

The project «Smart eDemocracy Against Fake News (SMARTED)» was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

<https://smartedemocracy.org/>

Applicable to the Measure 2.3 "Civil Society Projects"

14 events have been carried out within this project:

Event 1: Disinformation and fake news challenge to democracy (International meeting in Riga)*

Participation: The event involved 61 citizens, including 41 participants from Latvia, 4 participants from Canada, 2 participants from Czechia, Estonia, Belgium, USA and 1 participant from countries like France, Greece, Slovenia, Germany and Denmark.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Riga, Latvia on 29/11/2018. The second day of event took place on 30/11/2018.

Short description: The aim of the event/conference was to (a) reflect on the EU level initiatives on disinformation and the outcomes of Communication on fake news, (b) outcomes from project's survey, (c) raise awareness on the situation in different European countries (Estonia, France, Latvia, Greece, Czech Republic) and (d) to debate the best ways to tackle fake news through active citizenship, including various eDemocracy tools.

Event audience: project partners, academic personal, NGOs, policy makers, media etc.

Second day of the event gathered project partners and trainer of non-formal education, where the interactive one-day program was prepared and Partners agreed on the road map for the rest of the project.

Event 2: Two local events in Estonia

Event 2.1: Smart e-participation against fake news

Participation: The event involved 17 citizens from Estonia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Tartu, Estonia on 09/05/2019.

Short description: People from South-Estonia were present at the workshop and were engaged through interactive methods, such as Q&A discussions, group work, world café etc. Media expert (leading journalist from a national newspaper) was present at the meeting and gave a talk to give more insights about fake news and its implications.

Attention was raised through promotional activities in social media, personal invitations and meetings with relevant stakeholders. This resulted in good connection with other organisations and initiatives that target fake news, media literacy and e-democracy.

Event 2.2: Smart e-participation against fake news

Participation: The event involved 52 citizens from Estonia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Paide (27/08/2019) and Narva (26/09/2019), Estonia.

Short description: The SmarteD methodology was implemented during the two workshops (26.09 in Narva and 27.08 in Paide). The workshops contained all the parts of the SmarteD methodology and in addition, both events gave a very specific and practical knowledge about the usage of fake news and manipulation techniques and opportunities in digital information sphere. The participants also received an extended knowledge how to verify facts, information, context, files etc. During the practical exercises all partakers acquired a practical skill of fact checking. They also got a detailed overview how fake news, false information and different manipulation techniques can be used to tweak democracy. People from Narva and from East-Estonia, Paide and from Middle-Estonia were present at the workshops. They were involved through several different interactive methods. The

workshops contained a group work part, discussions and etc. Information manipulation expert from NGO was presented at the workshop and he gave a practical insight of the fake news landscape in Estonia, in Baltic states, Europe and in global level as well.

Event 3: Two local events in Czech Republic

Event 3.1: Smart e-democracy against fake news

Participation: The event involved 25 citizens from the Czech Republic

Location / Dates: The event took place in Plzeň, Czech Republic, on 26/04-2019.

Short description: Local event was organized close to rural area collecting together local citizens – youth of age 18-25. The aim of the event was to include presentations, debates, practical e-participation and collection of needs and fresh ideas. Delivered results: awareness of EU topics significant for local citizens and level of e-participation; awareness of consequences caused by EU level fake; awareness of different eDemocracy tools and skills needed to discern between fake and actual news, tackle politicization of news and disinformation campaigns, and strengthen their media literacy. Recommendations prepared with citizen's fresh ideas and needs- what kind of support, tools, advise etc. they need to tackle EU and domestic level fake news, which are prevalent in the Czech Republic.

Event 3.2: Smart e-democracy against fake news

Participation: The event involved 51 citizens from the Czech Republic.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, on 11/09-2019 and on 16/10-2019

Short description: The SmarteD methodology was implemented during the two workshops (on 11.09 and 16.10 in Hradec Kralove). Local event was organized close to rural area collecting together local citizens (youth, NGO's, students and academics). The aim of the event was to include presentations, debates, practical e-participation and collection of needs and fresh ideas. Delivered results: awareness of EU topics significant for local citizens and level of e-participation; awareness of consequences caused by EU level fake; awareness of different eDemocracy tools and skills needed to discern between fake and actual news, tackle politicization of news and disinformation campaigns, and strengthen their media literacy. Recommendations prepared with citizen's fresh ideas and needs- what kind of support, tools, advise etc. they need to tackle EU and domestic level fake news, which are prevalent in the Czech Republic.

Event 4: Two local events in Slovenia

Event 4.1: Sensationalism: from where to where?

Participation: The event involved 30 citizens, including 3 participants via Skype from Greece, Estonia and United States of America.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Koper, Slovenia, on 10/04/2019.

Short description: The aim of the event was to empower non-governmental organisations, youth workers and educators with practical tools for identifying fake news and various methods for addressing them. The event was composed of three parts: (1) Opening plenary discussion with Dr. Sonja Merljak Zdovc (Časoris youth on-line media) who highlighted the fake news phenomenon in the past, present and for the future; (2) Workshop I focused on learning and using the E.S.C.A.P.E. method which included introduction via Skype by Mrs. Jessi McCarthy from the USA, one of the method founders; facilitated analysis and identification of cases of fake news from media sources based on E.S.C.A.P.E. method and plenary discussion among participants about the results of the analysis; (3) Workshop II involved an overview of online platforms, checking facts and other e-democracy tools for addressing fake news; designing proposals to combat fake news at the EU level; presenting and discussing the proposals with the Slovene Member of the European Parliament Mr. Franc Bogovič via Skype call and sharing and exchanging workshop results with project partners from Estonia and Greece via Skype call. The participants of the event established a critical view on media content and consequences of fake news at local, national, regional and European level by identifying different types of media and assessing credibility of information provided. They also gained practical experience with analysing media messages and information about tools, online platforms and European initiatives to combat fake news. Participants generated several proposals and ideas how to tackle fake news at the EU level and engaged in networking and exchanging experiences. Full event report is available at <http://www.inepa.si/institut-inepa/novice/275-sensationalism-from-where-to-where-smarted-workshop-report.html>.

Event 4.2: This is not a fake news – workshop on fake news

Participation: The event involved 36 citizens, including 2 participants via Skype from Czech Republic and Latvia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Postojna, Slovenia on 14/05/2019.

Short description: The aim of the event was to share knowledge to youngsters, youth workers, educators, and students on practical tools for identifying fake news and various strategies for addressing them in everyday life environments (school, media etc.). The event was composed of three parts: (1) Opening plenary discussion with Dr. Sonja Merljak Zdovc (Časoris youth on-line media) who presented fake news issue in the context of digital space and technologies. She also introduced an on-line game Bad news (<https://getbadnews.si/>) and participants tested the game by playing the role of fake news-monger. (2) Discussion with guests including Slovenian member of the European Parliament Mrs. Tanja Fajon who worked as a journalist before becoming a politician. She shared a case of intentionally created disinformation targeting her personally as MEP and referred to fake news impact during election campaigns. Other guests participating in discussion with participants were young candidate to the European Parliament Ms. Irena Joveva (ex. TV speaker and journalist) and young journalist Ms. Klara Škrinjar, who is a local from Postojna and well known journalist in Slovenia. Both shared their views on fake news interference in everyday life. Ms. Joveva was a victim of hacking her Twitter profile and she shared her personal experience. Ms. Škrinjar advocates for truthful journalism. She introduced a new Slovene fact-checking portal www.razkrinkavanje.si. (3) The final workshop part of the event presented various cases of fake news by facilitator Mr. Matej Delakorda. He introduced the E.S.C.A.P.E. method to participants, who later analysed particular cases following the method. In the second part of the workshop, participants designed proposals on how to combat fake news and presented them to SMARTeD project partners from Czech Republic and Latvia via Skype call. The participants of the event raised their awareness and understanding of online disinformation and consequences caused by this phenomenon on European and local level. They also developed critical thinking skills and fostered a sense of European citizenship based on an informed debate on European issues. Full event report is available at <http://www.inepa.si/institut-inepa/novice/276-this-is-not-a-fake-news-smarted-workshop-report.html>.

Event 5: Two local events in Greece

Event 5.1: Citizens against Fake News

Participation: The event involved 32 citizens from Greece.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Agia Paraskeui, Greece on 03/04/2019.

Short description: Local event was organized close to rural area reaching the following target groups:

- Civil Society: This first event was targeted mainly at members of Civil Society; that is why through targeted promotion and selection of participants we managed to ensure that the 77.5% of the participants were in fact Civil Society members.
- Journalists: Also due to the fact that the topic of the event was Fake News we thought that one of the main stakeholders were journalists and must be represented on this event. Almost half of the participants were journalists or students of journalism.
- New Technologies: Since the topic was Fake News which mostly reproduce on the Internet and social media platforms we had as participants people who interact with the Internet many times in a day as well as IT professionals.
- Citizens of rural or semi-rural areas: We have ensured the participation of people from rural and semi-rural areas by promoting the event through social and traditional media to people in such areas and by choosing a venue that it is near to a rural/semi-rural area.

The aim of the event was to include presentations, debates, practical e-participation and collection of needs and fresh ideas. Delivered results: awareness of EU topics significant for local citizens and level of e-participation; awareness of consequences caused by EU level fake; awareness of different eDemocracy tools and skills needed to tackle the fake news through practical workshops of e-participation; recommendations prepared with citizen's fresh ideas and needs- what kind of support, tools, advise etc. they need to tackle EU level fake news; tested and improved methodology used in one-day program.

Event 5.2: Citizens against Fake News

Participation: The event involved 44 citizens from Greece.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Larissa, Greece on 09/05/2019.

Short description: Local event was organized close to rural area reaching the following target groups:

- Journalists: Due to the fact that the topic of the event was Fake News we thought that one of the main stakeholders were journalists and must be represented on this event. Almost half of the participants were journalists or students of journalism.

- New Technologies: Since the topic was Fake News which mostly reproduce on the Internet and social media platforms we had as participants people who interact with the Internet many times in a day as well as IT professionals.
- Citizens of rural or semi-rural areas: We have ensured the participation of people from rural and semi-rural areas by promoting the event through social and traditional media to people in such areas and by choosing a venue that it is near to a rural/semi-rural area.

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Event 6: Two local events in France

Event 6.1: Discovering Fake News

Participation: The event involved 31 citizens from France

Location / Dates: The event took place in Paris, France, on 03/04/2019.

Short description: Citizens participated in the whole SMARTeD workshop giving their ideas, knowledge, feedbacks, working on fake news with the ESCAPE method, talking with professionals and experts about their analysis and tools. Citizens from suburbs, our neighbourhood and representatives of NPO operating with public with difficulties were presents. All the events were dedicated to local citizens to debate and raise their awareness of disinformation and fake news, and the effect on them, on the society and on Europe. We discussed about how our governments and societies could improve their policies against this phenomenon including eDemocracy tools. During this event we presented facts, contexts in France and in European countries (like Estonia). And during innovating workshops we animated our participants suggested new ideas and tool to improve the fight against fake news, misinformation and disinformation.

Event 6.1: Discovering Fake News

Participation: The event involved 21 citizens from France.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Paris, France, on 07/05/2019 and on 06/10/2019.

Short description: The SmarteD methodology was implemented during the two workshops. The audience was young people in civic service. The aim of the event was to include presentations, debates, practical e-participation and collection of needs and fresh ideas. Both events were dedicated to local citizens to debate and raise their awareness of disinformation and fake news, and the effect on them, on the society and on Europe. We discussed about how our governments and societies could improve their policies against this phenomenon including eDemocracy tools. During this event we presented facts, contexts in France and in European countries (like Estonia). And during innovating workshops we animated our participants suggested new ideas and tool to improve the fight against fake news, misinformation and disinformation.

Event 7: Two local events in Latvia

Event 7.1: Smart e-participation against fake news

Participation: The event involved 21 citizens from Latvia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Cesis, Latvia on 30/04/2019.

Short description: Local event was organized close to rural area gathering local citizens, local policy makers, NGO's, media and academicians. The aim of the event was to include presentations, debates, practical e-participation and collection of needs and fresh ideas. Delivered results: awareness of EU topics significant for local citizens and level of e-participation; awareness of consequences caused by EU level fake; awareness of different eDemocracy tools and skills needed to tackle the fake news through practical workshops of e-participation; recommendations prepared with citizen's fresh ideas and needs- what kind of support, tools, advise etc. they need to tackle EU level fake news; tested and improved methodology used in one-day program.

Event 7.2: Smart e-participation against fake news

Participation: The event involved 46 citizens from Latvia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Jekabpils, Latvia on 04/09/2019.

Short description: Local event was organized close to rural area gathering local citizens - youth. The aim of the event was to include presentations, debates, practical e-participation and collection of needs and fresh ideas. Delivered results: awareness of EU topics significant for local citizens and level of e-participation; awareness of consequences caused by EU level fake; awareness of different eDemocracy tools and skills needed to tackle the fake news through practical workshops of e-participation; recommendations prepared with citizen's fresh ideas and needs- what kind of support, tools, advise etc. they need to tackle EU level fake news; tested and improved methodology used in one-day program.

Event 8: Online Disinformation: Finding the silver bullet in the digital world

Participation: The event involved 69 citizens (plus 300 online viewers), with participants coming from 15 different EU countries.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Brussels, Belgium on 12/11/2019.

Short description: The aim of the event/conference was to explore possible solutions to countering online disinformation, from potential regulatory approaches to efficient initiatives and actions to empower citizens. By involving diverse stakeholders working in the field, participants took stock of the achievements made in tackling online disinformation in Europe and looked at the way forward to protect citizens from this threat.

The event featured two interactive panels where decision-makers, tech platforms, civil society organizations, civic campaigners and academics 'challenged' and commented each other's positions on the subject of 'online disinformation'. The panels went through different aspects of the problem: the first debated a possible regulatory approach to tackle online disinformation. The second panel presented efficient initiatives and actions to empower citizens and to build the necessary resilience to ensure a prosperous, safe and democratic digital future for European citizens.