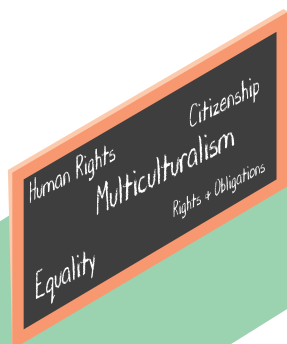


EDUCATION FOR DIGITAL DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP IN THE INTERNET ERA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Training Workshop of the EU CONVINCe Project
Berlin, 2 April 2019

REPORT



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ABBREVIATIONS

BIK	European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children
COFACE	Families Europe'
DCE	Digital Citizenship Education Project
DLF	The Danish Union of Teachers
EFEE	European Federation of Education Employers
ESHA	European School Heads Association
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
FLC-CGiL	Federazione Lavoratori della Conoscenza CGIL
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
OBESSU	Organising Bureau of European School Students Unions
SNES-FSU	Syndicat National des Enseignements de Second Degré
ZNP	Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego

1. INTRODUCTION

The third training workshop of the project [EU CONVINC \(EU Common Values Inclusive Education\)](#), took place on 2 April 2019 in Berlin, Germany. EU CONVINC is a joint project of ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education), EFEE (European Federation of Education Employers) and ESHA (European School Heads Association) which seeks to provide teachers, school leaders, and other education personnel, as well as the education institution community as a whole with tools and methods to better deal with citizenship related issues both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities, as well as support them in the delivery of inclusive quality education to all. In recent years, extremism, xenophobia, violence, radicalisation and terrorist attacks have surged across Europe and are threatening the safety of citizens as well as the universal values of freedom, democracy, tolerance, equality, non-discrimination, respect for the rule of law, human rights and solidarity. Within this context, the role of education, and in particular, of teachers, school leaders, other education personnel, and education employers is crucial to promote democratic citizenship and social inclusion in diverse educational contexts and learning environments. The EU CONVINC project is a direct answer to the current challenges and opportunities, of multiculturalism, diversity and social inclusion.

The training workshops are one of several activities that the ETUCE Secretariat has organised in the project period from January 2018 to December 2020. The first of three training workshops, focused on **“Successful good practices on democratic citizenship education and the teaching of EU common values”**, whilst the second workshop was on **“The whole-school approach as a tool to prevent radicalisation and extremism”**. Finally, the third workshop emphasised on **“Education for digital democratic citizenship in the Internet era: Challenges and opportunities.”**

According to the Council of Europe's Digital Citizenship and Digital Citizenship Education [concept](#), '**Digital Citizenship** refers to the ability to engage positively, critically and competently in the digital environment, drawing on the skills of effective communication and creation, to practice forms of social participation that are respectful of human rights and dignity through the responsible use of technology'. Therefore, digital citizenship represents a new dimension of citizenship education which provides students with competences, knowledge and values to become active, informed and responsible citizens in the digital society aware of their citizenship rights (e.g. voting rights), including such essential competences as critical thinking and media literacy.

Along with the training workshops, ETUCE and its partners also carried out an online survey amongst ETUCE, EFEE, and ESHA member organisations in order to identify the challenges and good practices concerning the promotion of citizenship education and universal values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination. Combined with a desk research, it also aims to acknowledge and pair-up challenges and good practices related to promoting citizenship and universal values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, with a particular focus on secondary education, both within school-curricula (formal learning) and in extra-curricular activities (non-formal learning). The project has also released

a [Massive Open Online Course](#) (MOOC) 'Citizenship and Human Rights Education for Change' in English and French to help teachers, educators, school leaders, education trade unions and education employers to better deal with citizenship-related topics in a broad sense. The e-learning course is built on the successful and innovative tips, advice and good practices exchanged and discussed during the project, and takes place for 6 weeks from 29 April to 9 June 2019. The policy outcomes of the project include two joint statements by ETUCE, EFEE, and ESHA: The [Joint Statement on Education for Democratic Citizenship & EU Common Values](#) (2018), and the Joint Statement on schools for inclusion (in preparation).

A final project conference will take place on 14-15 November 2019 in Warsaw, Poland.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To identify, disseminate and upscale (transfer/transpose/wider implement) successful good practices (into other countries/ contexts/educational systems) with regard to the role of education trade unions in facilitating the implementation of the contents of national education policies aiming at promoting the teaching of universal values and inclusive education.
- To provide teachers, education employers school leadership, families and students with an innovative platform for exchange of good practices at the grassroots level.
- To enhance the acquisition of social, civic and intercultural competences of pupils and the understanding and ownership of universal values in a broad sense

2.PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

The project is led by an Advisory Group who offers guidance and field knowledge, assists in the design of the online survey for the project, and contributes Joint Statements, provides expertise and recommendations to the MOOC, and dissemination of the project's outcomes and evaluation of results. The Advisory Group consists of representatives from national education trade unions across the education sector:



Fred Verboon, European School Heads Association,



Claudio Franchi, FLC-CGIL, Italy,



Odile Cordelier, SNES-FSU, France



Laura Widger, School of Lifelong Learning and Education of



Dorota Obidniak, ZNP, Poland



Daniel Wisniewski, European Federation of Education Employers



Annabell Kolbe, GEW, Germany



Dominique Danau, SAGO research, The NetherlandsLithuania

Two Associate Partners: 'COFACE – Families Europe' and 'OBESSU – The Organising Bureau of European School Students Unions' are also invited to contribute to the wider implementation of the project, e.g. in disseminating the project outcomes and material.

3. TRAINING WORKSHOP: BACKGROUND OBJECTIVES

Promoting universal values of freedom, democracy, tolerance, equality, respect, human rights and citizenship education, are key priorities for ETUCE work.

The 'Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education', adopted by the EU Education National Ministers in Paris, in March 2015 aims, among other things, to enhance the acquisition of social, civic and intercultural competences, as well as to understand the phenomenon of multiculturalism in education and promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning and combating discrimination on all grounds, in particular, regarding students at risk of marginalisation or social exclusion. This is in light of the: [Paris Declaration](#), [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), [UN Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, [Council Recommendations on Common Values, Inclusive Education, and the European Dimension of Teaching](#). The EU CONVINC workshop on "**Education for digital democratic citizenship in the Internet era: Challenges and opportunities**" addressed the impact of digitalisation on the inclusive education and issues related to the responsible use of ICT and social networks in school in the context of democratic digital citizenship. The development and the use of digital technology have massively evolved. Whilst the Internet and communication technologies open many possibilities for young people to expand their perspectives thus providing more opportunities to learn and participate in society, they also bring along exposure to risks, such as inadvertent release of private information, online indoctrination, cyberbullying or grooming for sexual abuse. The progressive digitalisation can also become a source of exclusion and discrimination and potentially deepen inequalities within society and the education system, if not managed correctly within a well-conceived framework. Therefore, workshop participants discussed how to address such issues as online

safety, data protection, cyberbullying, online indoctrination, fake-news and misinformation, through education.

The main objectives of the training workshops are:

- Provide ETUCE, EFEE and ESHA member organisations with the opportunity to present, disseminate and scale-up good practises in other different contexts and educational settings as well as to discuss possible solutions to tackle challenges encountered by education stakeholders when dealing with the responsible use of ICT and social networks in school in the context of democratic digital citizenship;
- Give participants the opportunity to exchange and showcase good practices and help resolve challenges through learning about other countries' good practices, e.g. by match-making challenges in one country with good practises of another;
- Provide teacher training support and guidance on successful and innovative approaches and methods on citizenship and human rights education in general.

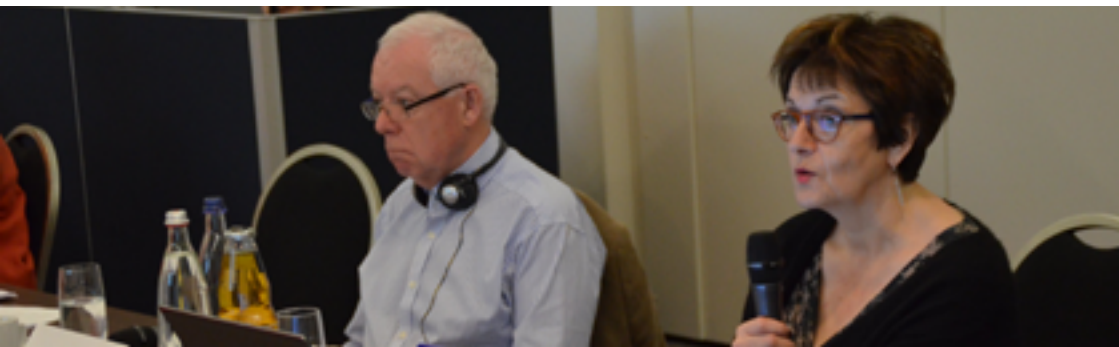
4. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Dominique Danau, project research expert from SAGO Research, provided the preliminary results of the online survey conducted in 2018 among ETUCE, EFEE and ESHA member organisations. She informed that 95 responses from 91 organisations from 46 different countries had been received. In her presentation, Dominique Danau focused particularly on responses regarding digital citizenship education and E-safety.

Dominique Danau, highlighted that a major challenge in promoting digital education amongst participants is that critical thinking/understanding lacks a prominent role in citizenship education curricula. As a result of this, students are lacking the relevant skills to navigate critically through the Internet to help them identify misinformation. This also creates a lack of support to teachers in which access to media sources in the classroom and guidelines to how to teach critical thinking is not available. The graph below highlights this issue, showing how often citizenship education competences are included in the national curricula by competence.

Among other challenges, Dominique Danau named the lack of support for teachers, including availability and access to material and evidence (results of projects and initiatives) on how to cope with (mis) information from media sources in the classroom and how to teach critical thinking. Hence, 81% of respondents expressed a great interest in more training on how to teach critical thinking in classrooms.

From left to right: Mike Jennings, ETUCE Bureau member and Dominique Danue, project research expert from SAGO Research





Source: EURYDICE, (2017), Citizenship Education at School in Europe, p51, https://eurydice.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/215_EN_Citizenship_2017_N.pdf

Dominique Danau highlighted a variety of initiatives which have occurred on promoting digital citizenship and inclusion in education:

- **European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children (BIK):** to provide a better integrated and more effective support to children when they go online – bringing together various stakeholders, e.g. Safety Internet Centres in EU Member States, Safer Internet Day, etc. (<https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/>);
- **Better Internet for Kids** is a government-led organisation in comparison to the other projects which are run by NGOs. This a project which stresses the importance of children being safe online (<https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/web/portal/practice/awareness/detail?articleId=4471811>);
- **eSafety Label:** a Europe-wide accreditation and support service for

schools, aiming to provide a secure and enriching environment, for safe access to online technology (<https://www.esafetylabel.eu/about>);

- **Global Kids online** (<http://globalkidsonline.net/>): international research project (toolkits, etc.) and EU Kids online (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/eu-kids-online>) (toolkits, etc.).

Participants stated that the following activities are perceived to be effective in fostering the ability to reflect and think critically in view of addressing (mis) information found in the internet:

- Sharing the process of problem solving by presenting and reacting to misinformation found on the media (48% of respondents);
- Organising a range of discussions in the classroom between teachers and students' own decisions on the use of ICT (48% of respondents);
- Organising discussions in the classroom on the different uses of ICT in which representatives from different socio-cultural settings are invited to present their inputs (51% of respondents);
- Developing classes which use ICT and social media so that students can ask questions and answer real life questions through an open discussion (49% of respondents).

Dominique Danau concluded her presentation by explaining the dimensions of the CONVINCENCE Research Report to be published for the project's final conference. The report is to present the findings from the research and highlight the challenges and good practises of teaching in a multicultural learning contexts, teaching in a controversial and sensitive issues, school

leadership and the whole-school approach, digital citizenship and e-safety and preventing radicalisation and extremism. The report will also include a compendium of good practises of the organisations which participated in the survey and the workshops.

5. DEMOCRATIC DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ICTS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN SCHOOLS

Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov, Council of Europe, presented the Council of Europe's resources and materials on digital citizenship education, including such topics as online safety, cyber-bullying, data protection and dealing with misinformation on the internet. In particular, she provided the insight in the [Digital Citizenship Education Project](#) (DCE) launched by the Council of Europe which aims to empower children through education for learning and active participation in the digital society.

Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov presented in more details various online resources collected in the framework of the DCE Project and linked to being online, wellbeing online, and rights online.

From left to right: Mike Jennings, ETUCE Bureau member and Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov, Council of Europe.



Moreover, the Council of Europe has published the handbook '[Digital Citizenship... And Your Child: What every parent needs to know and do](#)' which provides guidelines for parents regarding the digital citizenship education. The Council of Europe have also published the [Internet Literacy Handbook](#) which identifies ethical, sociological and cultural issues related to digitalisation in the world. One of the factsheets in the handbook focuses on digital citizenship education and the ability to think critically when examining various information.

Dr. Elizabeth Milovidov, concluded by emphasising that as education starts from what children have in their hands educating children and even adults about the digital world is fundamentally important in increasing one's awareness of the dangers as well as the benefits of technology. She pointed out that such knowledge enables students and members of wider society to navigate more easily and more confidently on the Internet and therefore should be encouraged through every level of education across Europe.

6. STRENGTHENING MEDIA LITERACY AND ICT CRITICAL THINKING TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PREVENT INDOCTRINATION AND RADICALISATION

Prof. Catherine Lowry-O'Neill, School for Lifelong Learning of 'Waterford Institute of Technology', Ireland, presented various approaches to strengthening media literacy and ICT critical thinking with the view to promote social inclusion and prevent indoctrination and radicalisation. She started from referencing the recent terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the perpetrator of the crime used YouTube to broadcast the attack and far-right content, as an example of a significant role that online media might play in stimulating the radicalisation and indoctrination.

Prof. Catherine Lowry-O'Neill named various experiences that may lead to radicalisation (e.g. fear, humiliation, frustration at lack of influence, etc.) and highlighted that enhancing one's critical thinking ability is a crucial tool to prevent the indoctrination and radicalisation as it enable individuals to question the information in front of them, to be aware of the context, and to seek different perspectives in order to understand the bigger picture. Acquisition of critical thinking competences leads to the promotion and reinforcement of social justice, tolerance, diversity, human rights and democracy in society.

Furthermore, Prof. Catherine Lowry-O'Neill highlighted the importance of the media literacy as in the modern world, sole provision of the technology to students is not enough for the acquisition of digital skills and competences, as it does not address social and cultural factors linked to the use of technical tools. Being exposed to 'media intoxication' particularly in the digital era of globalisation, children are not taught how to properly and critically use the technological tools they are given and risk becoming vulnerable to misinformation on the internet. Prof. Catherine Lowry-O'Neill also emphasised that ICT is a key tool in promoting social inclusion in education through encouraging participation in an informative society, communicating with others, and being socially connected to understanding others better. It is therefore important that students are not becoming 'consumer citizens' but rather critical thinking citizens who question deeply rooted inequalities, conflicts and discrimination in the society.

From left to right: Prof. Catherine Lowry-O'Neil, School for Lifelong Learning of 'Waterford Institute of Technology', Ireland; Sephora Mulema, ETUCE;. Annabel Kolbe, GEW; and Martin Schmalzried, COFACE



7. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTISES

Kristina Aaltonen, The Danish Union of Teachers (DLF), Denmark, highlighted that in Denmark various initiatives have been implemented to promote democratic citizenship education in the context of digitalisation and to prevent radicalisation. For instance, the Danish Ministry of Education, encouraged the use of digital teaching materials, conference, workshops, as well as the introduction of thematic week on digitalisation in schools. The Danish approach focuses on:

- Developing critical thinking, democratic, and social skills and a sense of responsibility amongst young people;
- Capacity building amongst teachers and other educational personnel's within the education sector;
- Encouraging self-reflection on personal value and attitudes associated with citizenship and controversial issues;
- Promoting communication and negotiation with others with the view to discuss controversial issues, to challenge prejudices, and to promote the analytical approach to norms, values and habits.

Schools in Denmark encourage the use of digital teaching materials to encourage the active involvement of students through putting democracy into practise. This approach requires promoting professional autonomy of teachers, ensuring there is adequate time available for teachers to prepare their lessons, emphasising on developing students' transversal skills and less on "teaching to the test".

Dirk Debroey, Provincial Education Flanders, Belgium, presented an example of a good practise from the project 'What's my name?'. The aim of the project is to empower young students through linking education with culture, as well as providing a positive approach to challenges facing Ghent's

youth living in a 'society of a permanent change'. In the framework of the project, the students of 15-16 years old, were asked to research the roots and meaning of their names, as well as to write a diary on what their name meant to them through an artistic approach. The project also included a dance workshop and a trip to Ghent City Museum to enable the students to learn more about the inhabitants of Ghent in the past and the changes that the city endured, as well as attending an opera whilst guiding blind people with the view to strengthen the students' self-esteem through building their awareness of their own cultural identity through performing art. This innovative project offered students and teachers the opportunity to learn more about their identity and the cultural identities of others through the use of digital arts and social media communication.

Suzana Hitrec and **Brankica Zugaj**, **Association of Croatian Secondary School Principals, Croatia**, presented good practices in Croatian schools regarding digital citizenship education. They pointed out that fostering inclusive education in Croatia is a key priority in the country, and citizenship education is a cross-curricular topic in the education system. The key topics in the area are human rights, democracy and civil society in order to effectively prepare students to becoming active citizens in society.

Brankica Zugaj, outlined various good practices of digital citizenship education in Croatia:

From left to right: Mike Jennings, ETUCE Bureau member and Kristina Aaltonen, The Danish Union of Teachers (DLF), Denmark, Dirk Debroey, Provincial Education Flanders, Belgium



- The pilot project [e-schools](#): a comprehensive information system which focuses on creating digitally mature schools for the 21st century;
- '[Loomen](#)' - an online service which allows teachers to create their own virtual classrooms;
- E-Safety badges given to schools for protecting devices, personal data, privacy and well-being;
- A manual for parents on cyberbullying created together with the Parents Association.

Martin Schmalzried, COFACE reported that COFACE-Families Europe works on many issues of digitalisation such as, fake news and media literacy, child online protection and cyberbullying, and Digital Citizenship Education. He explained that "digital" citizenship consists of online territories which are being controlled by private companies, thereby making it more difficult to censor information on the internet. He highlighted the importance of democracy and the current financial systems in stimulating change in society, emphasising the importance of the digital citizenship as a key stimulant to proving positive changes to society. He concluded that it is crucial to invest in teaching digital citizenship in schools across Europe to help stimulate innovative ideas of students.

From left to right: Mike Jennings, ETUCE Bureau member, Suzana Hitrec and Brankica Zugaj, Association of Croatian Secondary School Principals, Croatia, Martin Schmalzried, COFACE



8. WORKING GROUP SESSION

During the training workshop, education trade unionists, school leaders and education employers, exchanged their experiences of challenges from their national contexts in encouraging the use of ICT in education in the context of digital citizenship, as well as the impact of digitalisation on inclusive education. On one hand, participants pointed out that resources play a key role in promoting digitalisation in schools, as many schools are experiencing a lack of resources and knowledge of digital materials, thereby hindering the development of digital competences and knowledge, whilst in some countries (e.g. Italy) state initiatives on safe use of ICT in education are not implemented throughout the whole curricula and therefore, do not bring the structural change. Additionally, there is a great social division amongst countries and regions/cities regarding those who have access to technology and those who do not.

On the other hand, it was highlighted that digitalisation can be a tool which exacerbates inequalities rather than promoting inclusive education. For instance, not all schools have access to fast internet connection or not all students have access to updated laptops at home, which could lead to them being marginalised. Another significant challenge mentioned in regard to implementing digital citizenship education was the lack of knowledge, methods, and expertise for teachers when it comes to the media literacy, and overall the absence or unaffordability of teacher training on ICT (e.g. in

Working group 1 (English/German)



Portugal, teachers have to pay themselves for it). Alternatively, participants highlighted that there is an abundance of various materials and resources about ICT in education, which however are not implemented in the well-structured strategy and lack a clear action plan. Amongst other challenges mentioned by the working groups, there were the lack of comprehensive assessment of skills and competences on e-safety and digital democratic citizenship, unclear distribution of responsibilities regarding teaching digital citizenship as transversal competence throughout various school subjects, the lack of time for adequate implementation and assessment, and of curriculum with positive approach to using ICT in teaching.

Participants shared their views concerning the **key elements of an effective digital citizenship education**, including critical thinking; adequate time provided for teachers and students to learn how to use and teach digital materials in the context of inclusive education; bridging generational digital gap for teachers and students to have equal levels of digital literacy; understanding and usage of the ICT as only one of the many tools that teachers have at their disposal; and digital parental education:

Furthermore, workshop participants discussed possible measures for the successful and risk-free implementation of the digital democratic citizenship in education, including:

- Free Wi-Fi provided in all schools to foster an inclusive education system across Europe;

Working group 2 (English)



- Adequate and up-to-date equipment and school infrastructure available to all students even after school hours (e.g. students who do not have adequate equipment at home can use this opportunity);
- Digital learning materials and methods tailored to individual learner's needs and combined with provision of teacher technical assistants;
- More programmes provided on a government level to promote digital citizenship education;
- Providing students with skills and competences on how to use and navigate social media and internet space with a view to enable students to identify and analyse misinformation;
- Education which encourages a more open-minded and solidarity approach to the communities in order to avoid the risk of students becoming trapped in their own social bubble when using digital media and leading to exclusion.
- Commitment of all education stakeholders, including school leaders, parents, and a wider community to the implementation of digital democratic citizenship and ICT for inclusion in education, and preventing the massification and individualisation in society.


Working group 3 (English)



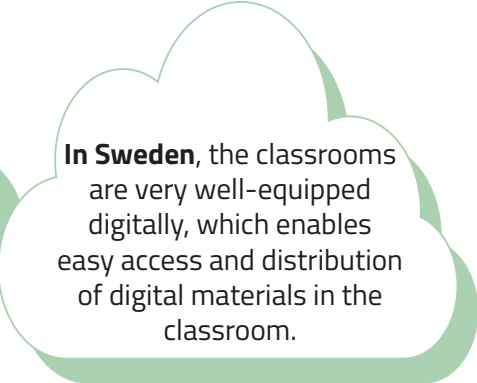
Moreover, participants provided examples of national actions and initiatives which could help foster the ability to reflect and think critically, in the view of misinformation found on the internet, as well as ensuring that digitalisation in education provides opportunities for inclusion of all learners and addresses inequalities within society and the education system.

Ultimately, the working group session concluded stating that it is important that government bodies provide adequate up-to-date equipment, resources, and services to schools and teachers across Europe to enable students to gain the required skills and competences to become active, informed and responsible citizens in the digital society. This will enable them to become more aware of their citizenship rights (e.g. voting rights), including such essential competences as critical thinking and media literacy.

It includes such important skills as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation, safety, intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking.



In France, one teacher created a voluntary WhatsApp group for his Math students, where students were able to ask questions and exchange solutions amongst themselves.



In Sweden, the classrooms are very well-equipped digitally, which enables easy access and distribution of digital materials in the classroom.

In Germany, ICT is being increasingly used in classrooms to enhance students' media literacy and to identify misinformation on the Internet.

In Ireland, nearly every school has access to the Internet. Access to the Internet can help teachers to prepare their lessons, involving more digital interactions from the students which in turn will increase students' digital and media literacy.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Extremism, xenophobia, violence, radicalisation and inequalities occurring across Europe, have threatened the safety and citizenship of citizens by challenging fundamental values. These fundamental values of freedom, democracy, tolerance, equality, non-discrimination, respect for the rule of law and human rights, are at the cornerstone of societies in Europe and help to provide equal opportunities and rights for all members of society. Therefore, education plays a key role in promoting these values and ensuring that all students are integrated into the education system. Teachers, school leaders and all education personnel's, must work in collaboration with each other to strengthen digital democratic citizenship and social inclusion in all aspects of education.

Digital competences are placed among eight key competences, outlined by [European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#), and includes such important skills as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation, safety, intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking. Digital citizenship education represents a new dimension of

citizenship education that focuses on providing students with competences, knowledge and values to become active, informed and responsible citizens in the digital society. It is through digital citizenship education that students gain the necessary skills and knowledge to critically navigate the Internet to identify misinformation, fake-news and cyberbullying and to challenge inequalities and discrimination in the digital and non-digital world. Digital competences enable students to better understand digital technologies and to learn how to communicate through these new technologies. This in turn provides students with the tools needed to prevent them from being exposed to online indoctrination, radicalisation, cyberbullying and being closed in 'social bubbles' when participating in the digital web.

It is increasingly important that digital citizenship education, is a requirement for schools across Europe and a transversal topic across the national curricula. The need for professional training for staff on ICT, the need for investment in education to be able to provide digital citizenship education is key. It is important that ICT is used as a tool among many, in which teachers can choose as fits best the needs of the students, the best way to integrate adequate technical support and up-to-date equipment and infrastructure into their teaching. This will enable both students and teachers to have the opportunity to gain the necessary digital skills and competences not only for their work life, but also for their everyday communication with society, including the use of their citizenship rights. Educators are the best equipped actors to change society to become more equal, democratic and stand in solidarity with others, as well as embracing the positive impact of digitalisation to prepare young people for the risks linked to new technologies.





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