor in the sensitisation to social and civic issues.

Participation in *volunteering activities* (16,7%) and *sports club* (10,4%) had not been shown as single factors (i.e. these always come in addition to other influences). Nevertheless, being acknowledged as influencing factors is a positive sign, which confirms the importance of the

collaboration between families and school *with other stakeholders* from the sphere of informal learning and sports for shaping the civic competences of young people.

Estimating the benefits from the awareness raising experience, approx. 68% of the respondents consider that it was **useful**, among them: 38% better understand situations of discrimination; 20,8% know better how to protect themselves and others, and 9,4% are trying to avoid them.

However, almost 13% of young people think that this experience was **useless for them**, while those who are not sure about the benefits are 18,8%.



3. Students' suggestions to improve social and civic education in Bulgaria

When asked to consider the *main assets and the possible improvements of civic education*, about a quarter of the respondents (25,5%) left the question without an answer or straight forwardly wrote they *don't know or have no opinion*. The feedback of 4,7% of the students is that there will be *no improvement / no asset*. Altogether, these negative feedbacks represent approximately 30% of the responses.

Nevertheless, a prevailing number of respondents chose to give their feedback. Some recurring opinions are listed below:

- More tolerance / acceptance to those that are different
- Less ignorance / [young] people will know our rights and obligations better
- Less racism, discrimination, violence
- Less aggression; fewer victims of violence
- Better society / better people / more harmonious society / more responsible and united society / more informed and active society
- Better life / higher life standard / better future
- Better education
- Will respect each other / people will behave better
- More competent young people / better informed young people
- Better connection with the problems of society
- More adequate people / more responsible people

- Wide-minded people
- Better communication
- Fewer crimes
- More honesty
- Change of the system
- Better behaviour at school
- Respect, solidarity

We would like to elaborate on several groups of answers, which we consider important:

One of the topics, which appears in several feedbacks, is about the potential positive influence from civic education **to motivate young Bulgarians to stay in the country and not emigrate**. The key to this is seen in the positive influence of civic education *for better understanding of civic processes, for more informed political choices, for reducing the sense of helplessness and building confidence for upholding civic rights*.

Tightly related to these opinions is the position that active citizenship behavior is linked to better knowledge about citizenship rights and obligations:

“In my opinion, by improving civic education in Bulgaria, society will be able to clearly express its position, to fight against injustice, to demand from the government and no less important – it will be responsible and then it would be possible to achieve higher voting activity.” (female, 18 years old)

“If we have better civic education, we will make informed decisions, we will be able to build our own opinion on various issues and we will reduce discrimination.” (female, 15 years old)

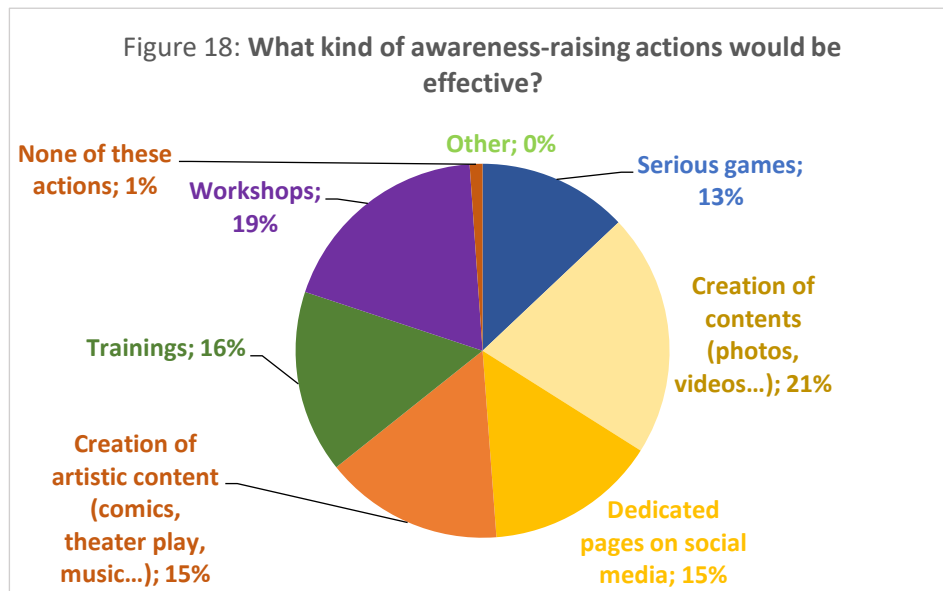
In addition, some respondents connect active citizenship behavior to economic prosperity and sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

The second highlight is related to the **quality** of civic education, which is estimated as **too theoretical, not related to the problems of today's society, not relevant** to the real needs of young people:

“I think it is important for students to get an idea of real life, not just the topics that are taught. Most [young people] feel unprepared for the reality they face when they graduate, they don't know what is required from them (when they have to vote, for example, or apply for a job).” (female, 18 years old)

“In my opinion, education on this topic in school is almost useless, as the subject requires practice and developing of true understanding – through [real] events / stories / movements / acquaintances, and not through a dry theory or a lecture, refracted through the prism of the teachers and teaching staff.” (female, 17 years old)

Those opinions are very important in the context of the RAINBOW project as they show a real need of improvement of civic education in Bulgaria.



Secondary level students' experience and perception of discrimination

1. Have you ever been discriminated against or witnessed discrimination?

A third of the respondents have **never** experienced discrimination, but 55,7% acknowledge that this happens to them **from time to time**. Approx. 10% of the respondents acknowledge they experience discrimination **often**; 1% is discriminated against **every day**.

As to the reasons of discrimination, according to the respondents, in 38% of cases such situations are related to **physical appearance**; in 22,4% – to **morals** (which could be understood also as: behavior); 20,3% are discriminated because of their **gender**; 18,8% – because of their **age**.

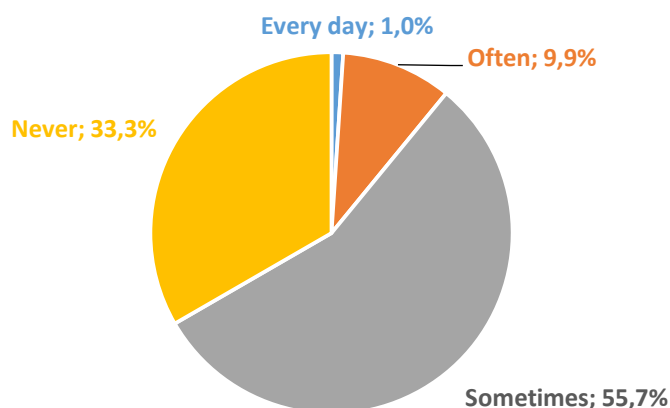
The factor **discrimination by age** deserves attention. It might be a sign for peer tension (bullying), as well as an indication of *young people feeling underestimated by the adults* (parents, teachers, etc.); feeling their opinion is not taken into account / their voice is not heard.

Four other discriminating factors are referred to by 6,8% each:

- Social situation;
- Place of living;
- Family name;
- Physical handicap.

(The order of listing is not related to the factor's importance).

Figure 19: Have you ever experienced a situation where you have been discriminated against?



With reference to these results, we should pay attention to the fact that discrimination by **social situation** and **place of living** are indicative for subtle social injustice in the society.

The next group of 5,7% each include the following factors of discrimination: **religion** and **political opinions**.

Health and **family situation** are pointed out as discriminating factors by 5,2% each.

Most of the respondents stated they have been subject of discrimination due to several different reasons – that is why the overall sum of the responses is more than 100%.

One of the respondents who stated being subject of discrimination every day (male, 15 years) shared that this is due to his **physical appearance**; the other respondent (female, 17 years) mentioned most of the factors listed in the form, incl.: **physical appearance, presumed race, skin color, social status, economic situation, religion, gender**.

Regarding the witnessed cases of discrimination of others [Qs3], respondents report a pretty varied picture. The summarized results of all responses are shown in Fig.20.

Among cases witnessed **very often**, the top occurrences reported by the participants in the RAINBOW inquiry are related to discrimination regarding:

- Sexual orientation (22,4%);
- Physical appearance (20,3%);
- Skin colour (12%).

Among the discrimination incidents witnessed **often**, the top occurrences are:

- Physical appearance (38,5%);
- Skin color (27,6%);
- Ethnic background (24%).

In view of the difference between incidents related to **physical appearance** and **skin color** in both groups of responses, we should conclude that in many cases discrimination due to **physical appearance** concerns body issues, such as **weight, body shape, height**, etc.

According to the cumulative rates of **very often + often** cases of discrimination, the most frequent incidents are due to:

- Physical appearance (58,9%)
- Sexual orientation (42,7%).

The next group of factors consists of:

- Skin color (39,6%);
- Ethnic background (30,2%).

Altogether, this feedback paints a picture of a non-inclusive society, which does not tolerate people who are noticeably different.

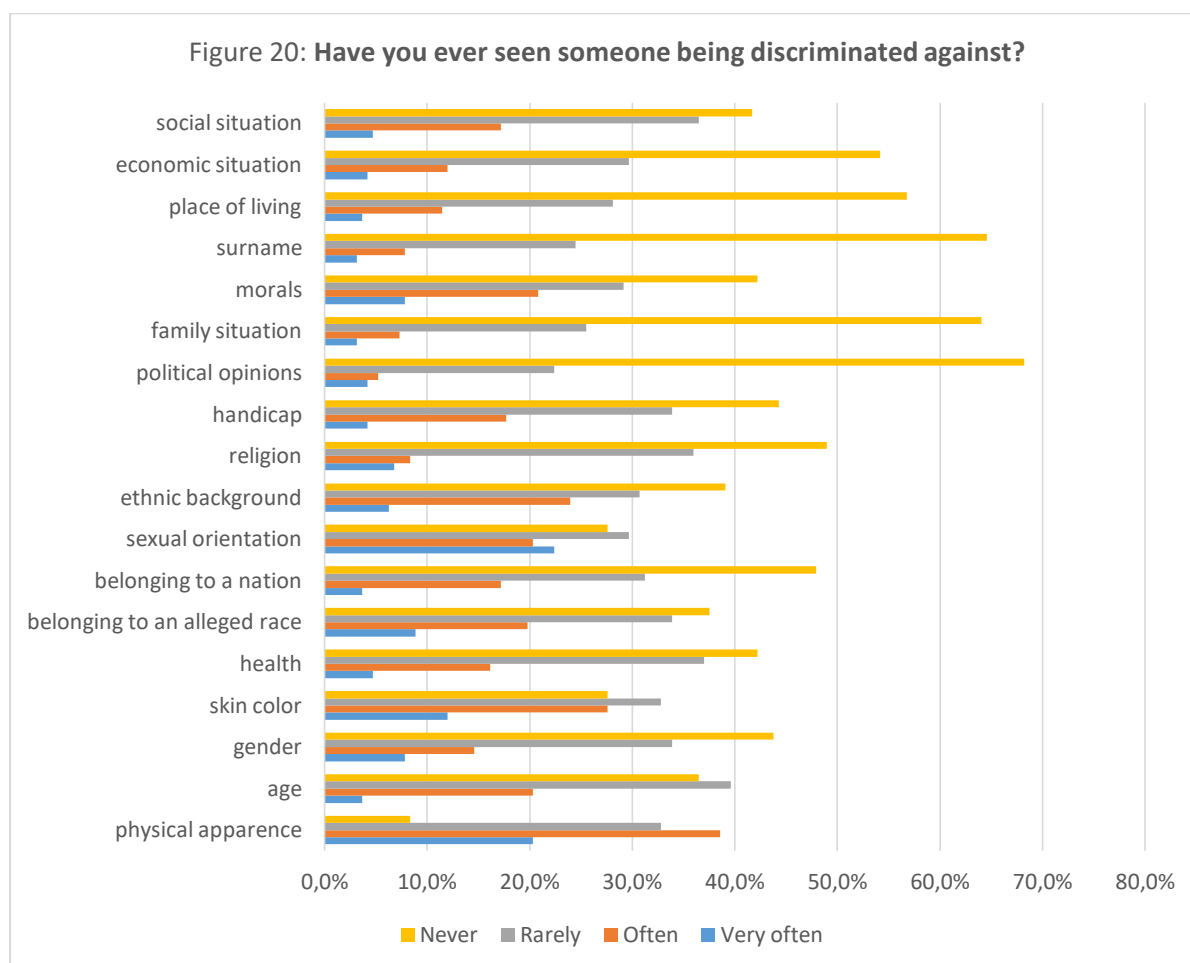
An alarming level of discrimination is reported by two other groups – *handicapped* and *socially substandard*. More than a fifth of the respondents (21,9% cumulative rate of *very often* + *often*) report that people have been subject to discrimination due to their **handicap** or **social situation**.

Most of the respondents report they have **never** witnessed discrimination due to:

- political opinions (68,2%)
- surname (64,6%)
- family situation (64,1%)

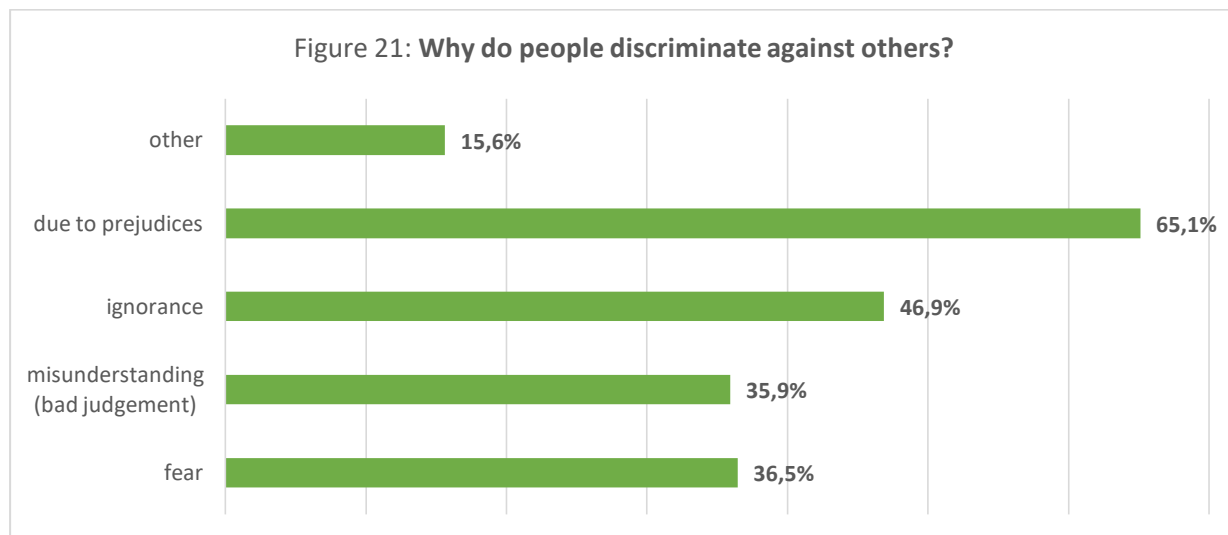
Those results can be explained with the age of the respondents – the listed factors are not visible or obvious, and are rarely subject of interest and discussions by the young people who (at that age) usually spend time and move with their peers. Hence, discrimination on such factors rarely falls in the focus of young people's attention.

The RAINBOW questionnaire spread in Bulgaria contained an additional category of discrimination by **social situation**, which is different from *economic situation*. *Economic situation* relates to positioning on the *rich–poor* scale, while the *social situation* is related to judgment of the relevance of the person to certain social level in the society, which takes into account not only *economic status*, but also *social ranking* and *prestige* of the social environment (mainly concerning the family status).



2. Why do people discriminate against others?

Reflecting on the reasons explaining **why people discriminate against others** (Fig.21), most of the respondents think that this is due to **prejudices** (65,10%) and **ignorance** (46,9%), followed neck in neck by **fear** (36,5%) and **misunderstanding / bad judgment** (35,9%).



Under the options **other**, a bit more than 15% of the respondents shared some additional reasons. Among the recurring motives for discrimination are listed:

- low self-esteem / personal inner problem(s) / because their ego is hurt;
- to show others that they are better / that they are cool;
- because they themselves have been subject of discrimination;
- because they want to hurt others / want to dominate over others;
- due to bad manners;
- because they need other people's validation / due to fear of being rejected;
- due to the influence of other peoples' opinion (incl. peer pressure / family influence);
- lack of tolerance and common sense.

"Because of the norms established by society, which impose on us what is "normal". From an early age, adults fill our heads with their judgemental (condemning) beliefs and most people never form their own opinion: something is wrong because they have been told so." (female, 17 years)

Secondary level students' experience with social media, fake news and violent content

1. Students' use of social media

Most of the respondents report spending **between 2 and 3 hours** on social media every day (43,2%). Almost 40% of the respondents spend between **3 and 5 hours daily** and 19,8% - **more than 5 hours** per day. Just 6,3% spend **less than 1 hour daily** on social media.

The most popular social media among the student-respondents are **YouTube** (used **very often** by 76% and **often** by 19,8%), **Instagram** (**very often** – 74,5%) and **Messenger** (**very often** – 63%, **often** – 29,2%).

Students and teachers report **similar behaviour** patterns regarding **Twitter**, which is equally unpopular in both groups – with 90% of the teachers and 65,6% of the students reporting they **never** use it.

Figure 22: How much time do you spend on social networks daily?

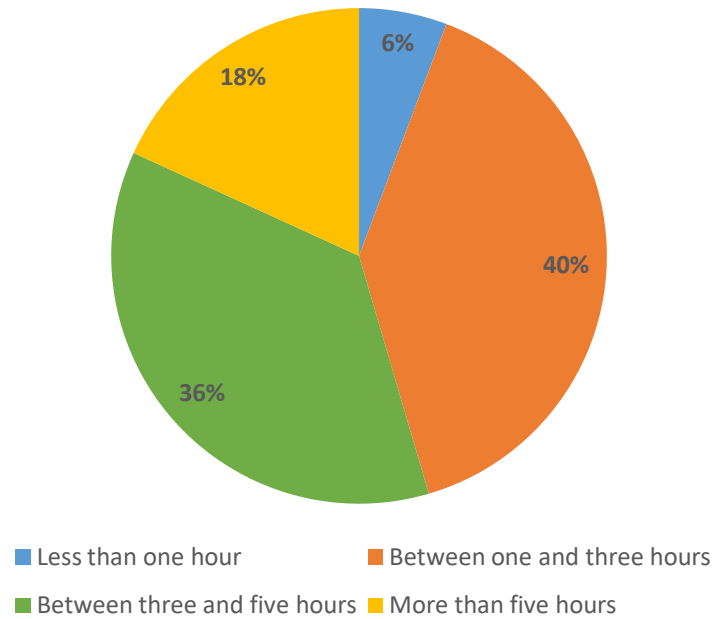
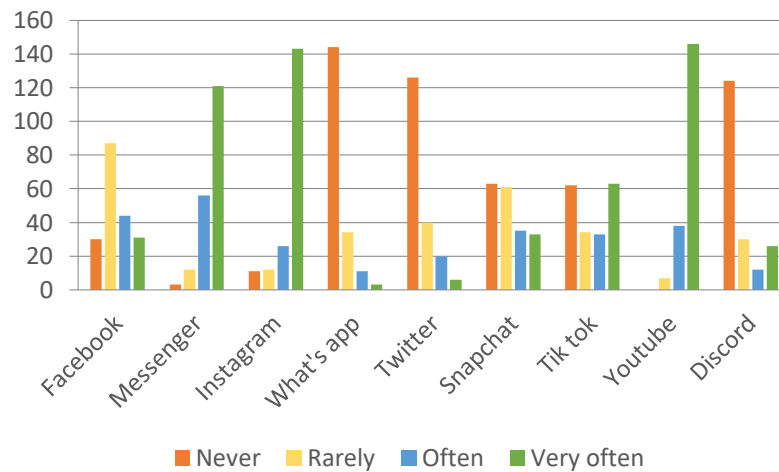


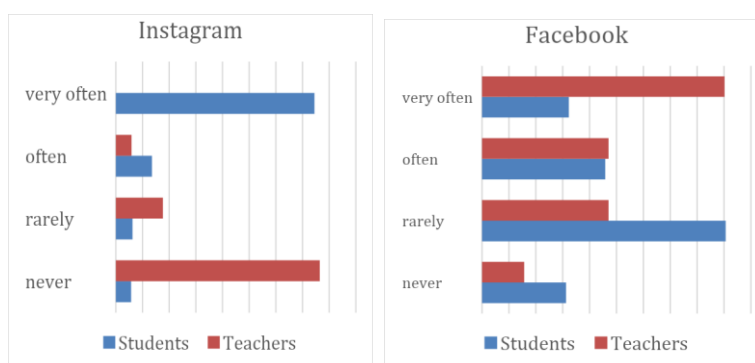
Figure 23: Which social media do you use? (in total frequencies)



Students' and teachers' preferences coincide on **YouTube** and **Messenger**, but are radically **opposed** regarding **Instagram**. Almost 75% of the students report they use Instagram **very often**, while none of the teachers do. In contrast, 76,5% of the teachers **never** use **Instagram**, while only 5,7% of the students report the same (see Fig. 23).

Students' and teachers' habits regarding the use of **Facebook** also significantly differ: while 45% of teachers use it **very often**, only 16% of the students report the same. Approx. the same number of students (15,6%) report they **never** use Facebook. The biggest group of student-respondents (45,3%) report they **rarely** use Facebook (ref. Fig. 24).

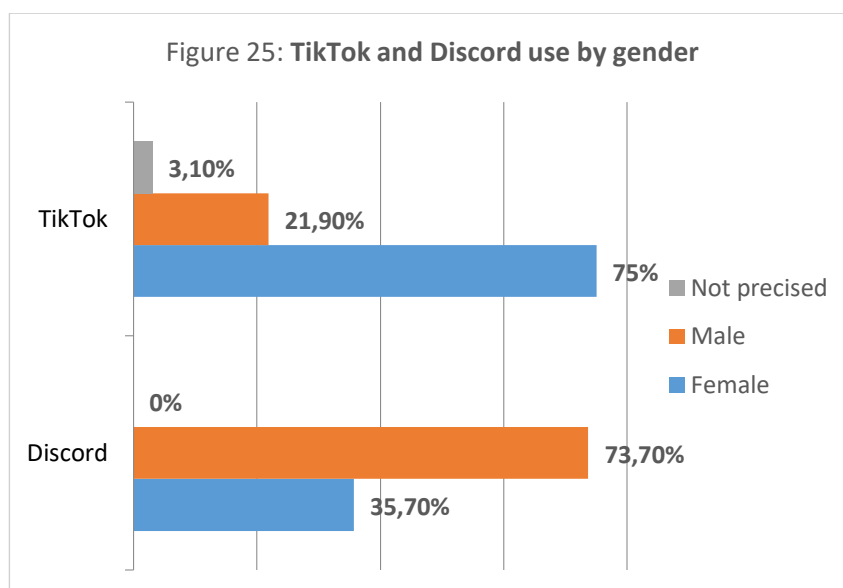
Figure 24: Frequency of use of Instagram and Facebook by students and teachers (in%)



Regarding the **TikTok** application, the student-respondents are divided in half – 50% acknowledge they use it **very often** (32,8%) or **often** (17,2%) and the same number of respondents use it **rarely** (17,7%) or **never** (32,3%). Most of the respondents who use **TikTok** are **female** (ref. Fig. 24).

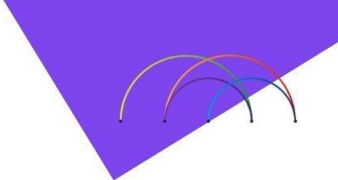
Discord is less popular as a whole with about 20% of respondents admitting they use it **very often** (13,5%) or **often** (6,3%). The prevailing part of its users are male, which seems related to the fact that this application is popular among gamers.

Figure 25: TikTok and Discord use by gender



Student-respondents show pretty **passive patterns of behaviour on social media**. They use the listed applications in the following way:

- 1/ **Spending free time** on Instagram (82,8%), YouTube (69,8%), TikTok (54,7%);
- 2/ **Sharing content** on Instagram (77,6%), Messenger (51,6%), Facebook (29,7%), Snapchat (28,6%), TikTok (22,4%);
- 3/ **Watching videos** on YouTube (90,1%), TikTok (55,7%), Instagram (45,8%) and Facebook (21,9%);
- 4/ **Communicating with family and friends** through Messenger (92,2%), Instagram (65,6%), Snapchat (23,4%), Discord (17,2%);
- 5/ **Informing themselves** in Instagram (58,9%), Facebook (51,6%), YouTube (50,5%) and Twitter (20,3%).



Students declare **expressing themselves** on Instagram (64,6%), Messenger (29,2%) and Facebook (24%), which can be accepted as an *active behaviour*, but their activity of this kind is comparably less considerable than the other afore mentioned activities.

From all social media applications, students declare using Messenger the most to **exchange educational content with my friends and classmates** (94,8%) and for **communication with teachers** (85,4%).

Activity by social media application:

Messenger is used for **communication** with family and friends (92,2%), with teachers (85,4%) and for **exchanging educational content** with friends and classmates (94,8%);

Instagram is used by students pretty much for everything in their **private life**: for **spending free time** – 82,8%, **sharing content** like pictures and songs (77,6%), **communication** with family and friends (65,6%), to **express themselves** (64,6%), to **inform** themselves (58,9%), to **watch videos** (45,8%); The use of Instagram for educational purposes is comparably limited, yet about 30% of the respondents declare they use the application **to exchange educational content with friends and classmates**;

TikTok is used mainly for **watching videos** (55,7%) and **spending free time** (54,7%). Although this application allows creative activities, only about 14% of the respondents use this application to **express themselves**.

In a similar pattern, the use of YouTube is predominantly for **watching videos** (90,1%) and **spending free time** (69,7%) and for getting **informed** (50,5%). The potential of YouTube to support creativity is used by 8,3% of the respondents to **express themselves**. The use of YouTube for educational purposes is pretty rare with only 1,6% of students admitting they communicate with teachers through YouTube and 4,2% **exchanging educational content with friends and classmates**.

2. Students' experience with fake news, online hate speech and discrimination

Among student-respondents 75,5% report they have **witnessed violent situations to other people** on social media (such as: hate speech, harassment, threats...); 21,4% have **been subject of such behavior** and 19,8% have **never faced violent situations** online [Qs8].

The prevailing part of the respondents report they didn't witness online hate speech, threats and harassment during the last 3 months preceding the inquiry [Qs9]. When witnessing such occurrences, they are most often addressed towards groups of people such as *migrants, women and people of the LGBT community*. Almost 30% of the respondents observed such behavior **5 and more times**, and about 23% detected it **2 to 4 times** during the last 3 months.

Regarding occurrences of *hate speech and discrimination* addressed at *their friends and themselves*, student-respondents report that this happened at least **once** in 19,8% *about a friend* and in 11,5% *about themselves*.

Some of the recurring reports on discriminating attitudes online include [Qs12]:

- insulting comments towards people from a different race / racism;
- homophobia;
- violence against animals;
- cynic comments regarding somebody's appearance (most often due to obesity);
- mocking / ridiculing;
- annoying comments and retaliation between peers on various insignificant occasions;
- making public personal information, which was confidentially shared by someone / posting intimate pictures online;
- harassment and blackmailing.



Students also shared observations that minor personal disagreements are sometimes transferred online and prompt insults and arrogant comments.

A considerable number of respondents (more than 6%) referred to the death of George Floyd³ in the USA as a *trigger for hate speech and intolerant and prejudiced comments online* (including in Bulgarian social media).

A 16 year-old girl shared that LGBTQ and black people are most often subject to hate speech and aggressive posts online, *“but, on the other hand [I encounter] a lot of support is posted”*.

Here are some more comments from the respondents:

“Expressing an opinion is not a bad thing, but I do not support it when it is expressed incorrectly, rudely and disrespectfully. I have witnessed many ugly things - words, expressions and photos. Opinion is something that everyone has, but we must respect people and their decisions.” (female, 14 years)

“Two of my friends posted a picture of them holding hands, and it was purely friendly without any other intentions. Negative comments and insults rained down immediately. I still didn't understand what's wrong in holding your friend's hand. And why others are interested in our relationships and ways.” (female, 15 years)

“...sometimes the cause of an internet conflict is speaking up in an inappropriate part of the platform.” (female, 17 years)

“A boy in TikTok uploads a lot of interesting videos, but is a little bigger. Because of his appearance, he received a large number of insulting and rude comments.” (female, 16 years)

“On TikTok [I've been witnessing] very offensive comments.” (female, 15 years)

A substantial part of the respondents consider that ***social media facilitate the spread of violent content*** with 53,6% which *definitely support* this view and about 35% who gave an answer in the middle of the 10-grade scale.

Even more definite is the feedback regarding the role of ***social media for the spread of fake news***: 68,8% *definitely agree* that social media facilitate the spread of fake news and 26% choose answers in the middle of the range.

On these points the opinions of the students and teachers who took part in the RAINBOW inquiry coincide (see 2. *Teachers' perception of the connexions between social media and hate speech* of the present report).

When ***witnessing violent content on social media***, 85,4% of the student-respondents admit that they ***comment and/or share it***. Such behavior has potentially *negative* consequences as it might validate such content by increasing its spread and visibility, and may attract public attention to it.

However, most of the respondents show an *active attitude against* the spread of such content: 83,3% state they would *report such content to the social media moderators*; 74,5% would *report it to the authorities* (for example – to the police); 72,9% would *report it to a teacher*.

58,9% of the respondents admit they will *ignore such content*. From all suggested options, the least preferred behavior would be *reporting the content to the parents* (56,8%).

³In May 2020 the 46 year-old African American George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis (Minnesota) during an arrest. Floyd's death triggered subsequent protests against police brutality and institutionalized police racism.





In case of being **subjects of violent content on social media** student-respondents show a slightly different behavioral pattern – most of them (74,5%) declare they will *report such content to their parents*, and 64,6% would *ignore* it. Approximately half of the respondents would *report the content to the social media moderators* (54,2%), to the *authorities* (53,1%) or to a *teacher* (50%). The least preferred choice of behavior would be to *comment and/or share such content* (43,8%).

The self-reported reaction of the students **towards fake news & violent content on social media** would be to:

- *ignore* it (58,3%);
- check it with different sources (48,4%)
- read / watch it (23,4%);
- comment it (9,9%)
- 2,6% of the respondents admit they would share such content even though they would not read it.

Using the option *other*, some respondents provide comments and clarifications:

“If it really concerns something important, I check it, but most of the time I ignore it. In general, I do not watch or read the news, because I think they encumber our psychic too much.” (female, 15 years)

“Most of the time I find them [fake news] funny”. (male, 15 years)

“I see what I should NOT do and I get vexed from the people’s malice!” (female, 17 years)

“When I see that something is wrong, I express an opinion and I hope that someone will hear me and will understand.” (female, 14 years)

Secondary level students’ awareness of the characteristic of media processes in the digital era

Students declare the highest level of **trust** to *their parents* 88% in general (69,3% **completely** & 18,8% **very much**).

Other institutions and groups which concentrate students’ **credence** are:

- *School* – 62% in general (20,8% completely & 41,1% very much),
- *European institutions* – 53,1% in general (11,5% completely & 41,7% very much),
- *Army* – 49% in general (14,6% completely & 34,4% very much).

The lowest level of trust is declared to *political parties* – 94,3% **disapproval** (56,8% **not at all** and 37,5% **quite a bit**). Bulgarian students show a significantly *low level of trust to people in general* with 73,4% **disapproval** (14,6% **not at all** and 38,9% **quite a bit**).

Students show a **low level of trust** also to the *media, social media* and *Internet sources (websites)*, with the latter accumulating the biggest level of disapproval:

Websites – 74,5% disapproval (21,9% **not at all** and 52,6% **quite a bit**);

Social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube,...) – 74,5% disapproval (10,9% **not at all** and 57,3% **quite a bit**);

Media (television, newspapers, radio) – 74,5% disapproval (18,2% **not at all** and 49,0% **quite a bit**).

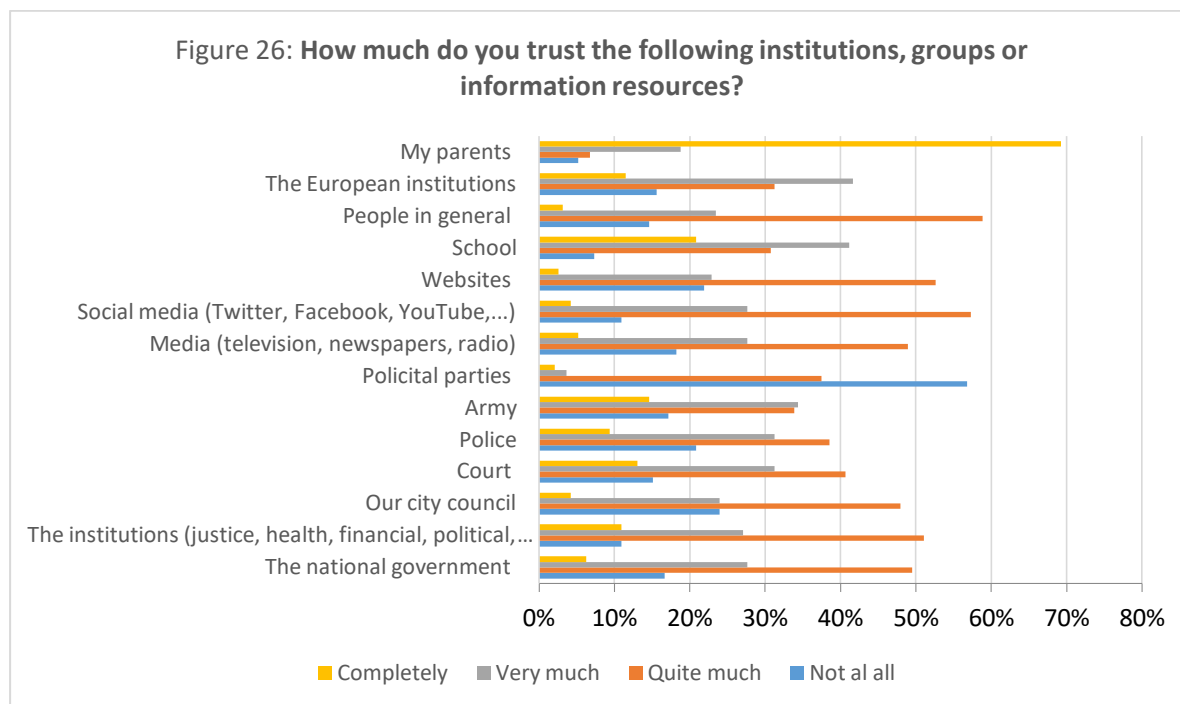
Taking in consideration that student-respondents declared *social media* as a source from which they usually are getting informed, the critical attitude to them expressed with this feedback is constructive.



Further down the scale come:

- City council – 71,9% disapproval (24 % **not at all** and 47,9% **quite a bit**);
- National government – 66,1% disapproval (16,7% **not at all** and 49,5% **quite a bit**).

The high level of disapproval matches the feedback on Qs16 where respondents consider that *following political issues in the media, engaging in political discussions* and *joining a political party* are **not** among the important behaviours for the good adult citizen (see 1. *Being a good adult citizen: what does it mean for students?* Of the present report).

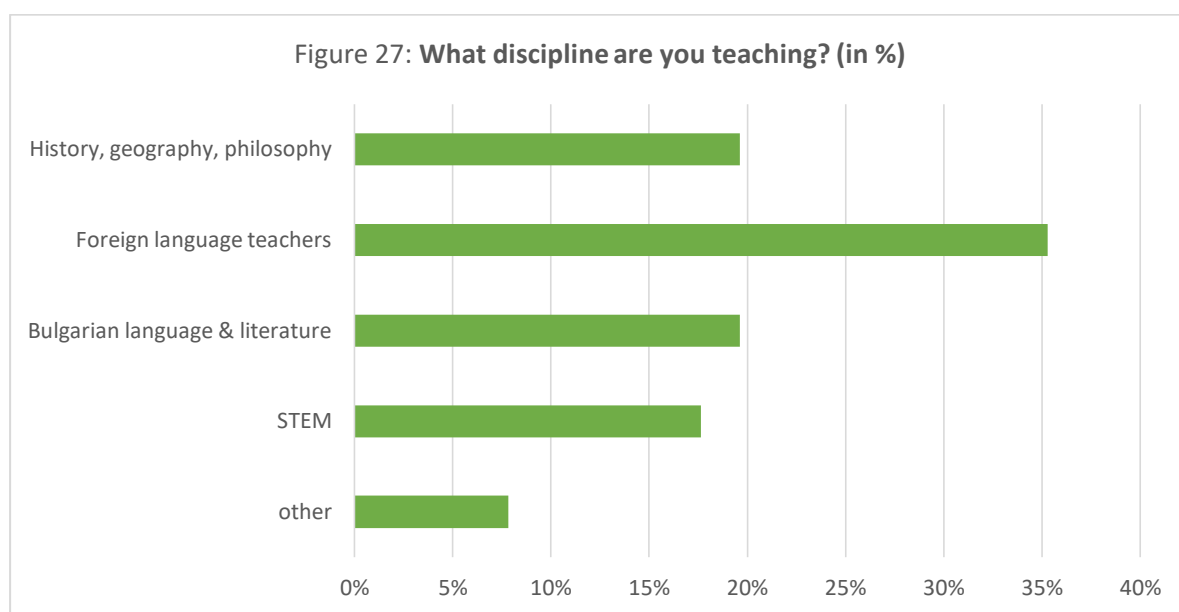


Appendix 1: profile of the participants

Teachers

51 Bulgarian teachers took part in the RAINBOW inquiry. The prevailing part of the respondents (82,4%) are female; 15,7% are male; one respondent preferred not to declare his/her gender.

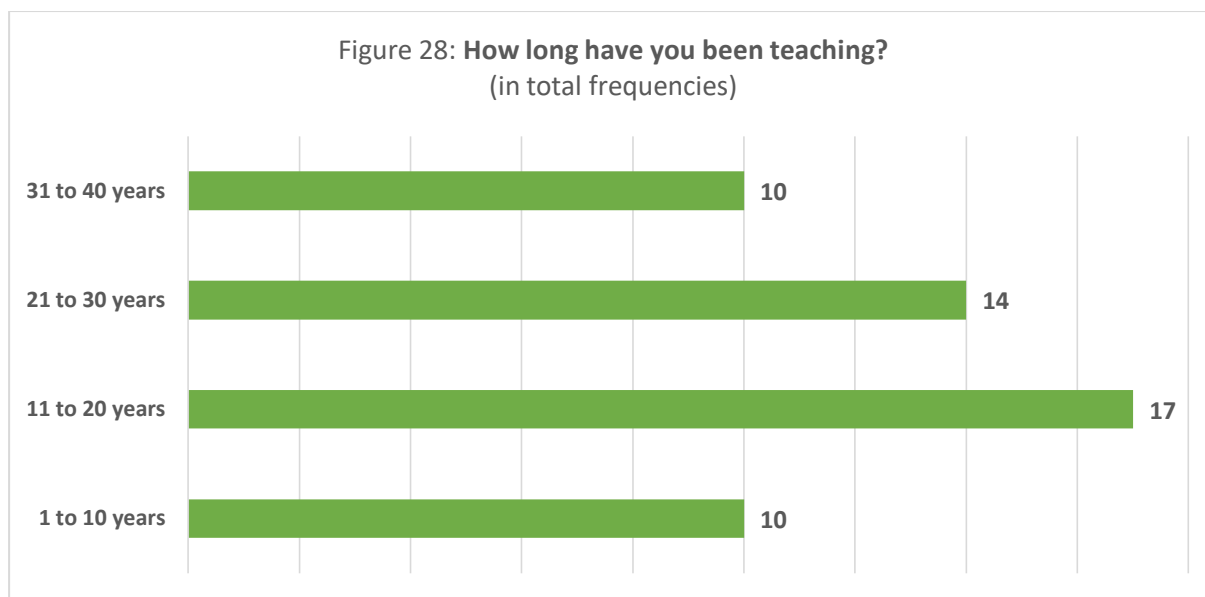
The most numerous group (35,3%) consists of **foreign language teachers** (teaching: English, Italian, French, Spanish, Russian, German). Teachers in subjects from the **Social sciences and civic education** domain (history, geography, philosophy) represent 19,6% of the respondents, to the same extent as teachers of **Bulgarian language and literature**. Teachers in **STEM** (which includes sciences, mathematics, information and communication technologies) are 17,6% of the respondents. Less than 8% are pedagogues with **other** profiles, among them: teacher in arts, in sports, in special professional subjects (from a vocational school), pedagogical counselor.



41% of the teachers who took part in the inquiry are also **class supervisors**. In their responsibilities fall various obligations, incl. administrative and organisational tasks, issues related to discipline, as well as *social and civic development of the students*.

Class supervisor teachers have 1 academic hour weekly with their class to perform their obligations. These are between 31 to 36 academic hours per school year (depending on the grade). Class supervisor teachers must have a *thematic plan* for the topics, which will be covered during these hours among which (but not only): health education; inter-cultural dialogue; traffic and road safety; first aid & behavior and protection of the population in case of disasters, accidents and catastrophes; prevention of violence; dealing with anger and aggression; peaceful resolution of conflicts; prevention of terrorism and conduct in the event of a terrorist threat; cybersecurity; career guidance; civic education; ecologic education; patriotic education, etc.

According to the *pedagogic experience* – the most numerous group of respondents are those with 11 to 20 years of teaching (33,3%). The second biggest group are teachers with 21 to 30 years of experience (27,5%). Young teachers with up to 10 years of experience are 19,6%, just as the respondents with 31 to 40 years in the teaching profession.



47,1% of the teachers teach 16–19 years old students. The same number of teachers teaches students in both age groups covered by the RAINBOW inquiry. Just 5,6% of the respondents teach only students in the younger age group considered by the project (14–15 years old).

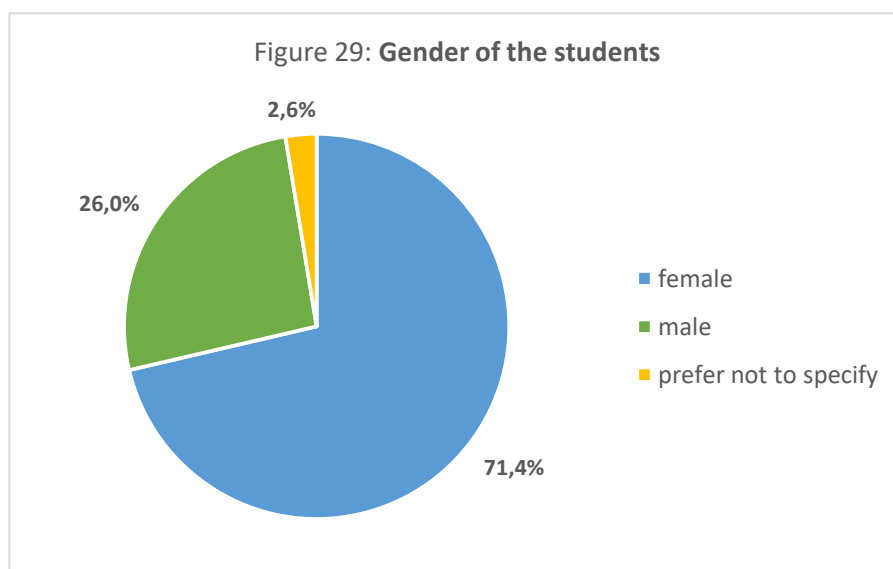
Students

The RAINBOW questionnaire was filled in by 192 students. 47% of them were in the lower age group (14-15 years old) and 52% in the upper age group (16-19 years old).

According to the present structure of the school educational in Bulgaria, the 14 year-old students are still in middle school (7th grade, which is the last grade of primary education). 15 year-olds are in the beginning of their high-school education, which lasts for 5 years and is divided in 2 stages. Compulsory school education in Bulgaria is 10 years and includes primary education (1st to 7th grade) + the 1st high-school stage (8th, 9th, 10th grades), after which students pass a general exam and receive a diploma, which does not allow them to continue to tertiary education.

The full course of school education is 12 years and includes also the 2nd stage of high school (11th and 12th grade). Before graduation, students pass a maturity exam, which gives them opportunity to continue with tertiary (i.e. University) education.

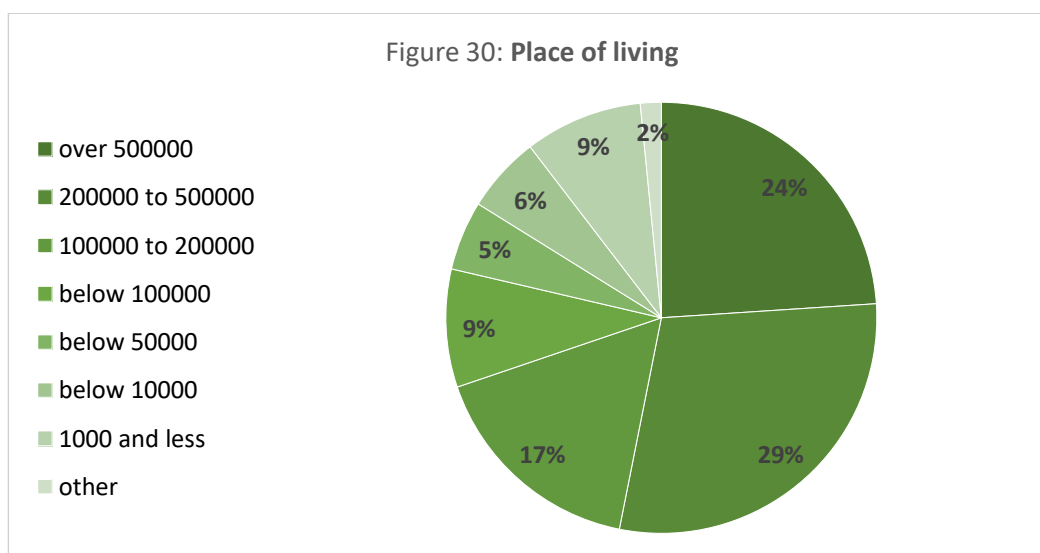
Most of the student-respondents (71,4%) are female; 26% are male, and 2,6% used the opportunity to not specify their gender.



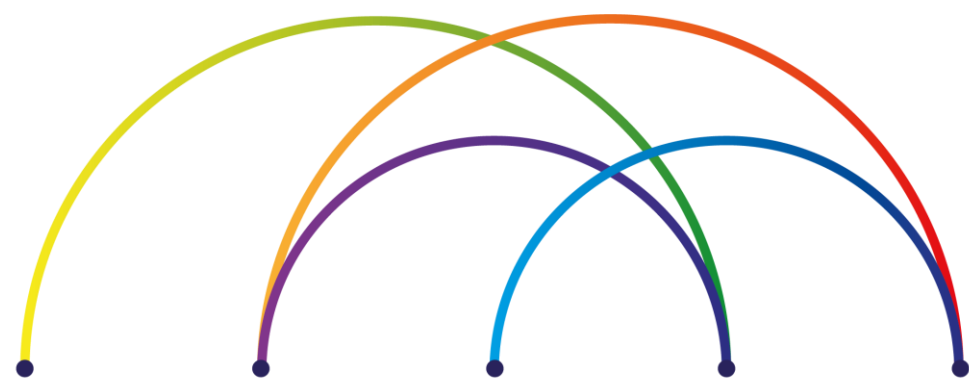
In terms of place of living, the information is just approximate. There are a number of factors which should be considered with respect to the demographic information.

First of all, the scale of the inquiry is quite detailed, with small steps between the ranges, which require a relatively high level of accuracy. Several respondents admitted they don't know or don't want to specify the size of their living place. These answers represent 1,6% and are grouped under the option **other** in Fig.30 below.

Furthermore, the place of living is not always the place where students study. Many young people who live in villages and towns choose to study in a high-school in the near-by city – aiming to receive better quality education or because there are no alternatives. That means that their views and opinions are not formed only under the influence of the community in the small town or village.



To summarise the data – more than 53% of the student-respondents live in big cities (with above 200.000 inhabitants). A bit more than a quarter of the respondents live in middle-sized cities. Approximately 11% live in small cities and towns and 9% live in very small places with less than 1000 inhabitants.



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

