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State of art of social
and civic competences
and values awareness

EUROPEAN REPORT



Introduction

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

Thanks to the RAINBOW 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 14 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, civic competences, social media, ...
- Students' needs for material.

Those inquiries gathered 1741 answers at the European level (254 for teachers, 1487 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.

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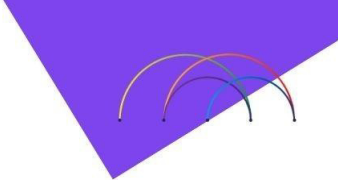
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Part 1/ Secondary level teachers' perceptions on social and civic education and media processes

Civic and social education in Europe

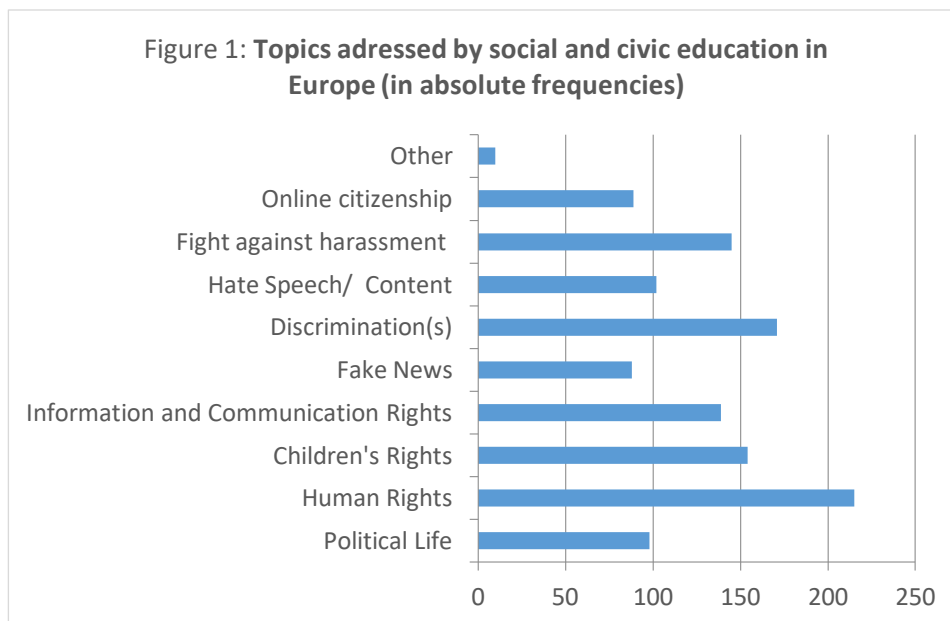
1. Topics addressed by civic and social education in Europe

The situation of civic and social education in the secondary level is quite different depending on the country. Some, such as France and Italy, made it compulsory in the curriculum. In France, moral and civic education is part of compulsory schooling. It is taught by history and geography teachers and, depending on the content covered, by teachers who teach other subjects. In Italy, social and civic education wasn't a compulsory subject until this school year. Teaching civic and social education in school is now compulsory and the subject is considered transversal to all learning activities.

Others, such as Spain or Romania, made civic and social education compulsory or optional, leaving the decision to the school. In Spain, each Autonomous Community has its margin to create or regulate an educational curriculum to be applied to schools. Most Communities establish some lines to follow or some recommendations but allow each school or even the teachers themselves to teach civic and social education in the ways they find appropriate. In Romania, civic education, social education and other disciplines (with a role in the formation of civic and social competences) are compulsory or optional (depending on the decision of the school).

In Belgium the situation is also different. Belgium has no elaborated tradition of citizenship education. Only very recently, in 2018, the Flemish Parliament approved sixteen key competencies, within which the new education goals had to be formulated and where citizenship education goals became achievable and evaluable. Although the government decides on the level of the attainment goals, it is up to the schools to decide how they will achieve those goals. Civic and social education can be taught separately or through other subjects.

In Bulgaria, social and civic education is not implemented through a dedicated subject but through 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 fulfilment of the civic mission of education.



We asked teachers which topics are addressed by civic and social education in their country. At the European level, the topics most addressed by social and civic education in the partner countries are related to *human rights* (85% of given answers), followed by topics related to *discrimination* (67%) and *children's rights* (61%).

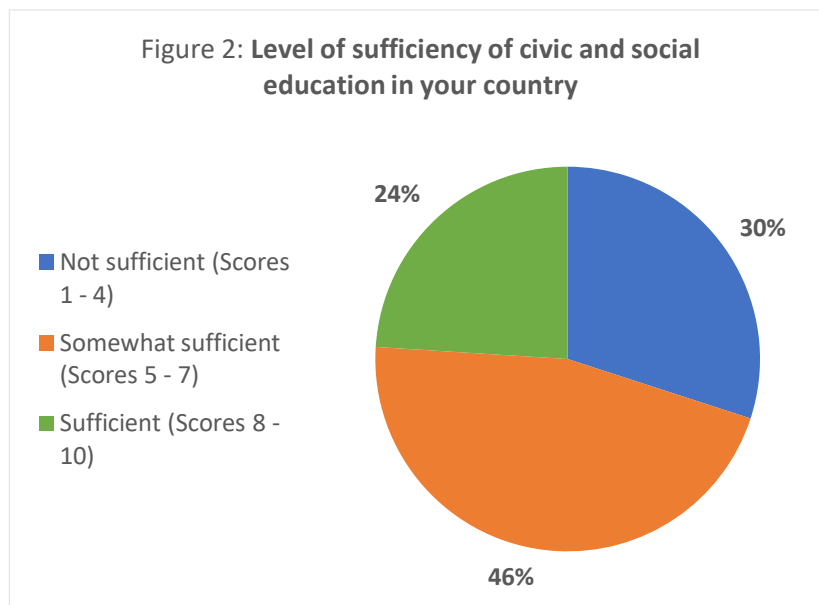
On the contrary, the least addressed topics are those which are linked to media literacy, such as *online citizenship* (35%), *fake news* (35%) and *hateful content* (40%).

Topics related to the *political life* in the country (39%) are also on the bottom part of the list of topics addressed. Regarding this topic, the situation is quite different in Italy, as political life is the second most addressed topic in civic and social education, and Belgium, as political life is the third one.

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

The estimation of social and civic education sufficiency is quite balanced. Nearly half of the respondents think that it is somewhat sufficient (46%). 30% thought that it is not sufficient, while 24% thought it to be sufficient. The average score is 5,79 out of 10. The fact that only half of the respondents think that social and civic education is sufficient points out that there are still some improvements to suggest.

French teachers are the most negative ones as nearly 8 out of 10 (78%) of them estimated the level of sufficiency of civic and social education as not sufficient at all, giving a score from 1 to 4. The percentage of teachers from all other participating countries opting for these low scores is below 50%, with Spanish (44%) and Italian (25%) answers in second and third place.



3. Current strengths of social and civic education

When asked about the strengths of current social and civic education, teachers suggested more possible improvements than strengths. This is quite logic as the answers to the question “*do you think that civic and social education is sufficient?*”, reveal that only 24% of the teachers think that it is sufficient.

However, more than half of the respondents (55%) point out that social and civic education is a good place for students to learn how to debate, to express one’s opinion and defend it using good arguments. It is also a good opportunity for students to express their creativity and learn how to use their freedom of expression.

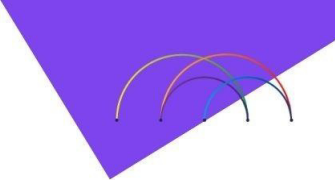
Some teachers also mentioned that social and civic education addresses accessible topics (for students and teachers) and that it is a good point. Its transversal nature and its role in the sensitization to democratic values such as the respect for the other, anti-discrimination or how to fight harassment are also mentioned as current strengths.

4. Possible improvements of social and civic education

Teachers suggested possible improvements are of various kinds. However, 28% of the respondent suggested to opt for a more practical approach. Teachers think that social and civic education should involve students’ personal experiences and real case studies. A theoretical approach might not catch students’ attention, while using their own experiences, and thus placing social and civic education in their daily lives, would allow them to really engage with the subject.

Another possible improvement is to allocate more time (particularly teachers from France and Spain) and resources to this topic. The respondents underline that they know how important social and civic education is, but that they never had the time to really focus on it.

12% of the respondents suggested to implement either a school wide social and civic education strategy or more transversality. Teachers mentioned the fact that social and civic education could have an impact on each aspect of our everyday lives to explain its transversality. A transversal approach of social and civic education in schools would mean to introduce social and civic education in every subject instead of dedicating a specific time or subject to it.



The respondents also underline the need for specialised trainings (8%) and materials (8%) on social and civic education, which would allow teachers to feel more prepared and competent to deal with it. Having more interventions of stakeholders from outside the school could also be a good track. Some respondents mentioned specialists such as journalists or scientists, others proposed to invite some witnesses (holocaust-survivors for example) during social and civic education lessons.

5. Teachers' perception of the connexions between civic awareness and hate speech

42% of the teachers partially agree with the statement that social and civic education can tackle online hate speech, 35% totally agree. On the other hand, 23% of the respondents disagree. The average score given is 6,03 out of 10. This means that the connection between civic awareness and online hate speech is not that obvious for teachers.

Secondary level teachers' personal and professional use of social media

When asked about which social networks they use, teachers report that the social networks they use the most are Whats'app (with 49% of teachers using it *Very Often*), Youtube (30%), Facebook (28%) and Messenger (19%).

On the other hand, the networks that they use the least are Twitter (72% never use it), Discord (72%), Vimeo (70%) and LinkedIn (60%).

By combining the answers *Never* and *Rarely*, the conclusion can be drawn that Vimeo (cumulated percentage of 89%) is the least used network. On the other hand, combining the categories *Often* and *Very Often*, Youtube (78%) comes out as the most used social network.

Now let's analyse the personal reasons why teachers use social media:

To communicate with family and friends: By far the most used social media for this reason are the two messenger applications Whats'app (70% of given answers) and Messenger (41%). Facebook is third on this ranking, accumulating 41% of given answers. The other social media are rarely used for this reason.

To share content: Whats'app (48%) and Facebook (44%) are most used for sharing content, followed by Instagram (27%) and Youtube (26%).

To watch videos: Understandably, the best known and most successful online video platform, Youtube, is the most used to watch videos, accumulating 87% of given answers. It is followed by Facebook (27%) and Vimeo (11%).

To inform yourself: Facebook (44%) and Youtube (37%) stand out as the most used platforms for teachers to inform themselves. The other platforms, except Discord and Vimeo, are used as well at around 15% each.

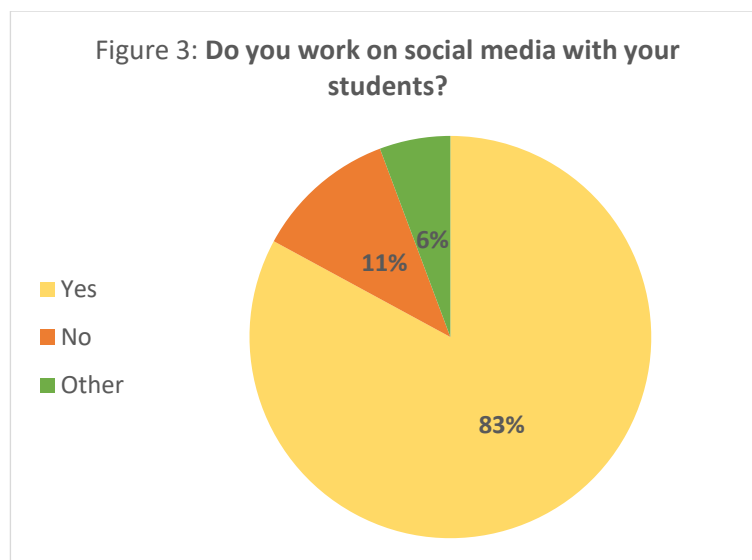
To express yourself: Whats'app (46%) and Facebook (43%) are the platforms teachers use most to express themselves, followed by Messenger (19%) and Instagram (22%).

Free time: Again, Facebook (52%) and Youtube (42%) lead the list of most used platforms for spending free time. They are followed by Instagram (27%) and Whats'app (17%).

As for the teachers' professional use of social media, it is important to note that 40% of the teachers answered that they don't use them. As for the remaining 49%, they use social media to share educational content with their students (41%), to interact with them (39%) and to work with them (37%). This distribution of answers shows that the reasons to use social media are pretty evenly distributed among the teachers, and not one reason is significantly more important than the others. However, we must take into account that this survey has been launched in a specific context due to the Covid-19 crisis. Indeed, many schools have been closed and distance learning has been implemented in many countries. This may have an influence on the numbers that are presented here.

Youtube (39%), Whats'app (33%) and Facebook (32%) are the three platforms teachers use most to share educational content. The messenger type platforms are the most used for communication with their students. Whats'app accumulates 33% and Messenger 32%. This means that teachers use pretty much the same kind of social media in a personal and professional context.

When asked if they do educational work regarding social networks with their students, 83% of asked teachers responded with yes, while 11% do not work on social media related issues. Those 11% are to a disproportionate percentage teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience, which do not use social media regularly in their private life: while 42% of all participating teachers have more than 20 years of experience, 64% of teachers of teachers who don't do educational work on social media with their students have this much experience. Only Romanian teachers answered this question with Yes at a 100%, while 73% to 86% of teachers from the other countries answered yes. The only exception to this is France, where just 50% of teachers answered that they do work on social media with their students.

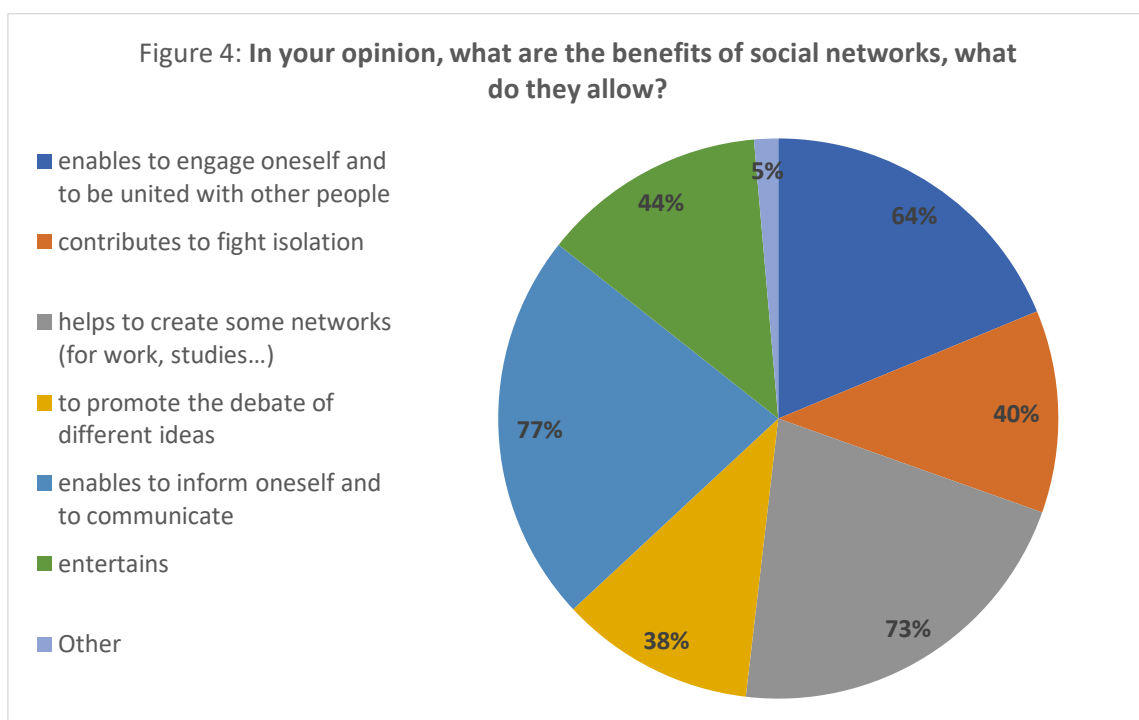


Secondary level teachers' perception of social media and their processes

1. The benefits of social media according to teachers

The first benefit perceived by teachers is that social media are sources of information and tools of communication (77% of given answers). Then, teachers think that social media can help creating useful networks (73%) and enable users to engage and be united with other users (64%).

The answers given to the other options are quite evenly distributed: 44% of given answers state that a benefit of social media is their entertaining capacities, their perceived contribution to fight isolation (40%) and their ability to promote the debate of different ideas (38%).

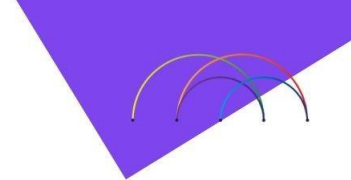


2. Teachers' perception of the connexions between social media and hate speech

75% of the teachers agreed upon the fact that social media facilitate the spread of fake news and violent content. The main reasons identified for this correlation are the instantaneity of the shared content and the reactions to it (74%) and the anonymity of social network interactions (73%). The big number of social media users (52% of given answers) and the soundbox effect (49%) were identified as less (but still) important reasons for social media effects on fake news and violent content dissemination. The standardization of profiles and content on social media only accumulated 20% of the given answers.

It is important to note that French teachers differentiate themselves as 22% of them disagreed with the fact that social media facilitate the spread of hate speech.

When asked about the negative impact of social media use on students' vulnerability, the majority of the teachers agreed that it had a negative impact on their students. Indeed, 60% of



the teachers think that social media enable the dissemination of violent contents and hate speech. Unhappiness and exclusion seem to be less identified as possible negative impacts. This may be linked to the fact that the identified strengths of social media are that they enable students to communicate and to create networks.

3. Media literacy, a possible answer to counter the negative effects of social media?

More than 50% of the respondent teachers estimate their students' media literacy as *not sufficient at all* to counter the negative effects of social media, which may come as a surprise if you consider that only 2% of the teachers proposed a focus on media literacy education when asked about possible improvements to current social and civic education.

40% estimated it as *somewhat sufficient*, while only 7% estimated students' media literacy as *sufficient*.

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

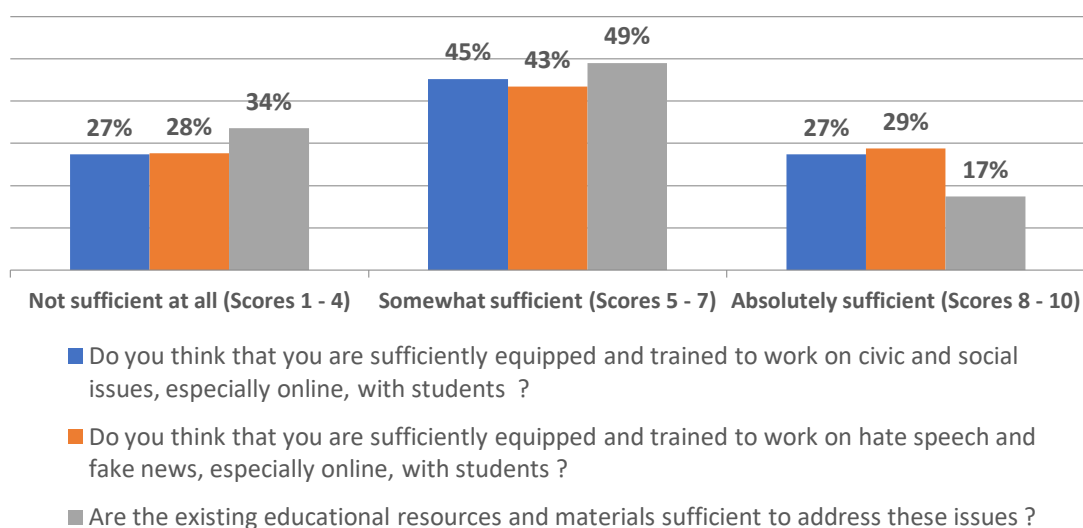
1. State of art of the sufficiency of the existing tools/trainings to work both on civic and social issues and on hate speech and fake news

27% of teachers think that they are not sufficiently equipped and trained to work on civic and social issues with their students. 28% think they are not sufficiently equipped and trained to work on online hate speech and fake news. Also, 45% of teachers think they are somewhat sufficiently equipped and trained to work on civic and social issues and 43% to work on hate speech and fake news. This means that more than 70% (cumulated percentage of answers given in the categories *Not sufficient at all* and *Somewhat sufficient* for each topic) of the teachers would need some specific training on each topic to tackle them.

The distribution of given answers to the question if materials and resources are sufficient is slightly different: while 43% of the respondents state that those materials and tools are not sufficient, nearly half of the answers stated that they are somewhat sufficient. Only 17% of teachers thought their materials and resources to be absolutely sufficient.

Those numbers indicate that teachers might be slightly more equipped and trained to work on these issues than their materials and resources are adapted to this work. The need for materials and resources is thus stronger.

Figure 5: Sufficiency of existing tools/ trainings for civic and social education

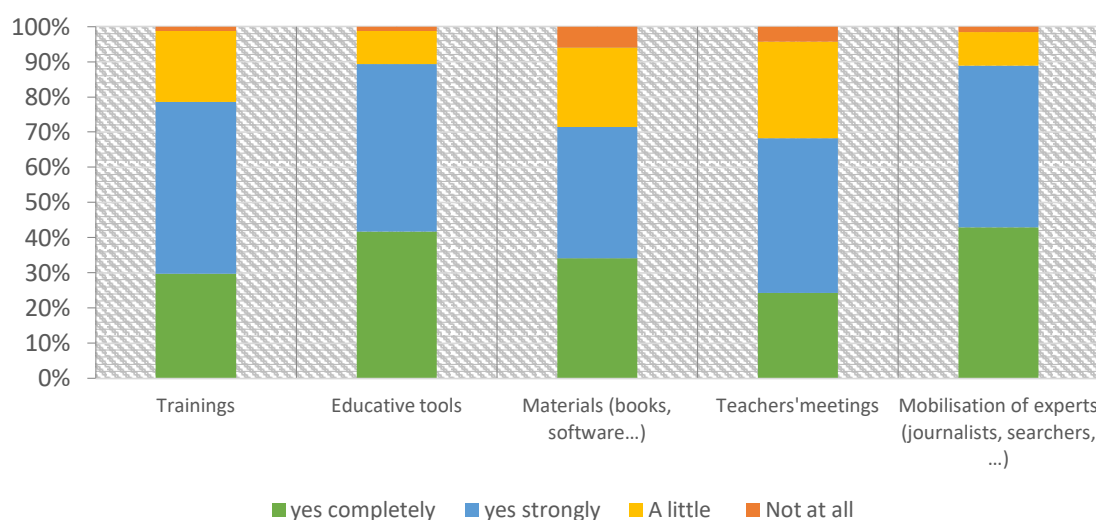


2. Some materials that would match the teachers' needs

When asked what could match their needs, 88% of teachers (41% completely agree and 47% strongly agree) estimate that more educative tools would match their needs. Dedicated trainings were estimated by 78% of teachers to match their needs, while teachers meetings scored 68%.

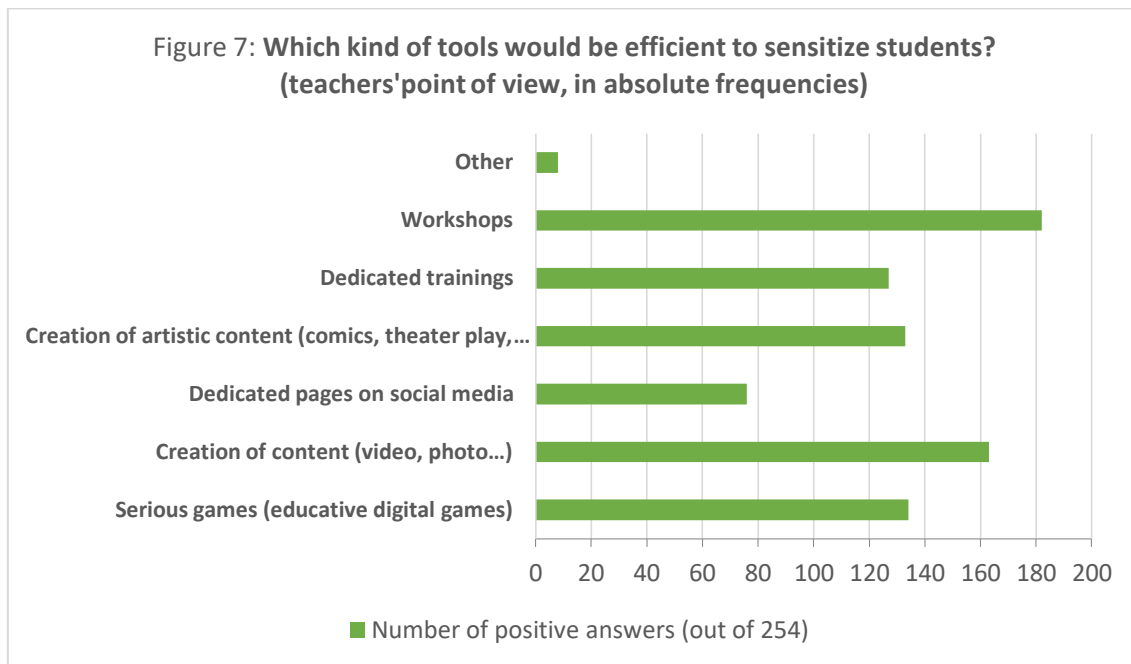
An option, which wasn't offered in the previous questions, but received the highest approval score in this question is the mobilisation of experts (89%).

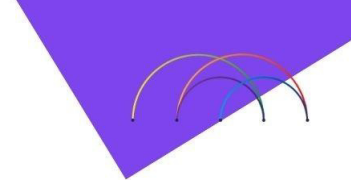
Figure 6: What could match your needs? (teachers' point of view, in %)



When asked about which kind of educative tools could be useful to sensitize students to social and civic education, the majority of given answers were related to implementing workshops on those issues (72%). Next in line come the creation of digital content such as videos and photos

(64%), serious games (53%), the creation of artistic content (52%) and dedicated trainings (50%).





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

Students' perception of civic and social competences

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

Most of the behaviours that have been listed in the RAINBOW questionnaire receive positive qualifications. As a general pattern, we can say that young people are trusting their political institutions only to some extent and do not estimate *political causes* and *voting* as important, unlike issues that impact their life directly – such as those concerning their *community and family*. Indeed, 78% of the respondents think it's important or very important to *ensure the financial prosperity of one's family*.

As very important behaviours for being a good citizen are also qualified: *respecting the rights of others to have their own opinions* (approx.73% of the students think it is very important or important), *Knowledge of humans' rights* (74%), and *making personal efforts to protect natural resources* (76%). Other types of behaviour mentioned as very important include: *Learning about the country's history* (66%), *Always obeying the law* (73%), *Working hard* (73%). Behaviours linked to solidarity are also considered as important for being a good citizens: 74% of the students think it is very important or important to *help people living in less favourable conditions*, 62% that it is very important or important to *take part in local activities which benefit the local communities*.

On the opposite side of the scale is: *Joining a political party*, which accumulates 62% negative vote (*not important at all or not very important*), *engaging in political discussions* is with similar results gaining a bit more than 62% negative votes. *Following political issues in the media* gets ambivalent feedback – although 45% of the respondents consider it as not important at all or not very important. Belgium's results are very representative, as *being a member of a political party* is rated as not (at all) important by more than 90% of students, *engaging in political discussions* is dismissed by 85% of the students.

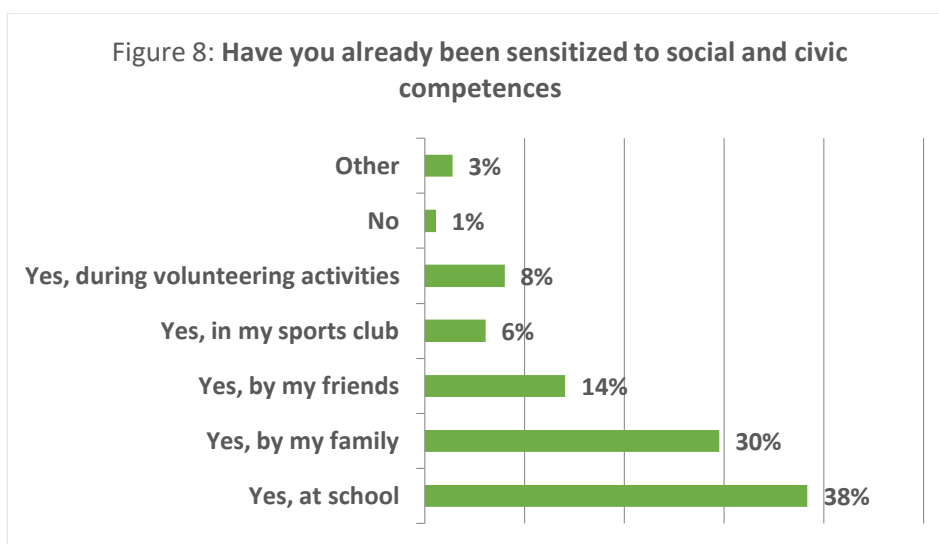
2. Students' awareness of social and civic competences

As defined in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2006/962/EC): social and civic competences include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

An important majority of students (75%) think that it is absolutely necessary to educate young people on social and civic competences. In addition, only 1% of them stated that they have not been sensitized to these competences, while the rest of them have been sensitized in different

contexts. Most of them have been sensitized at school (38%) and by their family (30%), while friends also play a non-negligible role (14%). Volunteering activities (8%) and sports clubs (6%) ranked last. Other places are mentioned by students, such as the scouts or different forms of religious education.

It is important to note that family plays the most important role in Bulgaria, whereas school comes first for France, Romania, Belgium, Spain and Italy. In Bulgaria, 72,9% of the students declare that they've been sensitized by their family and school comes second with 64,6%. The fact that about 35% of the respondents did not indicate the school as a sensitising factor for social and civic competences in Bulgaria is an expressive indicator, which requires attention.



Even if most of the students think that social and civic competences are important and that most of them followed some kind of social and civic education, 18% of them still think it was either useless or they don't know if it was useful. The other 82% learned among other things to understand discriminatory situations better (37%), how to better protect themselves and others (25%) or try now to avoid such situations (20%).

3. Students' suggestions to improve social and civic education

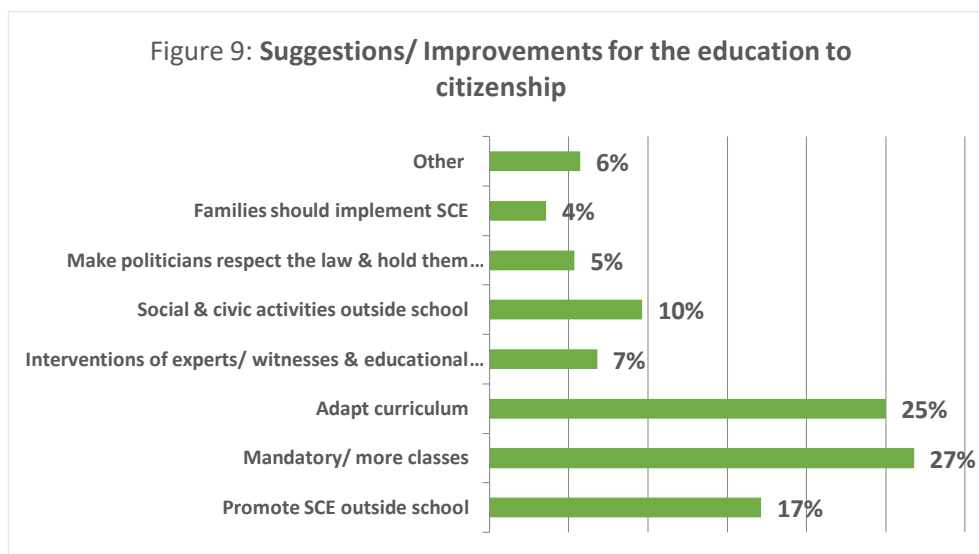
According to the students' answers, the biggest strength of current social and civic education is that it enables young people to learn how to be tolerant and thus, how to live better together in society (34% of answers given concerning current strengths). Another 20% of answers went in a similar direction, stating that young people could learn respecting others and their opinions thanks to social and civic education.

14% of the students also think that social and civic education enables them to get a better understanding of their rights and their duties.

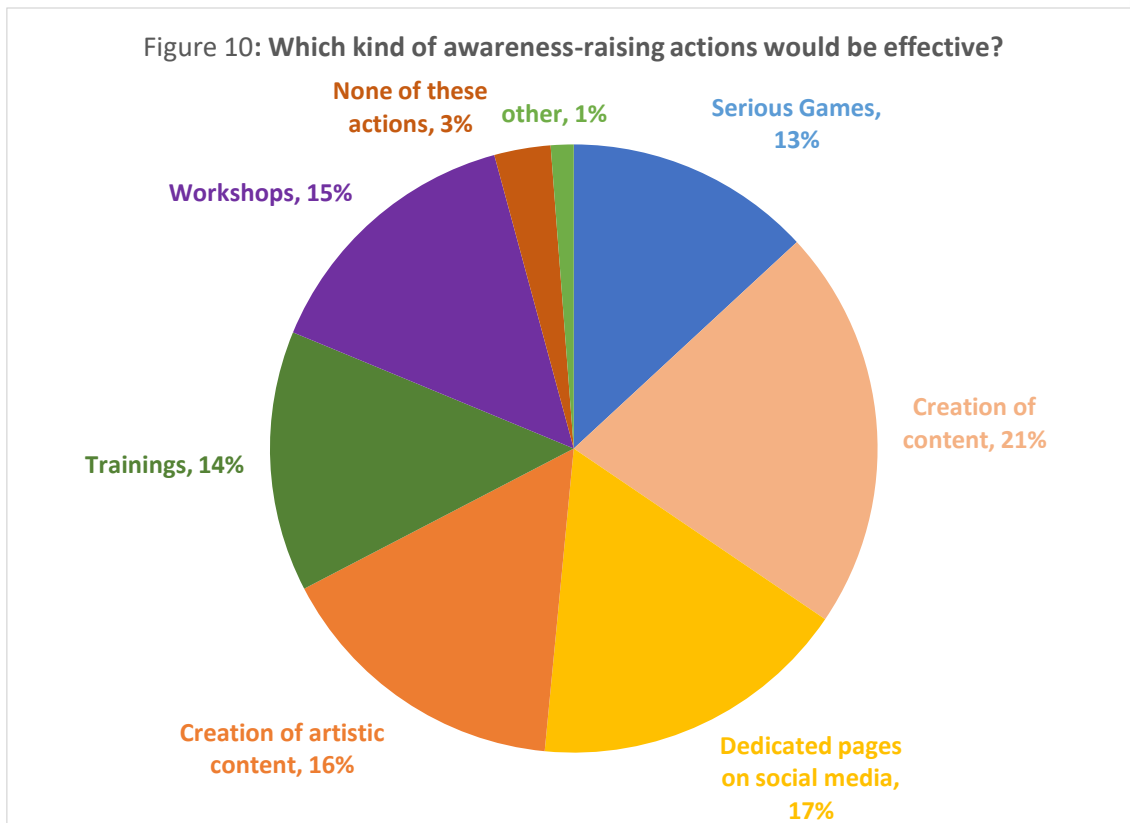
When asked about their own suggestions and ideas for improvements to social and civic education, the majority of students who answered this question (555 (=66%) of a total of 835 collected answers) had no idea or just stated that they didn't want to answer.

The distribution of suggestions of the remaining 280 answers is the following one:

- dedicate more time and resources to it in school (27%), for example by implementing mandatory social and civic education classes from an early age on.
- Another 25% suggest that the social and civic education-curriculum should be adapted to fit better the needs, interests and realities young people face on a daily basis, for example by using concrete examples or a more project-based approach. Students from France and Spain suggest to deal more with controversial themes (LGBTQI+ communities for example) and also to deal more with discriminations, racism and violence to prevent them.
- Another 17% propose to make more social and civic-actions outside of the school, for example by implementing big information campaigns. 10% think that in order to improve social and civic education, students should have access to more extracurricular activities focusing on it.



When given a list of possible actions/tools to raise awareness, students value the creation of new educational content most (21% of given answers for content like videos and photos, 17% for dedicated social network pages, 16% for the creation of artistic content). Dedicated workshops (15%), trainings (14%) and serious games (13%) got slightly less approval rates.

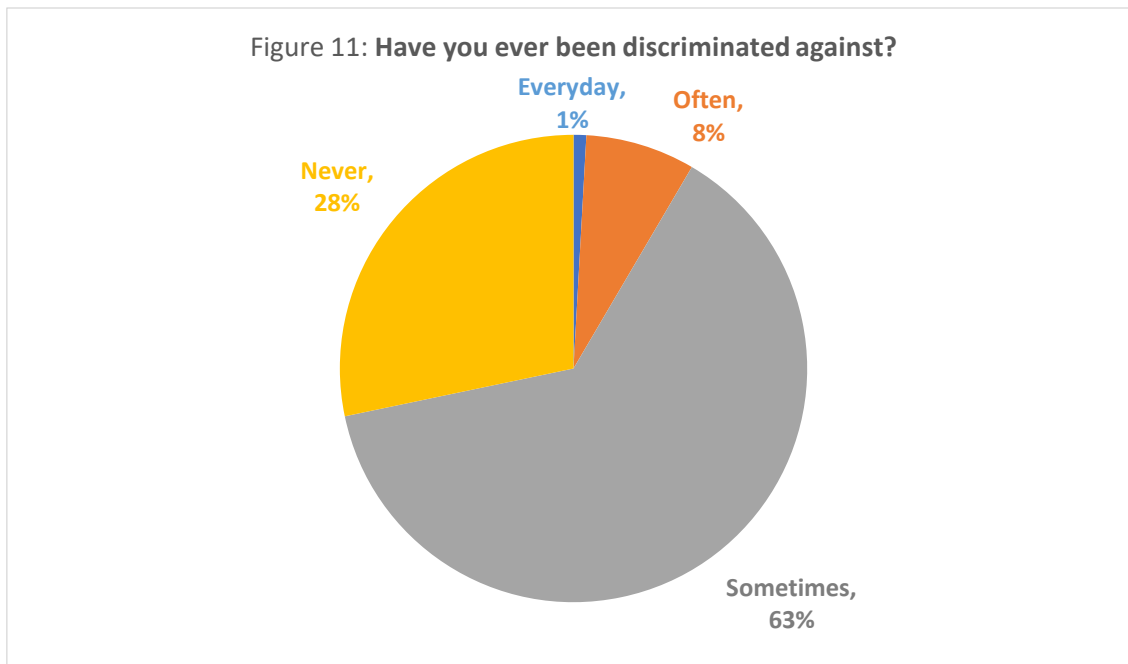


Secondary students' experience and perception of discriminations

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

72% of the students answered that they have already been discriminated against. 9% of them are discriminated against *often or everyday*. Most of the time, this discrimination is linked to their physical appearance (26% of answers gave this as a reason), followed by their morals (9%), surname (9%), age (7%) and gender (7%).

It is interesting to note that the alleged belonging to a race (36 out of 2388 given answers), handicap (38 answers) and the ethnic background (48 answers) are the three least mentioned reasons for being discriminated against.



2. Why do people discriminate against others?

When the students are asked about situations they witnessed, during which others suffered discrimination, they link them to different reasons. The most frequent reasons were the victims' physical appearance (cumulated 52% of the very often and often answers), followed by his or her skin colour (40%) and his or her (alleged) belonging to a race (25%). 10% of the students witness very often discriminations linked to the skin colour.

The contrast between the perceived reasons for discrimination the students suffered themselves and those situations, in which they witnessed discrimination, vary on this point: discriminations linked to racist ideas seem to be more present in the *world* students see and witness (surroundings, media, internet, ...) than in the *world* they live in directly (their own experience, their own interactions on the internet, ...).

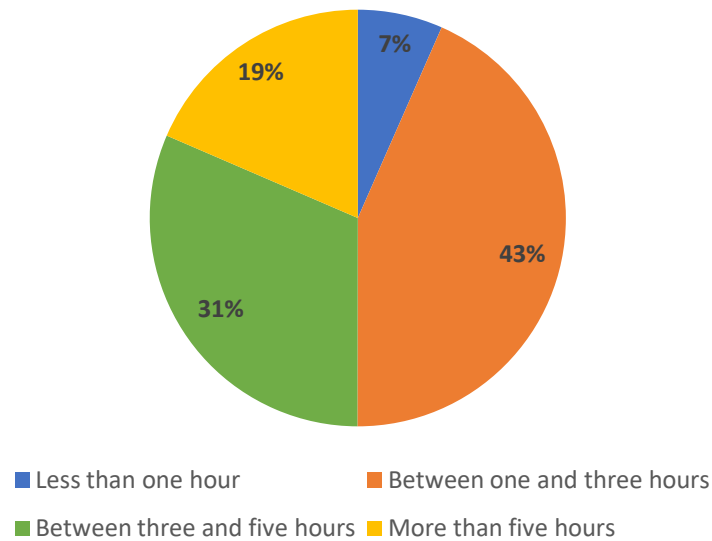
As for the reasons which would explain why some people discriminate against others, students think that discriminations are mostly linked to ignorance and close mindedness.

Students' experience with social media, fake news and violent content

1. Students' use of social media

Only 7% of students use social media less than one hour a day, while 50% use them more than 3 hours a day. 31% of the students answered that they spend on average three to five hours on social media and 19% that they spend more than five hours per day. Merely half of the students (43%) declare that they use social media between one and three hours a day on average.

Figure 12: How much time do you spend daily on social media?



This time is spend on different social networks for different reasons: Instagram, the most used social network (29% *Often*, 61% *very Often*) is followed by Youtube (37% *Often*, 48% *Very Often*) and Whats'app (27% and 44%).

The least used networks are Twitter (71% *Never*, 15% *Rarely*), Discord (68% *Never*, 15% *rarely*) and Facebook (32% *Never*, 37% *Rarely*).

Those use change depending on the expected purpose:

To communicate with their peers: Whats'app (74%) and Instagram (52%) are the most commonly used networks to communicate.

To share content: Instagram (78%) occupies by far the first place of networks used to share content, followed by Whats'app with 39% of given answers.

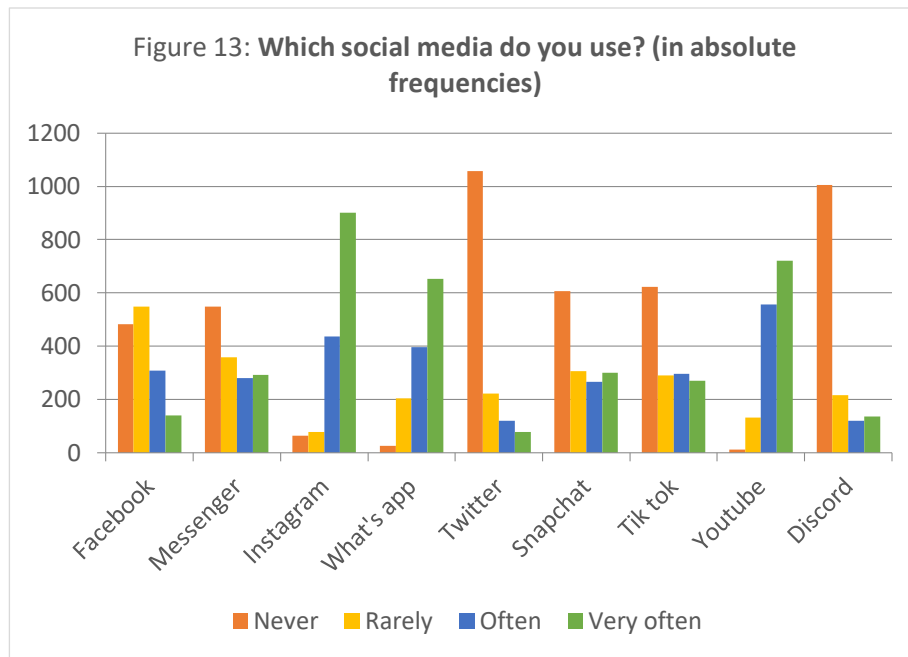
To watch videos: By far the most used network to watch videos is understandably Youtube (87%). But again, Instagram occupies a prominent second place with 45%.

To inform themselves: Instagram and Youtube are again on top, with both receiving 47% of given answers.

To express themselves: Instagram leads again by far (63%), this time followed by Whats'app with 25%.

To spend free time: Instagram (79%) and Youtube (64%) ar the most used networks for spending free time, while students use Twitter (11%) and discord (8%) least.

To communicate with teachers: The two messenger based networks, Messenger (28%) and Whats'app (46%) are the most used ones for communicating with their teachers.

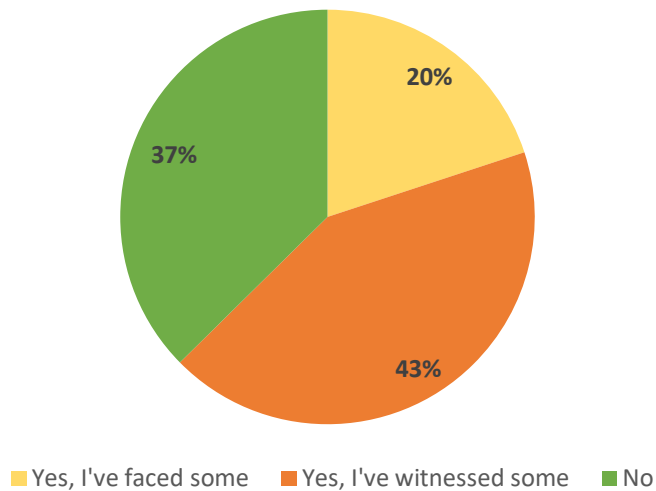


2. Students' experience with fake news, online hate speech and discrimination

According to the answers given by students, 20% of them have already faced violent situations on social media, while 43% state that they have witnessed some (24% witnessed those situations at least 2 – 4 times, 21% 5 times or more). In the 3 months preceding the inquiry, most of these situations were linked to contents targeting specific groups like migrants or the LGBTQI+ community.

The inquiry also enabled students to report some violent situations that they have faced or witnessed. Most of the respondents report that they witnessed situations where others were harassed or bullied online. Most of those situations occurred either to their friends or other students they know. Other students report violent situations linked to sexual violence and sexism (mostly directed against women). 15% of the answers also mention violent situations in which the victims were abused or discriminated against because of their (alleged) belonging to a nation or race, or because of their skin-colour. 8% reported witnessing or experiencing situations in which members of the LGBTQI+ community were targeted by violent content. It is noteworthy that nearly all answers from Italy concerned the same situation in which a black disabled kid got violently harassed by two girls on Instagram. 6% of the answers also mention events of police brutality, especially the killing of George Floyd on May 25th 2020 during an arrest by a white police officer in the US-american city of Minneapolis.

Figure 14: Have you ever been confronted to violent situations on social media?



According to the inquiry, the ways in which students react to violent content on social media are diverse. In situations where they are witnessing such content, their most common reaction is to report this content to the social networks (68% of given answers).

Both the options *I ignore them* and its opposite, *I comment or share them*, received 62% of given answers. In those situations, the option *Turning to my parents* received the smallest amount of answers, 51%.

When they are themselves targeted by the content, students turn mostly to their parents for help (61% of given answers), but they also turn to their teachers (60%) and the local authorities (58%).

Students' awareness about the characteristic of the media processes in the digital era

When asked if they think that social media facilitates the spread of fake news and violent content, the majority of students agree: 95% believe that it facilitates the spread of fake news and 91% believe the same for violent content. Thus, students seem to be well aware of the role that media can play in spreading violence and fake news. Only Romanian students responded slightly different than the rest of the students: the majority of those from the other countries chose to respond with a high score (8 – 10) when asked if they think that social media can facilitate the spread of fake news and violent content, while only 46% of the Romanian students are convinced that social media can facilitate the spread of fake news, and even less, 35% to be precise, thought the same for violent content.

However, it seems that students still trust media and social networks. Indeed, when asked about their trust in different institutions, 37% of the students declare that they trust media (television, radio...) and 39% trust social networks.

Appendices:

Teachers

Figure 15: Gender

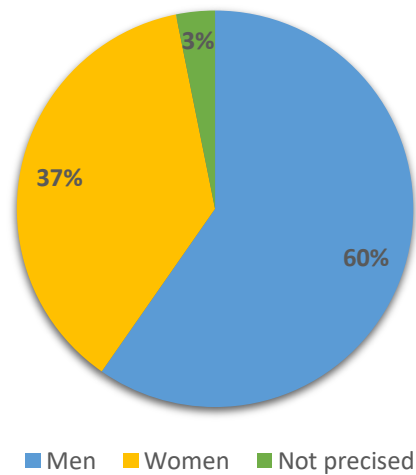
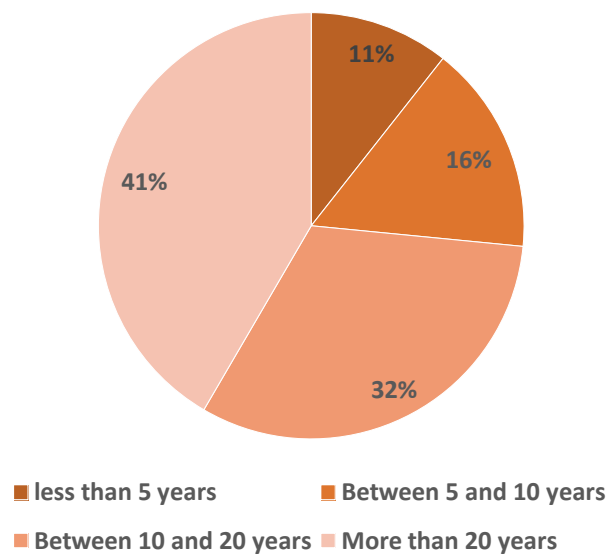


Figure 16: Teaching experience



Students

Figure 17: Age of the participants

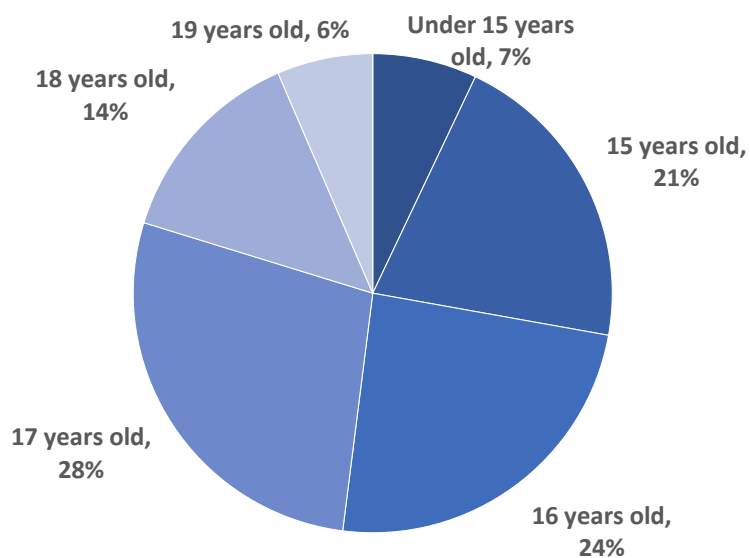


Figure 18 : Gender

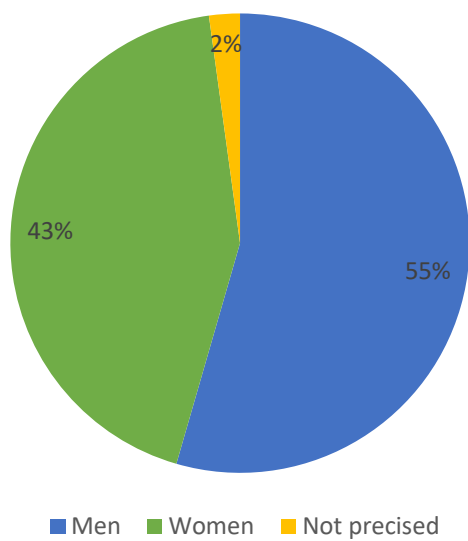
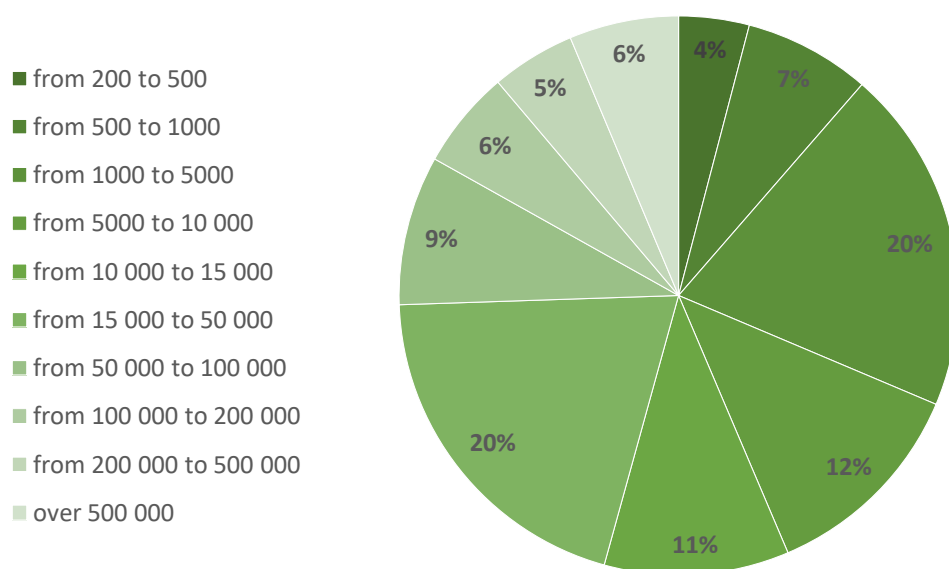
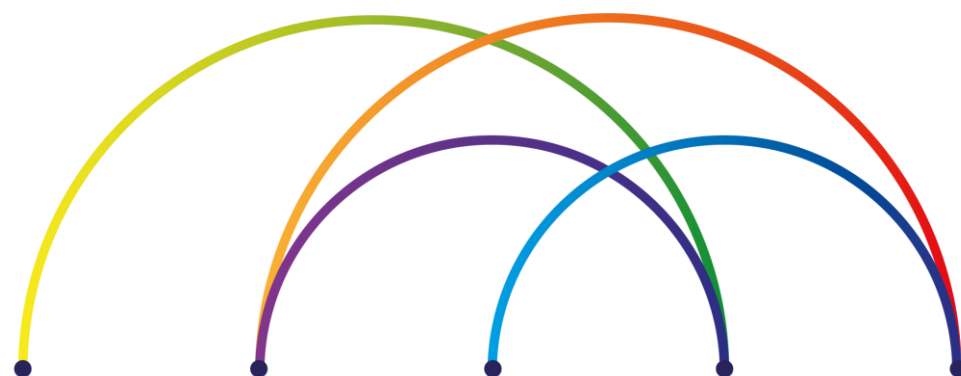


Figure 19: **Number of inhabitants in your "City"**





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