OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUTH WORKERS TO CIVIL AND ECONOMIC SOCIETY ACTORS

SUMMARY

Introduction

The European Union is a political and economic union of 27 Member States, representing 450 million people, whose decisions influence the lives of all European citizens. Everyone, according to their position and role, acts as a stakeholder in the European project. In the face of contemporary challenges, the fight against disinformation and the proliferation of fake news is a major issue for democracy, citizen participation, and trust in institutions. The European Union is striving to respond to this through various strategies in the areas of communication, regulation of digital platforms, and promotion of media literacy. However, many observers point out that there is still a long way to go to ensure a transparent and reliable information space. At the seminar on fake news, participants from NGOs and youth organizations across Europe formulated a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening the capacity of citizens and institutions to identify, prevent, and   counter   disinformation.

The recommendations

Businesses, companies, and start-ups

The first recommendations concern businesses, media companies, and start-ups. Participants emphasized the need to adopt more transparent and responsible internal policies in order to protect the public sphere from disinformation. Large digital platforms and media groups, in particular, have the technical and financial means to set an example: they should invest in information verification mechanisms, promote reliable content, and actively engage in the fight against fake news. Start-ups and independent initiatives, for their part, represent an essential source of innovation for developing new fact-checking and public awareness tools.

Participants also recommended that large companies in the digital and media sectors work more closely with schools and young people to pass on their technical knowledge and train a new generation of entrepreneurs and journalists committed to information integrity. Part of the profits could be reinvested in promising independent projects, thereby promoting a diversity of actors capable of counterbalancing the concentration of media and platforms.

Finally, traditional and online media were encouraged to promote this phenomenon by devoting more space to participatory journalism initiatives, partnerships between start-ups and large digital companies, and best practices in media literacy. In this process, participants reiterated the importance of an inclusive approach, giving a voice to all communities and ensuring that the most vulnerable audiences have access to quality information and can exercise their citizenship in an informed manner.

Decision-makers

In every society, "decision-makers" play a central role: these include politicians, European institutions, leaders of large companies, players in the media and digital sectors, and financial institutions. They are the ones who set the legal, regulatory, and economic framework within which information circulates. Their choices influence how citizens access media content, perceive current events, and participate in democratic debate.

Participants emphasized that when policymakers adopt policies aimed at protecting freedom of expression while combating misinformation, they play a vital role in strengthening democracy. This can be achieved by funding media literacy programs, establishing transparency mechanisms for digital platforms, supporting research on information phenomena, and adopting legislation that promotes accountability among digital actors. Participants also reiterated the importance for these decision-makers to act with ethics and integrity, avoiding any form of manipulation or corruption, in order to guarantee a safe, reliable, and accessible information space for all.

Individuals

Even though individual citizens may feel powerless in the face of the scale of disinformation, everyone has an essential role to play in building a safer information space. Every action counts: checking information before sharing it, reporting dubious sources, diversifying reading material, and engaging in constructive discussion. Seminar participants identified several categories in which individuals can take action—educational, media, social, and civic.

On the educational front, everyone is encouraged to develop their critical thinking skills, get information from reliable sources, and encourage younger people to take a vigilant approach to digital content. Sincere conversations based on verified facts and real-life experiences are an effective way to raise awareness among those around you. In terms of media, citizens can support independent media, consult diverse sources, and avoid sharing sensationalist content. In terms of social engagement, they can get involved in community or association activities that promote media and information literacy. Finally, in terms of citizen , everyone can contribute to a healthier democratic climate by participating in awareness-raising initiatives, encouraging transparency, and demonstrating digital responsibility.

Participants reiterated that the fight against fake news does not rely solely on institutions or major media players: it is the accumulation of individual initiatives, however modest, that creates a collective dynamic of resistance to disinformation and strengthens democratic resilience.

The media

In the modern age, the power to shape social and political narratives lies largely in the hands of the media, understood in the broadest sense: print media, television, radio, but also social networks, podcasts, documentaries, and digital platforms. Their role in the fight against disinformation is crucial, as they influence citizens' perceptions of reality and democracy.

Participants emphasized the need to increase the presence of reliable and verified content in order to counter the continued spread of fake news. They proposed various means of doing so: diversifying formats (educational programs accessible to all ages, factual podcasts, field documentaries), mobilizing public figures to convey awareness messages, and developing clear and attractive digital campaigns. Social media, in particular, is a major tool: encouraging influencers to use their fame to promote information verification and launch positive campaigns (#ThinkBeforeYouShare, #CheckTheSource, #MediaLiteracy) could help establish a culture of shared vigilance.

Participants also warned against the risk of saturation or public disengagement in the face of repetitive messages. To avoid this effect, it is essential that the media regularly adapt their approaches, monitor trends, and renew their formats. Even if not all initiatives can achieve a massive impact, each effort contributes to strengthening democratic resilience and encouraging active and informed   citizenship.

Youth organizations

In an era of disinformation and threats to democracy, the involvement of young people in political, media, and social debates is more crucial than ever. While past generations have shaped the current information space, it is up to today's youth to help transform it into a more transparent and reliable place.

Participants emphasized that youth organizations must mobilize to ensure that young people's voices are heard. This involves identifying priority needs in media literacy, seeking and securing funding, and developing strong organizational skills and networks. Once legitimized, these organizations can create collaborative and inclusive platforms: promoting critical media literacy, encouraging democratic participation through social media campaigns, and raising awareness of the importance of voting and obtaining information from reliable sources.

Young people already represent a powerful and mobilized social group; it is essential that their influence continues and is fully integrated into public discourse in order to strengthen democratic resilience.

Conclusion

Through this seminar, participants were able to analyze their role within NGOs and propose recommendations addressed to each institutional level: large media companies, political decision-makers, and citizens. Their message is clear: the fight against disinformation and for democracy requires collective, cross-cutting, and united commitment. Defending the interests of a few may seem easier, but it is by working to ensure the quality of information, transparency, and citizen participation that we can build a more just and democratic future for all.