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T2.2 Stocktaking and Reflection Papers

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People in Focus

ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

EUROSUD

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL ECONOMY GROUP

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Section 1: Introduction

Objectives

The objectives of the national Stocktaking & Reflection papers are to identify measures to facilitate media literacy and citizen journalism in partner countries and to use a common template to make the results comparable. On the basis of the papers, the training materials foreseen in WP3, will be tailor-made to the needs of youth in partner countries.

Defining Media Literacy and Citizen Journalism

Media literacy in simple terms can be defined as 'the ability to decode, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms' (Welsh & Wright, 2010).

According to Renee Hobbs' White Paper for the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy, 2010 (Hobbs, 2010), a person who is media literate has the ability to:

- Access — Find and use media and technology tools skillfully and share appropriate and relevant information with others.
- Analyze and Evaluate — Comprehend messages and use critical thinking to analyze message quality, veracity, credibility and point of view, while considering potential effects or consequences of messages.
- Create — Compose or generate content using creativity and confidence in self-expression, with awareness of purpose, audience and composition techniques.
- Reflect — Apply social responsibility and ethical principles to one's own identity and lived experience, communication behavior and conduct.
- Act — Work individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, the workplace and the community, and participate as a member of a community at local, regional, national and international levels.

As described by Jay Rosen, a professor of journalism at New York University, **citizen journalism** is the phenomenon in which the audience (people who are not professional journalists or trained reporters) employs the press tools they possess in order to inform one another; become contributors to the media, using many different forms of distributing information (Rosen, 2014).

According to Aparna Dwivendi (Dwivendi, 2013), the occurrence of citizen-generated content is a response to mainstream traditional media, which oftentimes neglected public interests and had a biased portrayal of events and news. The public starts making content and that certain content is a response to the deficiencies of professional journalism.

Thus, a key idea behind citizen journalism is that people without official training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the internet to create, augment or fact-check media. It is about the mobilization of ordinary citizens to play an active role in their community and the media they are consuming.

Characteristics and Principles of Citizen Journalism

Characteristics (Mare, Keith, Marimbe, & Mukundu, 2018) (Ross & Cormier, 2010) (Riaz & Pasha, 2011)

1. Citizen journalism is **not profit driven**

Unlike in traditional journalism, the majority of citizen journalist activities are not conducted for profit, but are self-funded (operating out of their own pockets or out of what they can get through donations).

2. Citizen journalism is happening with **no formal training**

No university offers a degree in citizen journalism. By definition, citizen journalism is the gathering and reporting of news by people who are not trained as professional journalists.

3. Citizen journalism operates on the basis of a **decentralized, bottom-up process**

There are no citizen journalism headquarters, no chief executive officer, chief financial officer or marketing director. Citizen journalism is a movement without any visible or unseen substructure at work. Like the internet itself, citizen journalism is self-organizing and structured from the bottom to the top, with information circulating from the community, by the community, for the community.

4. Citizen journalism allows unprecedented levels of **polyphony**

Citizen journalism is an interactive form of journalism that allows average citizens to be active participants in the creation and spreading of news and information, allowing for a much greater diversity of perspectives, opinions and expertise to become accessible and visible by everyone than in traditional journalism.

5. Citizen journalism is happening with **no fixed standards of formation or editing**

Both broadcast and print media require journalists to conform to certain standards, with regards to grammar, spelling, punctuation, writing styles, specifications for size, space and format of articles, etc. They also have high standards for sourcing, quoting, privacy, treatment of minors and victims, protections from libel etc. Citizen journalists operate outside of all these restraints.
This failure to abide by standards of quality and reliability has brough considerable (and sometimes justifiable) criticism of content produced by citizen journalists. On the other hand, the absence of these rigid boundaries makes citizen journalism a growth hub for innovation in the way news is written, produced and delivered.

6. Citizen journalism has a **high degree of immediacy**

Unobstructed by traditional structures or editing processes, citizen journalists can be more mobile and responsive to breaking news than traditional journalists, and report on issues as they occur.

7. Citizen journalism **broadens the content** published by traditional media

With the internet and social media, sharing information has never been easier, which also means that hiding information requested by the public is highly unlikely, if not impossible. At the same time citizens as a group do not have some hidden or specific agenda, they just report what they witness and experience. Thus, citizen journalism covers topics that are sometimes overlooked by the mainstream media, this way enhancing pluralism in the media.

8. Citizen journalism contributes to the **democratization of society**

Citizen and other independent media not only inform people, but critically question various problems and make governmental actions more transparent. This is especially important when it comes to censorship. It is common that in the countries with a political system where all relevant information is censored, citizen journalists become the advocates for democracy, and sometimes the only truthful news source.

Principles

In 2007, the Center for Citizen Media developed the four "Principles of Citizen Journalism", providing a set of standards to guide citizen journalists on how to report reliably and efficiently.

These principles are:

- Accuracy: Checking facts, correcting errors promptly and incorporating new and relevant information
- Thoroughness: Learning as much as possible in the given time and list the original sources
- Fairness: Listen and take into account divergent viewpoints
- Transparency & independence: Be independent in the view of things, otherwise explain the biases and the conflicts. Not having direct connection with an interested party.

Similarities and differences between Citizen Journalism and Traditional Journalism

Similarities

Both citizen journalism and professional journalism have spreading information and upholding the truth as their driving forces. In doing so, both must operate on the basis of long-accepted values of good journalism that promote journalistic integrity, the foremost of which ese values are objectivity, truthfulness and fairness. They both benefit from a culture of free speech, including the right to criticize the government and any elite without fear of punishment, and both can influence the way people think, feel, and behave by exposing them to stories that move or impact them in one way or another.

Citizen journalism and professional journalism also share a similarity in terms of what is at stake in the practice of both, i.e., the free flow of information, which must not be hindered by laws, socio-economic conditions, changing technologies or failing systems (Mare, Keith, Marimbe, & Mukundu, 2018).

Differences

The boundaries between citizen journalism and conventional journalism are not clearly defined and their transition line is rather blurry, especially considering the ways in which traditional media channels often invite audiences to take part in content production while also encouraging their own reporters to experiment with new formats and styles (Darbo & Skjerdal, 2019). However, the differentiation between conventional and citizen journalists can be guided by the following characteristics:

1. Traditional journalism requires reporters to be qualified in the field of journalism when a citizen journalist does not necessarily have professional training.
2. Traditional journalists are employed by media houses to report on mainstream news, while citizen journalists do not report on behalf of a publication, they write and work independently. In essence, the reason why citizen journalism exists is the fact that it is far removed from the mass media.
3. Traditional journalists are working mostly on traditional media like TV, radio and print media, while citizen journalists practice journalism from anywhere possible and convenient, mostly on social media and online platforms.
4. The main aim of traditional journalism is to remain neutral and to provide a platform that educates and holds the general public and state accountable for their actions. Citizen journalism encourages members of the public to share their personal views.
5. The style and the tone of writing of traditional journalists is predetermined. The views expressed by citizen journalists are uncensored accounts of the events that have transpired.

6. In traditional journalism regulation bodies exist and there is gate-keeping, steps are taken to verify information and professional devices are used for thorough editing. Because of this complex verification process speed of publishing is curtailed. On the other hand, in citizen journalism speed is of the essence (“breaking news”) and information can be published instantly, as there are no verification, filtering, or gatekeeping processes that need to be fulfilled.

The vital need of Media Literacy training for Citizen Journalists

Media literacy moves beyond the traditional print text and examine more contemporary sources. As defined by The Core Principles of Media Literacy Education (Bergsma, et al., 2007), "the purpose of media literacy education is to help individuals of all ages develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today’s world".

Media Literacy training is essential for anyone involved in journalism for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, gaining knowledge about the ways in which media institutions are shaped by the historical, political, economic and social forces people involved in journalism can be inculcated with the concept and values of “journalistic objectivity”. Secondly, having the ability to sort through the cacophony of information coming at them and understand which resources are fake and which are not, journalists can remain accurate and reliable. Moreover, media literacy training also helps journalists understand not only how to use the wide array of technological tools available to them but also how to determine the needs and demands of their audiences, and how to engage with them more effectively using those tools. Finally, media literacy training can show journalists how to use specific media strategies to attract press interest, build coalitions, shape policy decision-making, and most importantly mobilize public opinion in order to promote a change in offensive or problematic mentalities/practices on a number of social issues.

Citizen journalists often have no formal journalistic training, nor do they typically have training in the essential roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent government. Previously, if journalism values were not learned in schools and universities, they were inculcated in newsrooms. Citizen journalists have not typically had that kind of teaching. Therefore, without doubt, there is an even greater need to promote thorough Media Literacy education programs addressed to citizen journalists, as compared to traditional journalists.

Section 2: Current state analyses per partner country

Section 2.1: Assessing the Media Landscape per country

a. *What is the state of freedom of speech and press in your country?*

Albania

The Constitution of Albania provides for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. However, Albania has lost twenty places in the World Media Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders for 2022, ranking 103th out of 180 countries.

Laws against online media, restricting journalists' access to information, arresting journalists and activists, and shutting down critical media outlets with the government are just some of the problems that Reporters Without Borders (RSF) says have led to deteriorating media freedom in Albania. In mid-December 2019, parliament approved two bills as part of the so-called 'anti-defamation package' which aims to regulate the content of online media by the Ethics Council at the Audiovisual Media Authority. The bills were returned to parliament by the country's President as unconstitutional. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe asked the Venice Commission for their assessment and the government decided to suspend their approval. By restricting freedom of expression, information and the media and against international best practice, both laws risk increasing censorship of journalists who are more vulnerable to government pressure (Reporter.al, 2022).

The Constitution also grants citizens the right to access to information: every citizen has the right, in accordance with the law, to acquire information on the activities of state bodies and persons exercising public functions.

The Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) is the main media regulator in Albania, replacing the previous National Council of Radio and Television (KKRT). The AMA is tasked with issuing broadcasting licenses and monitoring their use. It is funded through fines, annual licenses and fees, though it can also receive public budget money.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria ranked 91st out of 180 possible positions in the World Press Freedom Index. Despite improving in recent years (Sofia Globe, 2022) the socio-political factors prevail in curtailing media freedom (Reporters Without Borders, n.d.). The data indicates that the socio-political factors infringe upon freedom of speech and the quality of journalism in the country (Reporters Without

Borders, n.d.). While the editorial independence of public media is affected by the governing political party, the private media reflect the interests and views of their owners. The lack of independence and corruption fuel further the bias in journalism in Bulgaria.

The legislative framework provides basic protection of journalists but fails to prevent assaults against journalists. The vagueness of the law combined with the unwillingness of police departments to investigate crimes against journalists deteriorates further the quality of journalism. The low efficiency of the justice system intensifies the problem by leaving journalists exposed to the so-called SLAPPs (strategic litigation against public participation). SLAPPs have been associated primarily with Russia which have spread in other Eastern European countries. In general, the public sentiments seem to be skeptical towards Western owned media and fall victim to regressive reporting trends from ex-Soviet states (Petkova M. , 2021).

Media require income from advertising or funding in order to provide adequate coverage. Thus, governmental or EU funds become essential to the existence of a plethora of media. However, due to the lack of transparency of the distribution process, it is not uncommon for stakeholders to allocate funds in exchange for favorable representation (Reporters Without Borders, n.d.).

Egypt

Despite what Egypt has gone through after the June 30 revolution, including the terrorist attacks and extremist groups' exploitation of media platforms and social networking sites, it did not restrict media freedom and did not nationalize privately owned satellite media. Egypt did not also prevent the broadcasting of any channels with hostile policies or critical views on the Nilesat satellite (al-Omma, 2020).

Despite terrorist attacks after the June 30 revolution, the Egyptian government was forced to declare a state of emergency (Alhada, 2017). Thus, the government was forced to control the media, but also gave space for citizens to express their opinions, as they complained about the inefficiency of the ministries of education and health. The media covered issues such as the case of the Minister of Agriculture who was accused of bribery (Bribing the Ministry of Agriculture, 2015), and the case of the Ministry of Health (Akhera, 2022). Although some countries restricted the access of their citizens to social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Telegram, Egypt has not imposed restrictions or taxes on access thereto, nor has it prevented its citizens from complaining about the inefficient performance of government ministers (Dawood, 2021) and has established hotlines to receive complaints from citizens. In addition, satellite channels interviewed a number of opposition representatives in Parliament without any restrictions from the government, such as opposition figures such as Hamdeen Sabahi (Sabahi, 2022).

As to freedom of the press, the state has bodies and unions that support the press, including the National Press Authority and the Supreme Council for Media Regulation, which are government agencies specialized in assisting media institutions and supporting them financially without interfering in the work of media institutions. There is a union for journalists that the state does not interfere in its work, and it is reported that the union has journalists whose opinions are not in line with the government, and they were nominated for membership of the union.

Naturally, there were some problems in the application of laws during the emergency period, which the state took into account when launching the national strategy for human rights, as well as lifting the state of emergency. The state also emphasized the principle of canceling imprisonment in publishing cases, according to the 2014 Egyptian constitution (Article 71). Finally, the President of the Republic called in April 2022 to launch a "political dialogue" with all forces without exception or discrimination, and indeed the "National Academy for Training and Rehabilitation of Youth" called to represent the Syndicate of Journalists in the national dialogue (Lotfi, 2022).

Greece

According to the World Press Freedom Index in 2022, Greece is at place 108 of the 180 countries included in the assessment, ranking last among all European countries. In 2021 and 2022, the Greek press freedom faced serious setbacks, with journalists being regularly prevented from covering issues from migration to Covid-19.

During the financial crisis that shook Greece in the past decade, the lives of many journalists and photojournalists were endangered, and some were injured. During the rallies of November 17, 2010 and a few months later, on June 28-29, 2011, many professionals were attacked by the police and injured despite clearly wearing their badges. On August 15, 2011, photojournalist Manolis Kypraios was beaten by riot police forces while covering the demonstrations of the strike actions, so much that he lost his hearing and remains unable to walk. Photojournalist Tatiana Bolari was brutally beaten during the same demonstrations. In the last few years even journalist assassinations have taken place. The most prominent case of recent years was, Giorgos Karaivaz, a veteran crime reporter, who investigated organized crime and corruption. Karaivaz was gunned down outside his home in broad daylight in April 2021 (Papathanassopoulos, Karadimitriou, Kostopoulos, & Archontaki, 2021).

A recent nationwide poll by KAPA Research on behalf of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom shows that the state of media freedom was assessed with only 4.09/10. The majority of citizens believe that the media is controlled by the government or the political parties and this follows citizens' crisis of confidence in the media. 67% of people that took part in the research, answered that the Greek media broadcasts invalid or biased news (KAPA Research, 2020).

Finally, Media Associations (Alliance Internationale des Journalistes, Association of European Journalists – AEJ, AMARC Europe, Deutsche Welle Akademie, European Center for Press & Media Freedom – ECPMF, European Federation of Journalists – EFJ, Free Press Unlimited, Global Forum for Media Development – GFMD, IFEX, International Press Institute – IPI, PEN International and RSF) considered that Greece was not a safe environment for journalists to practice their profession in 2020. For this reason, EU and the Member States have requested from the Greek government to take actions and provide a new framework, in order to remove all restrictions on information and expression, to bring to justice those responsible for attacks on journalists and to act against fake news and hate speech (Psychogiopoulou & Kandyla, 2020).

Italy

The World Press Freedom index of 2022 sees Italy in 58th place, seventeen positions less than in 2021. Although it is not easy to compare the data of 2022 with that of 2021, because the calculation methodology of the index has changed, we can see the points where Italy has the most problems. Certainly, journalists in Italy do not have to fear for their life, since at present there are no cases of journalists killed, but they run risks. The years of the pandemic have led to a worsening of social conflicts, which has spilled over into forms of violence against journalists as well (Reporters without Borders, 2022).

According to the "Annual Report by the partner organizations to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists" of 2021, Italy is the European state with the most violence against journalists, second only to Russia. There were not only moments of physical violence, but also threats and intimidation through social media. It also happened to the President of the Italian National Press Federation, threatened by "no vax" groups.

According to the World Press Freedom Index of 2022, the worst indicator for Italy is the economic one, followed by the political one. As commented in the report itself: "As a result of the economic crisis, the media as a whole are increasingly dependent on advertising revenue and any state Subsidies, while the print media are also facing a gradual decline in sales. The result is a growing precariousness that dangerously undermines journalism, its energy and autonomy". To demonstrate this, in April 2022 a delegation of journalists came to the Minister of Labor to protest precarious conditions, which also affect the quality of the press (FNSI, 2022). In summary, it can be said that in Italy there is freedom of the press, especially from the formal point of view, but there are risks to the freedom of the press substantial.

Jordan

Journalism in Jordan is suffering some severe blows as a result of laws and legislations that are inherently restrictive to the freedom of the media and the practice of the profession. Many regulations, which have been passed in violation of the Jordanian Constitution, currently serve as a legal umbrella for authorities to control independent websites in general, and journalists in particular.

Whoever follows up on legislation targeting journalism in Jordan will notice a concerning State pattern. The Press and Publication law has been amended several times, which led to the censorship of news websites after each amendment, under the pretext that these had failed to secure a license from the General Administration of Press and Publication. Likewise, the Cybercrime Law is often used as a legal justification to arrest and detain journalists, increase website license fees, and request a license for the "Live" broadcast feature on social media.

Network data from the NetBlocks internet observatory confirm that Facebook Live video streaming features have been restricted in Jordan on multiple providers several times during the demonstrations and protests. Authorities used to impose a gag order, preventing local media and journalists, and citizens from reporting on events and limiting online speech. In this regard, journalists and citizens may wonder about the role of the "Jordanian Press Association" (JPA), represented by the new board, in countering these challenges and legislative amendments which have imposed further restrictions on freedom positioning Jordan on the 2022 World Press Freedom Index, in the 120th place out of 180 countries around the world, according to a report by "Reporters without Borders".

Based on the report by "center of defending freedom of journalists" about the index of media freedom in Jordan: Jordan scored 215.2 points in the Media Freedom Index for the year 2021, out of a total of 600 points in the index, and according to the criteria adopted for the index, this result falls into the category of "restricted". The "restricted" classification is repeated for the second year in a row, as the index in 2020 scored 227.3 points, but it is remarkable that the points obtained by the index in 2021 decreased from 2020, and the media freedom index declined by 4%.

The six sections included in this year's report received a "restricted" result, with the exception of the section related to the legislative environment, which received a "partially restricted" result, which is the only section that maintained its classification during the years 2020 and 2021, where this year it scored 34.9 points out of the original 90 points are available, which is a result six degrees lower than what it obtained in 2020, but it remained within the "partially restricted" indicator.

Five sections were categorized as "restricted", namely the political environment, with a score of 19.9 out of 60, while the right to information index maintained its "restricted" rating for the second year in a row, with a score of 9.8, despite dropping one point from the index last year 2020.

The Violations and Impunity section was also rated “restricted” with a score of 77.7 out of 210 points, as well as the section on media independence, which got a “restricted” rating with a total of 34.9 out of 100 points, which is the same classification he obtained in 2020, but in lower degrees and with a total score of 37.1 points.

This year's report added a new section on freedom of expression and media on the internet and social media platforms, which is the first measure of internet freedom and freedom of expression and media on the internet and social media platforms in Jordan, and it was ranked "restricted" with a score of 37.

This section was created as one of the six main sections of the report on the state of media freedoms in Jordan as a variable axis to measure any new issue or situation that occurred on the index, as this section was dissolved for the year 2021, instead of the media section in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was one of the axes of the report for the year 2020.

Tunisia

Coinciding with the commemoration of the World Press Freedom Day, controversy about media freedom and its role in Tunisia escalated. The discourse was led by the main drivers of media who were fighting to preserve the diversity of views and to expand the scope of journalists. This would allow media professionals fulfill their duties and thus enhance the sector’s independence and impartiality from political and financial influence. Fulfilling these requirements will foster media as a powerful counterpart to the political and financial actors in Tunisia.

Media actors, politicians and civil society activists acknowledge that freedom of media, opinion and expression is almost the only gain achieved for Tunisians after the January 2011 revolution that toppled the regime of former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

In the post-revolution years, a new, more diverse media scene emerged, but it was also accompanied by the concerns of the actors in the sector amid fears of gaining freedom of expression in light of a political and structural crisis that affected almost all sectors. Observers believe that the emerging Tunisian media scene has witnessed during the past seven years.

A state of lawlessness in the first stage, and then a state of turmoil in a second stage, often fed by the fragility of the general situation on the one hand, and by political quarrels and financial difficulties on the other.

On the other hand, they assert that the audio-visual, as well as written and electronic media played an important role in supporting the emerging democracy and represented one of its tributaries by contributing to correcting the transitional path.

Historians unanimously agree that the Tunisian press arose simultaneously with the emergence of the reform movement led by an elite of intellectuals since the mid-nineteenth century. On July 22, 1860, the first issue of the first newspaper titled "Al-Tunisi Newspaper" was distributed to be the first barrier of the process of national reform and social and political modernization.

Since 1888, several other newspapers have been published, including "Najma Al-Akhbar", "Al-Hadra" and "Al-Kasbah", bringing the number of Arabic-speaking Tunisian newspapers to 11 in the year 1890 and then to 54 publications and periodicals between 1904 and 1911, coinciding with the upward trend of the activity of the national movement to represent her voice demands Tunisia's independence from French colonialism.

b. *Who owns the major media outlets? What is the degree of political independence of the media in your country?*

Albania

The most influential Albanian private media are owned by a handful of companies which have links to politicians and at the same time operate in highly regulated sectors such as construction. While there are hundreds of online media in the country, only a small minority has a sustainable business model with transparent funding. The dominant media include RTSH, Top Channel, Klan and RTV Ora.

Transparency of media ownership refers to the public availability of accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information about media ownership structures. A legal regime guaranteeing transparency of media ownership makes possible for the public as well as for media authorities to find out who effectively owns, controls and influences the media as well as media influence on political parties or state bodies.

The media landscape in Albania is rich, but transparency of ownership is quite low. Albania is characterized by lack of transparency in the media market, hidden ownership and non-transparent trading in media shares, all features that - along with the web of clientelist relations - have been exploited by political parties and businessmen to influence the agenda of the media. Also, the behavior of media owners, who often are linked to businesses in fields other than the media one, lead to various forms of media instrumentalization which hinders media integrity.

Another transparency problem is related to identifying the media's source of funding. This is indeed one of the "unresolved issues" of the Albanian media system and a topic of constant debate

in a country with high levels of informal economy. Indeed, the question of how it is possible that such a great number of media operate in a small market like the Albanian one is still unanswered. In this sense, the large number of media outlets, in particular newspapers and televisions, operating in Albania is financed through parallel business on which there is a lack of transparency. The parallel businesses of the media owners, a phenomenon occurring when some businesses have their main investments in the media sector, but other investments in other fields, potentially making the media vulnerable towards other economic and political interests. In particular, when other interests are involved, the media are used as tools for making pressure for the protection and the development of such interests. Such a media landscape leaves room for letting that its owners' interests, rather than the public ones, that set the media agenda and its priorities (Rcmediafreedom, 2021).

Bulgaria

There is no transparency when it comes to media ownership in Bulgaria and the respective legal framework is rather vague. Despite that, it is widely accepted that the bigger share of Bulgarian media is owned by very few people (Petkova M. , 2021) who are leading businessmen in many economic sectors.

Bulgarian National Television ought to be independent and is not affiliated with any political party neither is it dependent on advertising and private businesses. However, there is no separate budget for government media that is outside the scope of the general budget planning for the country. The ruling party plans and distributes the budget to the different sectors within the state, media being one of them. So, indirectly, national media are still dependent on the political group in power. The lack of transparency of the distribution process of national or European funds predisposes stakeholders to allocate funds in exchange of favorable representation.

Despite efforts to promote transparency and pluralism the ownership of media is still to be unveiled in concrete terms due to lack of information. The little information available leads experts to fear high concentration of media. A study conducted by Media Club in 2020 concluded that Media Group Bulgaria, Media Group Attica Eva, SBB Media and Economedia are the leaders in print media. The majority of market shares (95%) in radio seem to be distributed among six big media groups: Fresh Media with 25%, BSS Media Group with 23%, BNR with 17%, Fresh Radio Group with 14%, BTV Radio Group with 11% and Darik Radio with 5%. In television, Nova Broadcasting Group and BTV Media Group continue to dominate the sector, holding a total of 93% of all television shares (Tsankova, 2022).

Egypt

There are many media outlets in Egypt, including newspapers, radio stations, TV and satellite channels, as well as websites, accounts on social networking sites, and applications specialized in

transmitting news. As to newspapers, there is diversity, between national newspapers, owned by the government, independent newspapers, owned by the private sector and finally party newspapers as well as specialized journals, which are mostly government-owned. Land broadcasting is owned by the government, but the government began to allow private-owned channels to have a land broadcast signal.

With regard to satellite broadcasting, the government's share in satellite channels is the least compared to private channels. There are also some channels owned by non-Egyptian media groups such as MBC Masr, owned by Saudi Arabia. These channels are completely independent and host all parties supporting and opposing the government. There are some government-owned channels, such as the Egyptian TV Channels Network. It is one of the media networks affiliated with the Egyptian Radio and Television Union. It was previously called the Egyptian TV sector. This network is considered the most important network affiliated with the Union, among 23 others.

Greece

The major media outlets are owned by private enterprises. Media ownership concentration in Greece is a burning issue, because media ownership also affects media independence, due to the economic interests of media owners in other highly-regulated business sectors like shipping and telecommunication. Some of the multimedia companies are Antenna Group, Lambrakis Press Group, Skai Group and Alpha Media Group.

Moreover, it is true that Greek journalism is suffering from chronic and severe crises (financial and operational), derived mostly from the fact that powerful entrepreneurs, coming from other sectors of the economy, buy media organizations and use them as effective means to serve their business interests by exerting pressure on political actors. Some of the owners have really close ties to the political elite. This means that in Greece, there thrives a media system where the "triangle of power" – consisting of political leadership, entrepreneurs, and media owners-exists. Political parties, also, tend to use media outlets with illegal means for advertising campaigns (e.g., SYRIZA's relation with Hot Doc magazine). In addition, the relations between media owners and politicians had an important effect on the presence of critical comments in the press.

Finally, it is crucial to add that the government spokesman is responsible for overseeing the public media, a fact that makes them seen as non-independent content.

To sum up, the overwhelming majority of media is owned by a few individuals who are usually collaborating with political parties. The placement of state advertising in the media has been pointed as based on political support rather than audience size (Chapman, 2016).

Italy

In Italy, most of the media is in the hands of a few private entrepreneurs who own several newspapers or television channels. There are also important public television channels, the RAI channels, and in their guarantee councils there are representatives of the various political parties. Both the autonomy of information managed by public bodies and that managed by private bodies is a strong subject of debate.

According to the Media Pluralism and Media Freedom Report 2021, market pluralism is capable of medium, almost high, 66% risk. According to the report, the economic crisis has affected advertising revenues and therefore the economic sustainability of the media. The economic conditions of journalists, especially freelancers, have therefore worsened, giving publishers more decision-making power. The two indicators that have worsened are: Transparency of media ownership and Commercial and ownership influence on editorial content; the latter reports an increase in the exposure of journalists to the pressure of economic interests, due to the worsening of their working conditions (Carlini & Brogi, 2021).

For political independence (medium risk, 48%), the highest level of risk comes from the public service independence indicator. In the methodology of the report, this assessment considers the governance and financing of the public service and is based both on the analysis of the legislative forecasts on governance and public service financing and on the assessment of their concrete implementation. Political independence and editorial autonomy are at medium risk for private media, mainly due to the continuing presence of one of the main political actors in the television sector; the lack of effective rules on conflict of interest; the inadequacy of the rules on electoral communication in a constantly changing media landscape. Public subsidies to the media sector are based on objective criteria but lack internal coherence and effectiveness and are not proportionate to the severity of the current crisis.

Jordan

Jordan is known for its political stability, which distinguishes it from its neighboring countries. But media professionals censor themselves and respect the implicit red lines around certain subjects, despite that Jordan's media are not very independent and many television channels such as Al-Mamlaka are semi-governmental. Privately owned Roya TV is nonetheless a major broadcaster. Jordan also has state, private, and community radio stations, as well as independent media platforms such as 7iber and Aramram.

Jordan's authorities control certain media outlets by appointing their editors (including those of Jordan TV, the Petra News Agency, and the Al-Dustour and Al-Rai newspapers) and by controlling their finances. Some media are controlled by the armed forces or by city authorities, and this gives them certain privileges such as the ability to cover a particular part of the country with greater facility.

Over and above those authorities can prosecute journalists and force them to pay heavy fines, while the Broadcasting Commission charges broadcast media outlets exorbitant amounts for their licenses. Privately owned media outlets, especially those not controlled by the authorities, struggle to survive due to a lack of financial resources. Some choose not to criticize private sector companies and public figures in order to obtain funding.

Tunisia

According to a recent study conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies of the Presidency of the Republic, published on January 9, 2018, the media landscape includes 11 televisions channels, 16 radio stations, 40 daily and weekly newspapers, and 8 monthly periodicals, compared to 4 television channels, 14 radio stations, and 30 newspapers before the uprising.

The majority of private media are owned by limited companies that solely own the media outlet and are less likely to be involved in other business activities. The national Radio and Television is owned by the state. After the revolution a few private media were confiscated from their owners and transferred to Al Karama Holding. Shares in Tunisian media are owned by various actors including national and foreign media groups (Association Al Khatt, 2016).

The print media are likely to be a family-owned business that was founded and is still run by them. Private shares dominate radio and television is affiliated with politicians. Six out of ten television channels have been or still are affiliated by political actors. When regarding the individual ownership it becomes clear that women take a secondary or purely representative role in media ownership.

The Tunisian government owns two television channels, nine national and regional radio stations, two daily newspapers. the news agency Tunis Afrique Presse and a publishing house. Nevertheless, is seems that Tunisia has media pluralism because there are multiple ownerships of private media as the owners seem to be diverse and none dominates the space.

After the revolution in 2011, media regulations were set to prevent the concentration of media ownership by HAICA – the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication. The media regulations as defined in Decree Laws 115 and 116, established a threshold of licenses and shares that can be attributed, meaning that one person cannot hold a tv and radio channel simultaneously.

The aforementioned HAICA and the Competition Council are independent bodies that comprise of variety of actors who can only serve a term of five years. Although members are appointed by the government, the budget for these institutions is independent from the state but it is very limited (Association Al Khatt, 2016).

c. *What is the degree of pluralism and social inclusiveness of media in your country?*

Albania

The Political Independence indicators assess the existence and effectiveness of regulatory and self-regulatory safeguards against political bias and political influences over news production, distribution and access.

More specifically, the area seeks to evaluate the influence of the State and, more generally, of political power over the functioning of the media market and the independence of public service media. Furthermore, the area is concerned with the existence and effectiveness of (self)regulation in ensuring editorial independence and availability of plural political information and viewpoints, in particular during electoral periods. A survey conducted by the National Media Institute also sheds light on the mutual relationship between the media and politics in Albania. This poll confirmed the presence of political pressure in the media. Over 75% of respondents think that politics influences the media more than the media influences politics (Zguri, 2017).

The Social Inclusiveness area focuses on the access to media by specific groups in society: minorities, local and regional communities, women, and people with disabilities. It also examines the country's media literacy environment, including the digital skills of the overall population. In addition, for the 2021 edition of the MPM, a new indicator has been added to the Social Inclusiveness area in order to assess new challenges arising from the uses of digital technologies: Protection against illegal and harmful speech. Due to this modification of the indicators, comparison with previous editions of the MPM should be handled with extreme care (Voko, Likmeta, & Matija, 2020).

The Market Plurality area focuses on the economic risks to media pluralism, deriving from lack of transparency and concentration of ownership, sustainability of the media industry, exposure of journalism to commercial interests. Transparency of media ownership is also vital to ensuring pluralism in this market and to avoiding monopolies and concentration. The sources and origin of ownership have an impact on the degree of independence and integrity of the media. In terms of transparency of media ownership, Albania has made progress and currently in the national register of businesses that can be accessed online, the names of media business owners are also posted. The print press in Albania is mostly self-regulated.

The Law on the Press only states that "The press is free. Freedom of the press is protected by law". Printed publications do not require authorization, nor are they registered in number at any time.

Bulgaria

Media pluralism is weak in Bulgaria. There is a high concentration of news media under a few ownerships, particularly in the online platforms. The concentrated ownership of media as well as the commercial pressures limit their editorial freedom. While there are legal frameworks to protect media and ensure transparency, they are not implemented and are thus ineffective.

1. Transparency of media ownership:
   Recently, after Bulgaria's state of media provoked international attention, legal provisions were strengthened to improve transparency of ownership. Those provisions demanded information on ownership and were accompanied with sanctions for non-compliance. While these measures improved the data available to the public, the state failed to enforce it on most companies (Spassov, Ognyanova, & Daskalova, 2021).

2. News media concentration:
   It is difficult to assess the actual level of news media concentration in Bulgaria due to lack of basic data. Based on partial information about advertising revenue it is estimated that the highest levels of concentration are in television, where 92% of the total market share go to four major owners. Reputedly, one person owns about 80% of the print distribution market (Spassov, Ognyanova, & Daskalova, 2021).

3. Commercial and owner influence over editorial content:
   Owners are known to use their power over the media outlets to undermine critics and political opponents. Others are accused of terminating the contracts of more than 60 people within one news channel in the past two years (Spassov, Ognyanova, & Daskalova, 2021).

Legally parties and politicians are not prohibited from owning media in Bulgaria. The government and municipalities influence editorial freedom through the attribution of paid projects and contracts and allocation of funds (Spassov, Ognyanova, & Daskalova, 2021). There is a self-regulatory Code of Ethics of Bulgarian Media that is supposed to protect editorial autonomy but is not applied in practice.

In Bulgarian media ethnic minorities are either underrepresented or depicted in negative light. Unfortunately, the pandemic only amplified xenophobic representation. Some national TV channels include sign language in their news sections for the hearing impaired. The public television broadcasts daily news in the Turkish language. Women are also often underrepresented or portrayed in stereotypical sexist manner; particularly female experts are given less airtime (Spassov, Ognyanova, & Daskalova, 2021).

Egypt

The media in Egypt is diverse in quantity and quality. It includes paper publications, television channels and electronic newspapers, in addition to online applications and social media platforms. Such media covers all various topics, whether political, social and entertainment.

Multiculturalism is the equitable and diverse representation and expression (i.e., passive and active access) of different cultural and social groups, including ethnic, linguistic, national and religious minorities, the disabled, and women, in the media. It consists of a set of themes and voices present in the media, socialization through multiple forms of media access and participation, with different forms of interaction and representation of diverse values, perspectives and roles. The Egyptian constitution prohibits discrimination against any groups and minorities and guarantees them safe access to the media and its platforms. There are satellite channels for Christians as well as channels hosting representatives of all sects and parties (K.U. Leuven, 2009).

The three indicators of pluralism and social inclusion in Egyptian media are presented as follows:

Political pluralism: It refers to the equitable and diverse representation and expression by various political and ideological groups, including the minority, and it defines the range of political and ideological views, opinions and interests covered and represented in the media.

Media pluralism: Media pluralism refers to the coexistence of media with different mandates and funding sources, particularly commercial media, community or alternative media, and public, service media, within and across media sectors, such as print, television, radio and the internet. The plurality of media refers to the diversity of the media in terms of their functions, including the provision of information, education and entertainment. According to previous studies, reducing the plurality and comprehensiveness of the media and its reliance on quantitative measurements will fail and cause inaccuracy.

Media Pluralism Scale: By adopting a comprehensive approach, measuring not only ownership and concentration, but also other constraining forces, examining not only external pluralism but also looking at aspects of internal pluralism as well. Egypt has great pluralism, as its content is varied and rich and covers all interests. There are government-owned channels, channels owned by private companies, channels owned by individuals, electronic newspapers, social media platforms operating without any restrictions, which proves the government support of media diversity. Government facilitates access to the internet, which increases citizens' role as news carriers through the idea of citizen journalism. Therefore, pluralism, according to the index, is present and reaches everyone without discrimination.

Socio-demographic indicators: These are indicators that measure a range of media available to citizens in the country on the basis of social and demographic factors such as location, social class,

age, gender, etc. therefore, the Egyptian media has social inclusiveness, it has specialized channels targeting youth and women, and there are also programs, channels and magazines specialized in religious and entertainment affairs. Recently, the Egyptian media has been working to host guests with opposing opinions and people with disabilities. The government also invests in supporting regional channels, although they make no profit to reach all people in rural areas and Upper Egypt.

Economic indicators: The economic indicator is based on measuring the extent, diversity, and modes of economic performance based on the number of media companies, the level of market concentration, and the economic indicators of pluralism such as the number of companies, levels of competition, available financial support, audience and consumer ratios represented by leading companies, distribution and use of content.

According to this indicator, the size of the Egyptian media market is the largest in the Middle East and North Africa through the number of channels, the number of electronic platforms, the number of views, and the volume of advertisements. The evidence of the increasing media diversity and the increasing role of citizen journalism is the orientation of advertisements and views to electronic platforms more than television, satellite broadcasting, newspapers and other traditional means.

Greece

The pluralism of media defines the state of having a plurality of people expressing their opinions, and analyses in media systems or the coexistence of different and diverse types of media. The Social Inclusiveness area focuses on the access to media by specific groups in society: minorities, local and regional communities, women and people with disabilities. It also includes the country's media literacy level, including the digital skills of the overall population.

According to the study "Monitoring media pluralism in the digital era" that was funded from EU-Center for media Pluralism and Media and took place in 2021 the Media Pluralism Monitor for Greece (Andriopoulou, 2021) showed that Freedom Market Plurality and Social Inclusiveness are in medium risk. The research findings leave no space for doubt that Greece faces challenges regarding media pluralism.

In the area of Basic Protection, key concerns remain the non-decriminalization of libel, the deficiencies in mechanisms to ensure respect for professional standards in the practice of journalism, and the precarious working conditions for journalists.

In the area of Market Plurality, what is particularly alarming is the lack of publicly available data inter alia on concentration trends. Domestic legislation is not characterized by clear provisions on the disclosure of news media ownership. Whilst audiovisual media are mandated to report on their ownership structures to the ESR, the print media are not required to indicate their owner on their

copies. The absence of comprehensive media ownership disclosure requirements undermines transparency to a significant degree.

In the area of Political Independence, the lack of safeguards for securing the independence of public service media and the country's only news agency from political interference is certainly a core issue that has important implications for pluralism. Successive governments have pledged to address this but have not done so. At the same time, private media are not shielded from political interference given the lack of self-regulatory measures that would effectively safeguard their editorial independence.

Lastly, in the area of Social Inclusiveness, the dominant ideology in the country about its ethnic and cultural homogeneity has led to no recognition of the existence of minorities and thus no effective protection of their related rights. Action should be taken to address gender stereotypes in news media broadcasting, to empower media pluralism in the online environment, and to include people with disabilities by the opportunities that are offered by digitization (Psychogiopoulou & Kandyla, 2020).

Italy

According to the Media Pluralism and Media Freedom Report 2021, the increased risk that is reported for the area of Social Inclusion (60%, average risk) is mainly due to the new indicator on Protection against illegal and harmful content, which registers an average risk, but very close to the high-risk margin. The vulnerability to harmful content is also linked to the results on Media Literacy, still little present in the national education system. The worst result in this area, again this year, is in the indicator on Women's access to the media, which registers a high risk; this result highlights the persistence of a gender gap in top positions in the media industry, in particular in journalistic directions, and the dissemination of stereotypes in the media representation of women. In the same area, another indicator measures the risks for minority access to the media: in this case, the result shows an average risk, mainly linked to the situation of non-legally recognized minorities such as migrants.

Jordan

The Jordanian population is made up of diverse community groups such as Palestinians, Christians, Druze, Circassians, and Armenians, but this pluralism is poorly represented in the media. Journalists find it difficult to tackle some subjects, especially those related to women.

The Jordanian media environment is relatively diverse and pluralist, but often reporters lack adequate capacity, ignore professional standards, indulge in self-censorship because of biases, have their employers' affiliations, fear legal consequences, or sometimes even physical threats, in

a context of impunity and lack of accountability by duty-bearers. Media professionals are also aware of 'red-lines-not-to-cross' (i.e., taboo topics), mostly related to the monarchy as well as to religious and ethnic issues.

A related issue is how a lack of media pluralism affects consumer interest, given limits on the scope and depth of coverage on certain issues. A key finding of the peer review mission was that Jordanian media is often side-lined in favor of other Arab-language international media outlets such as Al Jazeera, MBC, and Al Arabiya. At the same time, given that a majority of media outlets are located in Amman with few local television stations or daily newspapers outside the capital, UNESCO notes that "the national media is perceived to pay rather little attention to events taking place in remote areas outside of the big cities". Given a high rate of access, with more than 90% of Jordanians having access to satellite television broadcasts, international outlets are able to capture much of the domestic media market, including BBC, Radio Monte Carlo, CNN International, Al-Jazeera, and MBC among others.

Tunisia

The questions of ownership and control of media organizations in Tunisia have been subject to transformations. After several decades of total control under political regimes, ownership of various media outlets has taken a dramatic turn since January 2011 (Miladi, 2021). In the aftermath of the January 2011 uprising, the media scene benefited from spaces of freedom that it did not expect and was not prepared for, after the complexities of the audiovisual and written press licensing procedures were eased. New players have come to the market, some of them receiving state funds, while others are privately funded from external bodies. While private media outlets claim independence, direct links to political structures are very visible.

Media plurality in Tunisia has resulted in a plethora of television channels, radio stations, newspapers and magazines across the country, which present a diverse spectrum of political and cultural viewpoints. The events after 2011 also freed public broadcasting from government control but new freedoms of media outlets created challenges in terms of media ownership and regulation (Miladi, 2021). The economic dimension of media can be presented as dependency on private advertisers, some of them having media holdings and political ties. This environment threatens editorial independence. Statistics on actual media audiences are loosely calculated, which compromises advertising revenue model based on audience size (Reporters without Borders, 2022).

Section 2.2: Assessing the Community Media Landscape per country

a. What is the extent of involvement of youth organizations in promoting media literacy and empowerment and engagement of young people in community life?

Albania

Youth organizations support the development of media and information literacy (MIL) for all to enable people's ability to think critically and click wisely. The organizations particularly strive to enhance the capacities of policymakers, educators, information and media professionals, youth organizations, and disadvantaged populations in this area, assisting Member States to formulate national MIL policies and strategies.

MIL is an interrelated set of competencies that help people to maximize advantages and minimize harm in the new information, digital and communication landscapes. MIL covers competencies that enable people to critically and effectively engage with information, other forms of content, the institutions that facilitate information and diverse types of content, and the discerning use of digital technologies. Capacities in these areas are indispensable for all citizens regardless of their ages or backgrounds. Response to disinformation and misinformation requires a combination of critical information, media, and digital competencies, i.e., MIL.

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, there are no regulations on the licensing or the functioning of community media. The country does not have an established tradition of community media in practice (Spassov, Ognyanova, & Daskalova, 2021). Thus, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and youth leaders is crucial in increasing media literacy and encouraging citizen journalism. Between 2019-2022, 31 youth organizations carried out 38 projects, funded through the Erasmus+ Programme, promoting media literacy and encouraging citizen journalism. 22 of these projects were conducted in the form of youth exchanges and 12 as training courses.

Sdruzhenie Profesionalen forum za obrazovanieto is conducting the project *Active Citizens - Digital Citizens* from January 2022-2023. Through non-formal education they involve a diverse target group, including disadvantaged individuals and train them on different aspects of digital citizenship.

Sdruzhenie Ekoprograma's project Media literacy as a shield against fake news, disinformation and propaganda, duration January 2022 - July 2022, aims to supplement civil education at school with informal education. The participants will be taught how to consume as well as create digital content.

Centar za tovrchesko obuchenie is implementing the project *Digital media literacy for youth employment and social realization* that supports youth workers in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Slovenia and South Africa to improve their digital media literacy. They do this by focusing on three clusters: Netiquette; Research skills (incl. critical assessment of information, sources, relevance) and Creating original content.

Association Perperek Valley is working on the project *Together in support of diversity* that concentrates on tackling disinformation and teaching digital, social and civic skills and skills for initiative and entrepreneurship. They particularly focus on small and marginalized communities. The main objective is to promote diversity and counteract disinformation online, particularly when it leads to discrimination.

Egypt

In light of the scientific developments, the communications revolution, the internet and satellite channels and globalization, empowering young people becomes imperative to achieve development and societal change, by creating learning and work opportunities at all cultural, political, economic and social levels, and developing leadership skills. In addition, the cultural and media empowerment of youth aims to restore cultural practices and norms for youth, as Middle Eastern countries are now well aware of how a single tweet can lead to a popular hashtag, whether this hashtag contains correct information or not. No, the Egyptian state is keen to guide young people in light of the challenges they face represented in the lack of independent media platforms that allow freedom of thought and opinion.

The Egyptian government has given special protection and attention to its youth, especially regarding developing their scientific, and creative capabilities, empowering and integrating them politically, economically and socially, in a way that helps to advance the community and improve the standard of life of its members and fosters their feelings of belonging.

- Pioneer Youth Parliament: It is a platform in which young people express their opinions freely, practice democracy, and participate in decision-making through serious and effective discussions in a scientific manner. This parliament contributes to preparing and qualifying young people to participate in public work upon reaching the legal age, for example, to run for membership in the local council, parties, parliament, and civil society organizations (CSOs) (Saeed, 2020).

- Coordination of political parties and youth: It is an initiative that brings together party and independent youth under a political coordination umbrella to present a model for dialogue based on common goals and visions in order to develop a culture of political life and present a national project that brings together all spectrums (Salah, 2021).

- The Presidential Program for Qualifying Youth for Leadership: It is a program that aims to qualify young people for leadership, and to learn new methods and tools to participate in building the state. The program is based on informing young people of the latest management theories, scientific and practical professional planning, and raising their levels of political and cultural awareness (Salah, 2021).

- World Youth Forum: It is a platform for dialogue between Egyptian youth and the youth of the world. Egypt was keen to host the World Youth Forum in the presence of a number of presidents, kings, princes, heads of government and prominent international leaders, with young people of diverse nationalities, estimated at about 3,000 young men from nearly 100 countries. The conference discussed issues of terrorism and the role of youth in confronting it, the problem of climate change, illegal immigration and refugees, and the contribution of youth to building and maintaining peace in conflict areas. The conference witnessed the organization of a simulation model of the United Nations Security Council.

- The First International Conference on Mobile Journalism: Organized by the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at the Future University, in partnership with CanBe Training Company on mobile journalism and the future of media, its opportunities and challenges. The second session of the conference discussed citizen journalism and how it has become an essential part of the media content industry (Osama, 2022).

Greece

In Greece, Media literacy is on the political agenda but remains relatively underdeveloped as a policy. For instance, media literacy is present in formal, compulsory education but still it is not an integrated part of the school curriculum or teacher training. It is, nonetheless, vividly present in non-formal education, since several media literacy initiatives have been launched in recent years as a response to the rise of the usage of new media by young people and the existing phenomenon of fake news and misleading information, also within the framework of EU- funded programmes (Patrona, 2018).

For instance, in the period between 2019-2022, 55 projects devoted to various aspects of Media Literacy education were implemented by a variety of stakeholders in Greece (youth organizations, NGOs, informal youth groups, public schools, students' associations, social enterprises, universities, as well as public bodies such as the Greek National Agency). Out of these, 37 were conducted in the form of Learning Mobilities for Individuals (KA1), 17 in the form of large-scale Strategic Partnerships among Organizations and Institutions (KA2) and 1 in the form of an initiative for the Support for Policy Reform (KA3).

Some examples of youth organizations/CSOs that create actions and projects in order to promote media literacy and help young people navigate in the complex media landscape of today are:

Media Literacy Institute: a non-profit organization founded in 2017 in Athens, Greece. Its aim is to promote and disseminate the concepts of MIL at a national and European level.

Psaroloco: an NGO that promotes media literacy through a variety of artistic expression forms, giving priority to children and adolescents that belong to vulnerable groups. It organizes an annual International Film Festival for Children & Young People, and provides experiential learning workshops for children and adolescents, as well as information sessions and educational workshops for teachers, families and citizens in general.

InfinityGreece: a youth organization in Thessaloniki, aiming to provide a safe space to young people, where they receive creative stimuli in the field of Media, will be developed personally, will broaden their horizons and will leave their mark on the local community

HIT-Healthy Information Transfer: a scientific, non-profit organization, which focuses on the development of people's critical and scientific thinking, and their capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue, as well as on the importance of information's reliability for making decisions and having a democratic society.

Italy

In the national territory, several youth organizations have promoted media education events, especially in the field of how to defend against fake news. This has happened both at the level of student organizations and at the level of social promotion organizations in general. There is no national structure to coordinate them, each acting according to its own principles. As for the strengthening of youth participation in community life, the point of reference in Italy is the National Youth Agency, followed by local agencies. However, youth participation in public life is still lacking; in fact, it is a topic of debate how to improve it and many young people complain that they do not feel represented at the political level.

Jordan

Jordan's rapid digital transformation has resulted in high accessibility and the growing use of digital media, altering the way people consume and deal with information. With the overwhelming increase in the amount of data and exposure to unprecedented amounts of information, it has become paramount to educate and train people on how to navigate through the abundance of information and skillfully use available tools to critically receive information. This includes the ability to differentiate between information and misinformation, facts and rumors.

No nationwide study has been undertaken to assess the level of MIL among Jordanians. However, within the JMA, a closed-sample online survey 43 of youth engaged in USAID's youth programs (Ana Usharek and Youth Power) revealed that 32% of Youth Power (YP) and 27% Ana Usharek youth have had the chance to learn about MIL in school and 30% and 42% at university. Also encouraging is that 41% YP and 30% Ana Usharek youth participated in MIL training workshops. When asked what the first thing that comes to mind when receiving a piece of news or information that they want to share, both groups responded (65% and above) that they would take some kind of action. Thirty-one percent of YP youth stated they are not interested in news verification, compared to 18% for Ana Usharek youth. Nevertheless, 34% of Ana Usharek youth claimed they were not aware of what media literacy is all about versus 30% of YP youth.

In Jordan, the capabilities to promote MIL vary widely from one organization to the next. Not all organizations are equipped with the same tools nor do they all possess equal capacities, and as such, the scale of their MIL initiatives differs. For this reason, and after an in-depth analysis, organizations were categorized into two groups based upon the scope of their operations within the field of MIL; MIL Drivers and MIL Supporters. MIL Drivers are those organizations for which MIL constitutes a key part of their scope of work and has a significant reach within the country. Hence, their operations are instrumental in spreading and maturing the field of MIL in Jordan. Conversely, MIL Supporters are organizations that have a clear interest in the field of MIL, and conduct occasional initiatives, but their sphere of influence is more limited. In addition, some conduct initiatives that fall under MIL by virtue of certain competencies falling under their scope of work, and not necessarily driven by the goal of disseminating MIL among the community. That is not to say that these organizations do not play an important role in developing the competencies of people in Jordan. Rather, their operations compliment the efforts being undertaken by the MIL Drivers.

Tunisia

Only 81% of Tunisians are literate which make social media, newspapers and other written media inaccessible to the remaining 19%. 80% of the population distrust mainstream media and place importance on personal information rather than official (Association Al Khatt, 2016). Given the general mistrust in media and the limited access to diverse media, media literacy becomes critical.

In its endeavor to increase Media Literacy which encompasses Information Literacy, Media Literacy, along with ICT and Digital Literacy, the Council of Europe has launched a variety of projects and initiatives that set Media Literacy objectives within institutional framework as well as to provide the means necessary to empower individual participation in society. One of these initiatives No Hate Speech Movement which was launched in 45 countries including Tunisia. The youth campaign placed a particular emphasis on Media Literacy and its components as an effective approach to combating hate speech (Council of Europe, 2022).

The Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) is a for year (2014-2018) UNESCO project funded by the European Union and the State of Kuwait that provides the tools and channels to enable young people to be involved in the decision-making process. One their activities toward youth participation is #YOUTHMEDIA. The goal is to access and improve young people's representation in media, organize a discourse between media stakeholders and young people. Through diverse trainings they teach communication skills, media and information literacy and promote youth-generated media content and free speech.

ARTICLE 19 is the accumulation of national and international projects conducted is several countries by an international team aiming at actively engaging the civil society within the public domain and limit discrimination. They base their initiative on *The Freedom to Speak* and *The Freedom to Know* as pillars to empowerment. ARTICLE 19 MENA and the Ministry of Education provided an online TV channel *Ahki free la Télé* for youth by youth. During the pandemic, students were isolated and often relied solely on online media. The channel aimed to provide a platform for students to express themselves but also to learn about media and information literacy. 76 students from 19 Citizenship and Human Rights High School Clubs in diverse regions participated in the creation of audio-visual content. They were provided a safe space to express themselves but also opened a discourse on diverging opinions and underlined the importance of media literacy (Article 19, 2021).

IREX is active in 100 countries, including Tunisia and is concerned with education, leadership, information and youth. They launched Ma3an, meaning together, focusing on developing skills such as critical thinking among youth in order for them to contribute to civic society. The project is conducted in 33 vulnerable communities in the period of 2021–2022. The initiative will train young mentors in information literacy (Learn to Discern curriculum); positive storytelling; essential soft skills (YES curriculum); principles of monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and peer mentoring. Learn2Discern equips its participants with knowledge on how to discern information. It allows them to navigate in the sea of information and make decisions based on facts.

b. Can you identify governmental support in terms of measures and instruments to support NGOs and youth leaders in the promotion of media literacy and citizen journalism?

Albania

On 25 April, within the framework of the project "Enhancing Digital Literacy in Albania" was introduced the Architectural Plan of the Pyramid of Tirana at the Center for Openness and Dialogue (COD).

Albania's constitution and international legal commitments guarantee press freedom; protections for the confidentiality of sources are insufficient. The so-called anti-defamation package gives the state disproportionate power over online media content and reinforces self-censorship.

Bulgaria

A study of ESTAT (2020) shows that the majority of young people consume their news and entertainment from digital rather than traditional media (ESTAT, 2020). The e-government has proposed a Digital Services Act to monitor social media content and prevent disinformation and remove fake accounts (Sofia Globe, 2022). The new analytical unit would have only a monitoring function and not any regulatory powers.

For the first time, in 2022, The Ministry of Youth and Sports has opened calls for project proposals for Prevention of cyberbullying and online abuse, misinformation and dissemination of fake news that NGOs can apply for (Nabludatel, 2022). The Ministry will support 7 projects implemented on local and regional levels throughout the country. The allocated amount for these initiatives is up to 1 million BGN.

Egypt

Although CSOs faced some challenges during the period from 2014 to 2017 due to issues of foreign funding and the issuance of the law regulating civil work in 2017, the number of NGOs and CSOs reached as many as 52,000. Thus, the number of volunteers in Egypt is large, with more than 1.5 million volunteers in 2020, according to the Director of the UN Volunteers Office. In 2019, Law No. 149 was issued, which avoided the negative aspects of the previous law, and re-legalized the conditions of NGOs in a way that controls and does not impede civil work (Salama, 2021).

Cultural Empowerment and Youth Participation in Promoting Media Culture:

"Safe Digital Society" initiative: The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology launched the "Safe Digital Society" initiative in cooperation with CISCO to spread information awareness and enhance media and digital culture among users of websites, electronic applications and social media platforms and develop their knowledge and skills to confront new cyber security threats, especially amidst spread of cybercrime, hacking and data breaches, and increasing threats and challenges related to securing citizen databases (Ministry of Communications, 2021).

Youth Media Leaders Forum: implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in March 2022, and 36 colleges and media departments from various Egyptian universities participated in the forum. It included dialogue sessions and training workshops that worked to empower young people

at all levels, enhance their capabilities through the media, raise the level of culture and media awareness for non-specialized youth, and train them on how to immunize the citizen from the harmful cultural invasion through the media and confront false news and rumors, as well as targeting young people and youth through specialized youth through social networking sites and new media (Bakir, In the presence of the Minister of Sports. The activities of the first forum for media youth leaders will be launched tomorrow, 2022).

Arab Media Youth Forum: organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the League of Arab States and Cairo University. The forum included several dialogue sessions and training workshops aimed at educating students of media faculties about content industry in traditional and digital media, accuracy of digital media, Mobile journalism and video journalism (Bakir, Cairo Media launches the activities of the Arab Media Youth Forum, the second edition, 2021).

The Youth Media Forum: implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports through the Central Administration of Al-Tala'i', to inform young people about everything new in the world of journalism and media, integrate young people into the media community, enhance educational values through the media, develop youth and youth awareness, and raise the level of their media culture (Muhammadi, 2022).

Greece

Media literacy policy from a public perspective is a complicated issue in Greece. After the abolition of the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM) in 2011 (due to public spending cuts), the assigned public service authority on media literacy policy in Greece reporting to the EU, the media literacy agenda was marginalized and sparse over various thematic areas: from content creation and digital media to new platforms of expression and aesthetic norms (Poulakidakos & Armenakis, 2014).

Currently, the media literacy policy agenda is mainly pursued by the Ministry of Digital Governance, the Ministry of Education, which has issued the Digital Education Action Plan, the National Centre of Audiovisual Media & Communication (EKOME), which acts as the National policy advocate and expert for MIL Issues and the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV) (Lamprou, Antonopoulos, Anomeritou, & Apostolou, 2021).

According to Law 3908/2011, CSOs in Greece have access to funding from the Social Financing Fund, the National Fund for Entrepreneurship and Development and, in case they carry out business activities, are eligible for support by Manpower Employment Organization (OAED). In addition, local governments and legal entities of the general government can transfer the use of their property to CSOs in order to strengthen their collective activities and social benefits. However, this type of governmental support is generally regarded by the potential beneficiaries as

very fragmented, difficult to access due to their heavy bureaucratic burden, and simply not sufficient to cover the needs of most part of civil society.

There are no long-term public programs or stable support for projects and activities specifically promoting media literacy and/or citizen journalism. These are funded virtually in their entirety by private funds or European/international programs.

Some examples of singled-out projects supporting the promotion of media literacy and/or citizen journalism include:

- First Nationwide Study on Media Literacy in Greek Schools: The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute conducted the first nationwide study on media literacy in formal education environment in 2011. The research was designed and conducted by the Media Literacy Department of the Institute in cooperation with the Hellenic Ministry of Education, Religion & Lifelong Learning.

- Mythos Project: Mythos Project is an initiative of Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People and of European Meeting of Young People's Audiovisual Creation- Camera Zizanio, which takes place annually, the 1st week of December (main event), in the city of Pyrgos (Region of Western Greece), with the support of the municipality. Mythos Project is the longest running multinational film workshop on youth audiovisual creation in Europe. It started in 2011 and since then, with the participation of 400 youngsters from 16 countries, 55 shorts films have been produced.

- EKOME's MIL Webinar Series: EKOME is launching series of Webinars under the theme "Raising MIL Skills in the Mediterranean: Partnerships & Projects" since 2020, as part of its action plan on awareness raising and e-learning on Media and Information.

Italy

There are some projects implemented by the government to support media literacy among the young generation.

Generazioni Connesse is a project promoted by the Instruction Ministry. The topics of the project are online research, fake news, online security, web reputation, cyberbullying and other topics about the conscious use of the internet.

Pane e Internet is a project promoted by the Emilia Romagna Region. The project was born to foster the development of digital skills and full access to the information society.

Scuola, informazione e comunicazione nell'era di internet s a project promoted by the Puglia Region. Corecom Puglia (Regional Communications Committee) has launched a media literacy

initiative aimed at all students of Apulian schools through a call for applications related to the 2021/2022 school year, with the aim of supporting the planning of the Schools of Puglia of first and second grade in protection of minors in the world of communication and information (Consiglio Regionale della Puglia, 2021).

Jordan

MIL was part of the government's two-year plan where the goal is to establish that part of citizens' rights is the right to know as per law. In that regard, the government launched the 'Haggak Tiraf' (You Have the Right to Know) platform in 2018 and is supporting MIL initiatives being conducted by organizations. Due to the novelty of MIL in the country, organizations are covering a vast array of areas that fall under its umbrella in an attempt to cover a little bit of everything. However, the government's involvement is not the only factor that has led to the current level of MIL efforts in the country. Organizations of various backgrounds have stepped up and have made developing people's MIL competencies an important aspect of their organization's goals and objectives. Numerous initiatives have been conducted in various areas of MIL, across all regions in Jordan and these were tailored for different segments of society. Due to these efforts, organizations believe that their collective efforts are creating an impact in Jordan. That said, they still strive for improvement and are willing to collaborate with one another and the government to ensure that citizens can not only understand media but also wield it in a productive manner.

Tunisia

Citizen journalism and media literacy were considered a constructive means for Tunisia's effective participation in promoting measures and tools to support NGOs and youth leaders through governmental support for them, by strengthening the leadership and youth's organizational skills, in addition to adopting new methods of interacting with youth through digital means. Thus, Tunisia has identified the necessary measures to facilitate media literacy by establishing a common methodology to define a new media style that occurred as a result of the boom in the internet and social networking sites, which provided opportunities for publishing and expressing an opinion for any citizen, and even involving them in issues of public affairs and supporting democratic practice. In light of the massive spread of news that we are living in, we need to reinforce media culture, awareness of how to deal with different media, and the selection of news, and this is what Tunisia aims for so that the citizen can receive, analyze, interpret and criticize media messages without being influenced by them. There is a means to build young people's ability to analyze information to avoid a controversy and discussions that support misinformation.

From this standpoint, Dr. Noha Belaid, a professor of media and communication in Tunisia, launched the "What's Happening?" website, which she described as "the first website specialized in citizen journalism in the Middle East and North Africa". Belaid stressed through it "the

importance of citizen journalism in light of the decline in confidence in the media". In statements to Asharq Al-Awsat, she said that "Stasta", which specializes in conducting public opinion measurements and research, indicated in the 2021 Citizen Confidence Scale that citizens' trust in journalists fell to 10%, hence the importance of the “What's Happening?”, as the citizen's voice, allows the citizen to disseminate information from the heart of the event.

Belaid adds that "the citizen represents a fifth authority," which is the one that Dan Gilmore talked about in his book "We the Media" (2004), which defends the press "by the people and for the people". And she continues, "The site's mission is to support freedom of opinion and expression, enhance the concept of the citizen journalist, process information sent from the heart of the event by citizens, share reliable and credible information, and enhance participatory governance”.

3.Can you think of some specific measures that are put in place in your country to promote citizen journalism?

Albania

A creative technology center stems in enhancing digital literacy in Albania. The main idea is to promote and create a place for Albanian teenagers to explore an innovative path and diversify their future skills. Beneficiaries will be able to create their own personalized learning plans utilizing a virtual environment designed to facilitate the multifaceted curriculum. The center will consider designing a space that will allow creations and their exhibition. The proposed project intends to revitalize one of the main premises in Tirana through an architectural and business plan while guaranteeing leveraged partnerships between local, central government and other potential donors.

There are also developed programmes with the autonomous communities and municipalities in order to stimulate youth participation and prepare young people for mass media.

Bulgaria

Usually when we talk about citizen journalism, we think of a video going viral and even being picked up by traditional media. Often the day-to-day acts of citizen journalism remain within the reporter’s community, be it in social media or in their physical environment. While there is a plethora of small Facebook groups dedicated to particular topics or particular municipalities there is no single platform to unify them as news. Nova TV has provided a section where citizens are encouraged to upload their news under different categories.

Media literacy is essential to citizen journalism in order to avoid disseminating disinformation. The Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria has conducted a country wide research on media literacy in schools (Economy.bg, 2022). The plan of the Ministry is to assess current digital media literacy competence among students and introduce such training as a mandatory part of high school education in the country.

Egypt

The digital boom gave an opportunity for the ordinary citizen to turn into a journalist, and social media enabled citizens to create and publish news content, and even analyze it. Therefore, awareness of this role has become increasingly important for the citizen and for society, and citizen journalism has succeeded in presenting an accurate picture of the reality in the Middle East, specifically in covering some issues in Arab countries experiencing conflicts, in contrast to distorted publications of Western newspapers, which is a violation of facts and reality. Therefore, we must be aware of the role for the citizen journalism and work to strengthen it as follows:

- Establishing a platform to enhance the role of the citizen journalist, as a participatory work between the ordinary citizen and the professional journalist who is familiar with the laws and literature of the profession.

- The phenomenon of citizen journalism is positive and important, but the citizen journalist must respect a set of necessary and principled values in any news work, to avoid exchanging fake news and rumors, and also to facilitate research and obtain information. According to a study issued in 2016, obtaining information became difficult, as the researcher is forced to make greater efforts instead of facilitating it in order to increase the volume of social content, as 6000 tweets are published on average every second on Twitter alone. The search for all this content and its organization manually is not costly, but slowly, so it is possible to provide guidance work on how to use citizen journalism tools professionally and benefit from these tools in promoting social cohesion (Crowdynews, 2016).

- Inclusion of the terms of use in the policies related to the publication.

- Articles and news are published in the name of the citizen journalist after checking the information contained therein and checking it by the journalist working in the traditional press.

- Establishing ethical rules to control and obligate the citizen journalist's work (avoiding insulting individuals - not compromising the state's public security system - respecting the private life of individuals).

- Provides automation, algorithms, and intelligence that help find, filter, and publish safe, relevant, and real-time social streams, bringing only the best content from social networks to your site.

Greece

The last few years, citizen journalism in Greece became more and more known. An example of citizen journalism is a video presenting the beating of a young man in the square of Nea Smyrni on March 7, 2021 by a police officer that went viral. There were people in the same place at the same time, who recorded the incident on their mobile phones. The videos, taken that day and circulated on social media, flooded the internet and challenged traditional media outlets talking about 30 people who allegedly attacked police.

As a response to that incident, the Greek parliament approved, on November 11, 2021, a controversial justice ministry bill, introducing tougher penalties for the publication of fake news and for their spreading by news organizations. According to the new law "*anyone who publicly or via the internet spreads or disseminates in any way false news that is capable of causing concern or fear to the public or shattering public confidence in the national economy, the country's defense capacity or public health*," can be punished by imprisonment of up to one year or a fine.

The main purpose of this law is to protect the citizens from fake news and misinformation, in an unorthodox way. The government did not clearly define what is considered fake news and what standards should be used in order to determine when information can be labeled as fake. The law fails to stimulate citizens to understand and filter the news. This law is an example of a measure intended to solve the problem of disinformation and to encourage good citizen journalism practices, but which in practice delivers no, if not detrimental, results.

In general, there are no organized actions and government-led measures to promote citizen journalism in Greece.

Italy

According to the European Journalism Observatory, citizen journalism in Italy is flourishing. This is mainly due to the fact that many Italians are sceptic of the reliability of mainstream media. In 2006, Italy went through governmental crisis, which ended with Silvio Berlusconi's resignation from office, which in turn led to many bloggers and social media activists to play an important role on the streets, by using their mobile phones and other electronic devices to publish and report live from the events (Stefanini, 2012).

It has not been possible to identify recent initiatives on citizens journalism.

Jordan

Areas covered by organizations working within the field of MIL cover two broad topics; navigating information on the one hand and creating content on the other. The former covers a range of topics that include digital and news literacy while the latter is more concerned with topics

like freedom of expression and citizen journalism. It is worth noting however, that given that areas that fall under MIL tend to be hugely interlinked, coupled with the fact that in Jordan, this field is still in its inception phase, most organizations tend to not be specialized in one area but try to cover a little bit of everything (Ipsos, 2019).

Tunisia

The Council is interested in emphasizing, that the aspirations of Tunisians to establish a free, diverse and pluralistic democratic society cannot be achieved without a strong press. The Council remains a supportive institution for male and female journalists, the public, and media institutions for a strong, ethical, professional journalism with quality service to Tunisians and their right to know how to manage their affairs, at a time when some media institutions have abandoned their original roles to turn into a commercial service. The Press Council is also interested in confirming that it will be an essential partner for national organizations working to defend freedom of thought, expression and the press, and that it will not fail to engage in any initiative that defends freedoms.

Section 3: Media Literacy Practices and Actions per partner country

Section 3.1: How big a problem is disinformation and fake news in your country? What is the state of Media Literacy among young people in your country?

Albania

The spread of fake news and misinformation is becoming a threat to press freedom and democracy itself in the internet age. This leads citizens to have less trust in organizations, politicians and the media – while trust is essential to representative democracy. Also, through the use of "fake news" misunderstandings of information about life in the community and society are created.

In countries like Albania, where the media still suffers from a lack of editorial freedom and strong censorship, the consequences are even greater. In this sense it's also influenced by the fact that media literacy techniques are not applied in the Albanian school curricula.

Albania has low potential to deal with the effects of fake news and misinformation mainly due to underperformance in media freedom and education.

Media Literacy index 2021 ranks Albania on 33rd place. These are the findings of a new edition of the Media Literacy Index for 2021 by the European Policies Initiative (EuPI) of the Open Society Institute – Sofia (Lessenski, 2021).

In this unregulated market, misinformation, fake news and abuse of the role of journalist and media has flourished to alarming proportions. To fix this chaotic situation, civil society has undertaken numerous initiatives on media education (Faktoje, 2021) and self-regulation of the profession, but this has not stopped abuses by different actors. In this sense, initiatives and projects have been undertaken by NGOs for Media Education in the community, through trainings conducted for media education as well as training of young people for methodology and identification of fake news (Faktoje, 2021).

Bulgaria

"Eastern European countries are disproportionately affected by disinformation campaigns, which are likely to have a Kremlin origin" according to the electronic governance minister Bozhidar Bojanov (Sofia Globe, 2022). On the one hand, there is more information available that can be digested (Nedeva I. , 2021). On the other hand, information in less popular languages, such as Bulgarian can be limited. Such languages often fall in the cracks and are not properly detected and regulated by social media such as Facebook.

Successful disinformation campaigns do not fabricate completely news but add nuggets of truth or reality, or remove the context from a statement and thus appear credible. Furthermore, the term fake news has been weaponized to attack opponents and discredit any criticism (Auad, Cheresheva, Galev, & Bosev, 2020).

Gallup International Poll shows that in 2022, 35% of Bulgarians testify that they encounter news that can be defined as fake, every day or almost every day 2, while 4 years earlier the percentage was only 23.5% (Dimitrova, 2022). The problem of fake news expands significantly in the contexts of the current political crises and the war in Ukraine.

Egypt

"Media illiteracy" in short, is the ability to access the media and to analyze media content and evaluate it positively or negatively, in addition to arming oneself with the basics of creating media content for personal purposes to protect oneself from legal prosecution, and the proper handling of information.

In view of the case of Egypt, there is an increase in what is known as media literacy, especially with the spread of social media platforms, and the user has become the newsmaker and transmitter. The negative aspect of this is that they allow terrorist groups to manipulate this content under the pretext of freedom of opinion and expression. With the spread of platforms, false news increased, and some journalists are held responsible for turning to social media sources for "unreliable news" instead of doing their job of research and fact-checking.

There is a shortcoming in dealing with fake news due to the platforms that allow the promotion of news without warnings or restricting access to fake news promoters or publishing corrections to such news. However, Egypt is handling this through the spread of pages whose mission is to refute false news and respond to them.

According to media culture indicator, which evaluates how people respond to fake news, after the Coronavirus pandemic, there was an increase in the spread of fake news, which led to lack of trust in medical and scientific institutions.

It is also noted that there is an increase in the Egyptian youth's abuse of the media, especially electronic media, causing Egypt to occupy an advanced rank on the media literacy index. In general, fake news is rejected and there are increasing efforts from the government in this regard.

The spread of citizen journalism in Egypt faces also a major problem represented in illiteracy of Egyptians, as Egypt still suffers from illiteracy due to some social customs, and the state seeks, through ambitious visions, to reduce its rate to 17.5% during 2022 (Egypt Today, 2021).

Greece

Fake news is gaining a foothold in Greece as it ranks poorly among countries in Europe regarding the evaluation of news. Specifically, according to the results of the Media Literacy Index 2021, Greece is one of the most vulnerable countries in Europe to misinformation and fake news, holding the 27th place among 35 countries.

Distributing misleading information on Greek media, social media, and the internet is not a new phenomenon. By analyzing the discourse of the Greek media, two studies found common patterns which lead to the production of fake news: Greek media present conversations as news and instead of using data in their reports, opinions are preferred (Greek Safer Internet Centre, 2019), while some well-liked Greek online newspapers, such as tanea.gr and enet.gr, are using sentimental propagandistic methods and generating news that are not entirely true.

The alarming rate at which false information has penetrated the Greek media (including new but also traditional news platforms) has been captured by a study published in *Journalism and Media* in 2021 (Papathanassopoulos, Karadimitriou, Kostopoulos, & Archontaki, 2021), which found that 26% out of 137 cases fell into the misinformation (non-true stories with propagandistic purpose) category, 38% out of 201 samples into the hoaxes (non-true stories which include deceiving characteristics in an -mostly but not always- ironic way) category and 18% out of 94 cases into the fake news (broad category of false allegations, but not necessarily intended ones) category.

With respect to Media literacy, MIL is not identified as an autonomous object of study in the formal education system in Greece, but mainly as a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary subject and

within ad hoc school projects. In 2016, there was a public discourse for integrating media literacy into the curriculum, within the public consultation that was launched on the total school reform. However, this discussion was not translated into concrete action.

As already mentioned, Greece has a rather low score in Media Literacy Index 2021 by OSIS, ranking 27th out of the 35 countries included in the assessment. Digital literacy – a necessary component for Media Literacy - in Greece is below the EU average in all age categories and in overall, while in the European Commission's annual "Digital Economy and Society Index" (DESI) for 2022 Greece ranks 25th among the 27 EU member states, and so belongs to the cluster of the very low performing countries.

With respect to skills and abilities that form an important substrate for media literacy, the scores of Greek students in the latest PISA results published were:

- In reading literacy, 457 points compared to an average of 487 points in OECD countries.
- In mathematics, 451 points compared to an average of 489 points in OECD countries.
- In science, 452 points, compared to an average of 489 points in OECD countries.

As a conclusion, the level of media literacy among young people in Greece is far from optimal, and there is a lot of space for significant improvement.

Italy

Fake news in Italy is a serious issue that affects the public debate and the lives of citizens. According to the Media Literacy Index 2021, Italy is at the 21st position in Europe for its ability to distinguish reality from fake news and to defend itself from disinformation. According to the report "Media and Fake News: opinions and attitudes of Italians towards information" of the IPSOS and the Italian Digital Media Observatory is only among the youngest and among the most educated who are frequent fact checking activities. The majority of Italians (about 70%) are informed only through free media and less than 25% are willing to pay to access reliable information. Curiously, 78% of Italians say they are able to recognize fake news; yet, 90% of respondents recognize that disinformation is widespread in Italy and think that this is a problem (Autorità per le garanzie nelle comunicazioni, 2018).

Jordan

The state of digital media literacy in the Arab world, including Jordan, is weak, as interest in it comes at the bottom of the list of priorities for Arab countries, noting that it reflects the state of media itself. In other words, digital media literacy in the Arab world is still in the initial foundational stages.

The challenges facing digital media literacy are summarized by several reasons, including political, economic, and social (culture). For instance, the Arab world, including Jordan, neglected digital media literacy for a long time, which led to negative consequences that exacerbated the seriousness of political and economic unrest. Many obstacles stand in front of the spread of media and digital literacy, such as the structure of the media, which in turn does not provide the opportunity for a sufficient number of voices to participate, and the various political and social situations restrict the flow and availability of information, in addition to the imbalance in the ability of individuals to communicate their opinions and voices.

The level of digital media literacy in Jordan has been developed in recent years, there is a positive move toward educating the Jordanian people about digital media. Jordan Media Institute (JMI) is probably the country's biggest proponent of media literacy. JMI is a freelance media institute that aims to enhance the output of Jordanian media and to promote the name and image of the media profession domestically and regionally by establishing a medium that helps to circularize the ideas of media literacy.

The Government's plan for 2019-2020 officially adopted a strategic framework and plan to disseminate MIL under the Ministry of Culture, specifically focusing on the integration of MIL in the elementary and higher education system, which is projected to last four years. The implementation is currently hampered by a lack of funding as there is no budgetary commitment so far.

Tunisia

The phenomenon of fake news in Tunisia has expanded greatly and spread rapidly as a result of the swift development of information and communication technologies and the rapid spread of information and content in digital media such as social networking sites, which made Tunisia fall into the trap of fake news and misleading information. The new concept of disseminating information, news, photos and videos that on some occasions were mere rumors or fabricated content to mislead the citizen, especially since social networking sites lack censorship, is a convincing reason to strip this false news of credibility and professionalism.

However, Tunisian media have become dependent on digital means of communication as a source of news and information without making any effort to scrutinize and ascertain the extent of their sincerity, by achieving either excitement or what is known as booze to ensure that they remain in the first competitive ranks. But in the midst of this bitter reality, civil society drew attention to the approach to reforming the media system by implementing initiatives, measures and projects of NGOs for media education in society, for instance, training courses for young people on the methodology and identification of fake news and the sharing of reliable and relevant information. The focus is on the credibility, ethical rules of professional journalism and verifying the

information. After that, the editorial team drafts the entire news or refines the wording, mentioning the source of this information. Articles are also published in the name of the citizen journalist after verification of the information contained therein and scrutiny by the professional journalist. Sometimes the citizen may not be proficient in writing and expression, but possesses a video or pictures of the event, and here lies the task of the journalist in formulating the journalistic topic.

Section 3.2: Case studies of Media Literacy Education projects per country

Albania

Case No 1: Media Literacy – Fake vs Facts	
Description	Citizens Channel is an NGO which aims to promote the development of citizen journalism in Albania and to empower responsible citizen voices in accordance with the values of an inclusive society, tolerance and human rights and freedoms. Citizens Channel's field of activity: • Provide periodic training practices for online journalism, television, live reporting, video editing, audio production, web media, blogosphere • Contribute to educating and sensitizing the public about the importance of the media in building and maintaining a legal and functional democracy • To promote initiatives for the affirmation of the fundamental rights of individuals and to favor the media and social integration of categories in need • To support with media advice and techniques various social initiatives from communities and non-profit organizations with limited media access • To develop and strengthen cooperation with partners, other public and private entities, media institutions, institutions that exercise socio-cultural activities or that have similar goals and that unite the mission and goals • Advise public institutions and other entities on issues of drafting various media policies • Collaborate with identity groups to achieve the goal Project: Discrimination and hate speech, commonly encountered in traditional and online media, target vulnerable groups including women and girls in Albania, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. Distribution of content on social media in many cases doesn't go hand in hand with ethical and professional reporting. For this reason, training of 20-25 young

	people from Kuçova is necessary, also considering that trainings and opportunities are concentrated in the capital of Tirana.
Type	Training
Stakeholders	Young people, general public
Scale	National
Media Literacy skills promoted	Ability to identify untrue, unethical news that reinforce myths about groups or members of society that experience constant discrimination or violence

Case No 2: Media education in local communities in Albania	
Description	This project aims at tackling MIL concerns in rural communities in Albania by enabling high school students and their teachers to filter the information and better understand the media. These interventions will create better possibilities for critical thinking among youngsters and enable teachers to get used to MIL and spread it to other students. The project also aims at promoting and reinforcing cooperation between local journalists and communities to counter misinformation and disinformation online through awareness raising campaigns. Finally, the project aims at equipping its agents of change with better skills and deeper understanding of the media and its role in a democratic society.
Type	Project
Stakeholders	Young people, high school students, teachers, local journalists, general public
Scale	National
Media Literacy skills promoted	MIL, Critical Thinking, filter information online

Case No 3: Institute for Democracy, Media and Culture (IDMC), within the project "Fake News and Freedom of Expression in Threat" prepared 'School Media Training Manual'

Description	The handbook was prepared in the framework of the project "Media Freedom under threat" funded by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives. It assists educational institutions and other institutions working to prepare young people and teaching staff to strengthen their skills in media education and active participation in the production process and dissemination of information in the digital age. The manual contains pedagogical materials for teachers and students and aims to get acquainted with the elements of Media Training in detecting fake news and putting them into practice through concrete examples so that they do not remain an abstract notion. In these conditions, where self-regulation as an initiative is applied only by a number of limited actors; where the media education of the general population is extremely limited as well
Type	Handbook
Stakeholders	Teachers, Students
Scale	National
Media Literacy skills promoted	Skills in media education, detecting fake news

Bulgaria

Case No 1: Media Literacy in Bulgaria - What have we learned from the crises	
Description	The national conference "*Media Literacy in Bulgaria – What have we learned from the crises*" – a part of UNESCO's Global Media and Information Literacy Week took place in Sofia in 2020 to discuss and assess the media literacy in Bulgaria and the influence of fake news on the media landscape. The conference was organized by Media Literacy Coalition and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) together with the Ministry of Culture, Active Citizens Fund, Ministry of Education and Science, German-Bulgarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Association of Software Companies, Bulgarian Public Relations Association, and Branch Association of Bulgarian Telecommunication Operators. By assembling a diversity of stakeholders, the conference aimed to ensure a wide representation and impact (Nedeva I. , 2021).

	Next to discussing measures and the need for legislative reforms, the keynote speaker Irina Nedeva addressed journalists and emphasized the importance of integrity especially in the wake of fake news. Furthermore, the conference produced a fact-checking guide for news (Auad, Theresheva, Galev, & Bosev, 2020). The technological advancement of our era and the relatively easy access to new technology such as smartphones and tablets enable us to document events instantly (Moeller, Joseph, Lau, & Carbo, 2010). Subsequently, there is a perpetual flow of information that is impossible to assess thoroughly. It becomes difficult to differentiate between true and disinformation. Due to the pressure on the media to publish a news article quickly, sometimes even journalists report on fake news. Therefore, the Association of European Journalists (AEJ) have established factcheck.bg where citizens can review whether a news article is based on confirmed facts. Since the end of 2021, the Bulgarian National Radio has been checking news and photos in the media landscape and publishing the information in a special section on its website (https://bnr.bg/factcheck).
Type	Conference
Stakeholders	Academia, national media, young people
Scale	National
Media Literacy skills promoted	fact-checking guide

Case No 2: The Sofia Platform	
Description	An NGO that is focused on recent history and civic education has developed a platform гражданско.бг that assists educators to teach the newly introduced subject of Civic Education in schools (https://гражданско.бг/). The platform facilitates educators to generate a syllabus that encourages critical thinking and discourse among the students. Together with the education platform Ucha.se and the EUC in Bulgaria they have also created a playlist with 36 video lessons about civic education, including citizen journalism.
Type	Educational Platform

Stakeholders	Educators
Scale	National
Media Literacy skills promoted	Creative thinking and civil awareness

Egypt

Case No 1: Project to train citizen journalists	
Description	The Citizen Journalists Training Project (WACC, 2013) is a series of four workshops on internet policy and digital safety. The two-day workshops targeted around 100 journalists, bloggers, internet users and members of civil society groups in Egypt, Palestine, Jordan and Tunisia. The project aimed to strengthen citizen journalism by training bloggers (and those looking to become bloggers) and providing them with important and up-to-date information. It also intends to establish and enhance cooperation between journalists working in traditional media and bloggers.
Type	The project offered training courses and workshops over two days in each country, it addressed the ways in which governments try to balance security needs with the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and privacy. The training also covered efforts worldwide to increase government transparency and access to information.
Stakeholders	Members of civil society, journalists, university students, human rights activists
Scale	Regional (Provided training in 4 countries with different histories and backgrounds on Internet Governance, Egypt - Tunisia - Jordan - Palestine)
Time period/activity state	The training started on February 23 to 24, 2013 in Cairo, Egypt, it was mainly targeting journalists. This was followed by exercises in Ramallah, Palestine, May 19-20, and in Amman, Jordan, May 26-27. The end of the training was in Tunisia and the final training was hosted by the ESPRIT Technical College in Tunis, June 12-13, 2013 and was attended by about ten students and bloggers. This training is scheduled ahead of the Freedom

	Online conference in Tunisia, a two-day international forum on freedom of expression online where Internews representatives also spoke and led a workshop. Participants in these two workshops had more diverse backgrounds and included journalists, students, and members of CSOs organizations.
Media Literacy skills promoted	Learning about freedom of expression, empowering citizens to make informed policy choices, and providing citizens with the knowledge required to hold their governments accountable.

Case No 2: Development of citizen journalists in the Arab region	
Description	Is a two-year project funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Birmingham Center for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR) staff from research groups Media for Social Change and Interactive Cultures are working in partnership with US-based technology company Meydan on the project (BSMCR, 2014).
Type	Project
Stakeholders	Members of civil society - journalists - university students - human rights activists
Scale	Regional. The project works with citizens in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan, and with Syrian citizens in Lebanon, to help citizen journalists become reliable sources.
Time period/activity state	Two years
Media Literacy skills promoted	Digital Protection and Enhancing Citizen Journalism. Participants learned best practices for protecting their digital safety, including how to assess the threat model and level of risk, and tools they might use to improve their online safety, in addition to how to help people sort the truth from rumors.

Greece

Case No 1: Ellinika Hoaxes	
Description	One of the most promising attempts of fighting fake news in Greek public sphere is Ellinika Hoaxes. E.H. is a platform that mainly "hunts" non-true stories but also uses crowdsourcing strategies in order to detect not only fake but also low-quality content. The Director of Public Policy of Facebook in Southeast Europe, officially stated on May 2, 2019 the beginning of a partnership with "Ellinika Hoaxes". "Ellinika Hoaxes" encourages readers to participate in the fight against non-true stories. For this reason, the platform uses crowdsourcing strategies and techniques and it is always open to suggestions, remarks, corrections, submission of topics for research, etc. Users' participation through the submission of proposals is one of the basic rules for choosing topics according to the platform.
Type	Fact-checking online platform
Stakeholders	Media experts, Traditional and citizen journalists, general public
Scale	National
Time period/activity state	Ongoing since 2016
Media Literacy skills promoted	Fact checking, source validation, recognition and resilience against fake news, participatory journalism

Case No 2: Thessaloniki international media summer academy (THISAM)	
Description	An international ongoing project organized by Peace Journalism Lab, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Jean Monnet chair and DCN Global. Every year there are many attendees from all over the world, like professional journalists, students, media entrepreneurs, scholars, leaders of NGOs and media industry leaders. Each year the THISAM has a different topic related to media that focus on. For instance, the theme for the upcoming summer academy in July 2022 is "New Trends in Media and Journalism" (How can the crisis of the pandemic be turned into an opportunity to strengthen journalism? What is the viability of news outlets in a de-centralized social media news environment? How can trust in journalists be strengthened? Will new communication methods such as

	artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual reality simply facilitate the flow of misinformation and disinformation? etc.) Throughout the week of each event innovative ideas are shared and new business strategies developed. Mentoring and advising happens across career-level. The focus is on creating a hands-on, interactive, interdisciplinary experience.
Type	Summer School
Stakeholders	Early career journalists, students, media entrepreneurs, scholars, leaders of NGO's and media industry leaders
Scale	International
Time period/activity state	Ongoing since 2017; annual event
Media Literacy skills promoted	Depending on the annual theme: E.g., tools and techniques of fabricating news, resilience against fake news and misinformation, use of modern technological tools, storytelling, understanding cultural context in journalism, citizen journalism practices, interacting and engaging with the public, debating and self-expression skills, team work and many more

Case No 3: Greek Copyright School	
Description	Greek Copyright School was launched on the basis of the educational programme 'Copyright' that was designed by 5 school teachers in Greece, and was approved by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The activities of the 'Greek Copyright School' include five branches: 1. Printing and distribution of informative material to schoolteachers and pupils (folders with guides about copyright and related rights, comic books and stickers). 2. Organization of more seminars in more cities. 3. Creation of a dynamic website to host all the informative material. This material is sorted according to the target audience (primary school students, high school students, school teachers, parents). 4. Development of educational e-games.

	5. Creation of short movie animations about the importance of copyright and related rights as a tool for the survival of authors and artists
Type	Online platform with educational material
Stakeholders	Elementary school pupils, High-school pupils, Teachers, Parents
Scale	National
Time period/activity state	Ongoing since 2014
Media Literacy skills promoted	Proper use of copyrighted materials, critical thinking, understanding and applying fair use principles

Italy

Case No 1: EURISPES	
Description	The Eurispes presents a Project aimed at promoting the dissemination of Media Literacy and the figure of the Media Educator in Italy to help adapt the Italian system, in particular the educational and work, to the most advanced European standards. The Project provides a series of services aimed at individuals, groups, public and private structures, addressing the following areas: THE SCHOOL: training of teachers of Italian schools to the most advanced theoretical concepts and the consequent practices related to the process of dissemination of Media Literacy in Europe. TRAINING CENTRES: training of professionals and consultants in the new profession of Media Educator according to the most advanced European practices. THE COMPANY: training of employees of companies as well as professionals in the sector in order to improve skills on the protection of the "consumer" media, with a view to increasing user awareness and a critical and conscious use of the media product. THE FAMILY: formation of groups of parents interested in understanding the dynamics of the media and in understanding how to help develop in

	their children a critical capacity and a consequent conscious use of the media.
Type	Research and Information Centre
Stakeholders	Institutional partners, Ministry of Education, OECDScala Nazionale
Scale	National
Time period/activity state	Company active since 2002, active program since 2018
Media Literacy skills promoted	Ability to analyze information critically in different contexts of society.

Case No 2: Tortuga	
Description	A think tank of students, researchers and young professionals in the field of economics and social sciences, who develop research and analysis on economic and political issues, prepare policy proposals and collaborate with institutions, politicians, stakeholders and companies offering professional support in the field of policy-making. There are 53 members under-30, born and raised in different regions of Italy who now live between Milan, Bologna, Rome, Paris, Frankfurt, Chicago, Davis, Brussels and Dakar. Although they are young, they want to make their will and skills available for public debate, and to find technical and elaborate solutions when decisions are often not taken on a scientific basis.
Type	Think Tank
Stakeholders	Traditional newspapers, public bodies, universities, analysis companies
Scale	National
Time period/activity state	Still active from March 2015

Media Literacy skills promoted	Developing media literacy skills in the field of economics and social policies. Develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

Case No 3: BUTAC – Bufale un Tanto al chilo	
Description	BUTAC is a page dedicated to the fight against: hoaxes, misinformation, free alarms and online fraud. *"Ours wants to be a blog made with passion, the passion for the correct information, the passion for the truth. We try to find what are the false information conveyed online, but also in newspapers and on television, and we try to skin them or make them clearer! We do not want to make political or ideological polemics, but only put before all science and correctness of information. We count on the help of all in reporting new hoaxes to control... hoping in the meantime to intrigue you to deepen the topics treated!"* Very active on social media and on his blog. He has over 180,000 followers on Facebook.
Type	Fact Checking and media literacy campaign
Stakeholders	Traditional media
Scale	National
Time period/activity state	Still active from 2013
Media Literacy skills promoted	Critical reading of the news, ability to recognize fake news, ability to recognize disinformation.

Jordan

Case No 1: Fatabyyano	
Description	Fatabyyano is an online independent fact-checking platform that seeks to produce and spread informed and evidence-based knowledge to combat

	"fake news", With more than 884,000 fans on its Facebook page, Fatabyyano also counts over 3 million views on some of its "Fatabyyano Show" videos on YouTube. While it mainly targets news in Arabic, Fatabayyno also provides content in six other languages, through the work of its 35-member team, which includes researchers, academics, media people, and web developers, among others. Its plans for the future are to expand the outreach of the platform, through a partnership with ZEDNI, an Arabic educational network aimed at developing the curricula to improve educational outcomes in the Arab region.
Type	Fact Checking platform
Stakeholders	Researches, academics, media people, web developers
Scale	National
Media Literacy skills promoted	Evidence-based knowledge to combat "fake news"

Case No 2: 7iber	
Description	7iber is a media organization and online magazine that seeks to promote an open society that upholds values of accountability, rule of law, human rights, and pluralism, through in-depth multimedia journalism, critical analysis, and public conversation. In addition to media production and public events, 7iber organizes and leads training workshops on various aspects of writing, multimedia journalism, and digital security. They also conduct research and provide a range of consulting and production services. 7iber began in 2007 as a citizen media platform with the initial costs of the website covered by its founding members. Since 2009, 7iber has grown into a media organization that is a registered LLC in Jordan and financed primarily through grants and media projects.
Type	Media organization and online magazine

Scale	National
Time period/activity state	Since 2009
Media Literacy skills promoted	Writing, multimedia journalism, and digital security

Case No 3: Family Tec	
Description	Family Tec is an initiative Promoting Social Cohesion in Jordan through Dialogue and Media Literacy, run by young people and based in the Tafilah Governorate in southern Jordan, Family Tec is one of the Dialogue-60 projects supported by KAICIID in 2020. The initiative is affiliated with the Youth Committees of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development under the Queen Alia Centre for Social Work. It aims to create a media-literate "digital family" that is more capable of analyzing online content and media discourse while using social media platforms to advocate for peace. The idea of Family Tec basically stems from our belief in the importance of creating a media-literate society, and promoting purposeful consumption of social media's youth can be the means by which the public, that's flooded with content in this ever-expanding digital world, may connect, gain knowledge, acquire experience, and develop MIL tools. Statistics show that in 2021, 61.5% of Jordan's population are social media users. Another survey conducted by UNESCO on Jordanians aged between 18-29 showed that 91% use social networking sites on a daily basis. Raising awareness about these growing and evolving platforms is essential, experts argue.
Type	Project
Stakeholders	Young people
Scale	National

Time period/activity state	Since 2020
Media Literacy skills promoted	Media citizenship competences, critical analysis of online content, advocacy through media

Case No 4: Al-Hudood	
Description	Al-Hudood is a satirical Arabic news publication founded in July 2013. It originally focused on satirical journalism in Jordan and came to encompass news from the Arab world and from around the world, working with Arab writers and cartoonists from different parts of the Middle East and North Africa. Al-Hudood currently operates through grants, and it currently is funded from a grant by the European Endowment for Democracy, Open Society Foundation, and the Heinrich Boell Foundation, with a number of other funders now being interested in funding it for the coming future. With the strong restrictions on freedom of speech in the region, Al-Hudood took advantage of the flexibility and freedom that satire provides and became an alternative media outlet that discusses various important and sensitive regional issues. It tackles such issues without having to adhere to the limitations imposed on traditional media by authority and society due to the nature of fiction. Al-Hudood has tackled issues of human rights, corruption, freedom of speech, gender equality, and good governance, and portrays these themes in a manner that could be related to by readers from across the region, from an open, secular perspective, highlighting personal freedoms, freedom of speech, and feminism, using a darker, critical lens. Even though it is an explicitly satirical network, Al-Hudood creates a substantial amount of controversy, particularly when the article crosses the three red lines: politics, religion, and sex.
Type	News publication
Stakeholders	General public
Scale	National
Time period/activity state	2013

Media Literacy skills promoted	Creativity, independent thinking, an "quest for truth" attitude in journalistic reporting

Tunisia

Case No 1: MEDIA LOVES TECH	
Description	The MEDIA LOVES TECH is the first competition in Tunisia to select the best digital projects for innovative journalism. The German "Deutsche Welle" Academy, in partnership with the Tunisian Line Organization, launched the MEDIA LOVES TECH program, which aims to exploit the possibilities offered by digital development with the aim of serving distinguished journalism while creating opportunities for media development and ensuring its continuity. The idea of this project came due to the emergence of many news media outlets, which, although they differ in form, their common denominator is keenness to be independent and innovative, and at the same time to be a close press.
Type	Competition
Stakeholders	Journalists, start-up project owners, creators, programmers, designers, or those interested in the topic from actors in civil society, whether they are individuals or associations
Scale	International
Time period/activity state	The program passed through five phases: October 4, 2018: Last date for registration. October 11, 2018: Announcing the names of the winners of the first phase on the official website of the programme. After completing this stage, the top ten projects win a financial prize of 3,000 Tunisian dinars.

	October 22-24, 2018: MEDIA LOVES TECH conference in Tunisia, where experts gather to identify digital tools in developing journalism and facilitating its work. October 25-27, 2018: "Hackton" conference discusses scenarios for developing projects that were selected during the first phase, and the project owners who will participate in this phase will have the support of a group of experts and trainers in the media and digital fields. December 4, 2018: Closing ceremony for the submission of completed projects and the announcement of the first prize winners
Media Literacy skills promoted	Opening the door to creativity and competition to everyone who wants to develop a quality media scene in Tunisia

Case No 2: The Media Development Center participates in organizing a workshop entitled Media Accountability - Public Engagement	
Description	The Irish Prost Institute for International Journalism (Germany), in partnership with the Center for Media Development (Tunisia) and the Media Observatory in North Africa and the Middle East (Tunisia), organized a three-day workshop entitled "Media Accountability – Public Engagement". The workshop had two objectives. The first was to explore current media accountability standards and practices applied in the MENA region in general. The second is to investigate the participation of the public involved in the media accountability process as an interactive element in thinking about news and calling for corrections, as well as in developing programs and sending complaints in cases of violation of relevant ethical rules.
Type	Workshop
Stakeholders	Publishers, journalists, editors, media matchmakers, representatives of self-amending and amending organizations and bodies, as well as representatives of universities and NGOs
Scale	International

Time period/activity state	Tunisia hosted this event from 20 to 23 December 2021
Media Literacy skills promoted	Media literacy skills covered: development of a culture of media accountability, knowledge on media legislation, ethics, decision-making processes and public relations.

Section 4: Needs Analysis

Section 4.1: Main training needs of young people concerning media literacy and citizen journalism

Albania

Albania has low potential to deal with the effects of fake news and misinformation mainly due to underperformance in media freedom and education. This is also influenced by the fact that media literacy is not part of the Albanian school curricula, nether in Secondary or High school in the country. Several initiatives and projects have been undertaken by NGOs, conducting training for media education as well as for methodology and identification of fake news mostly targeting young people.

The youth need to gain skills and knowledge to identify untrue, unethical news. This intervention can be held both formal education institution such as schools and other public institution, also by a CSO through non-formal education methodology, approaching with different innovative education tools. This could increase young people ability to think critically, analyze and distinguish fake news and doubt source of information. It is also important to support and incentive educational institutions and other institutions working with youth to prepare them and teaching staff to strengthen their skills in media education and active participation.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria is lagging behind in comparison with other EU countries when it comes to media literacy. However, the data shows that 56% of Bulgarians use social networks every day or almost every day, while 37% tend to trust this source of information (European Commission, 2021). The overall trust in the media in Bulgaria is only 25%, which is problematic and shows a tendency, which can hardly be overcome without investing in media literacy education.

Based on the availability of platforms for fact-checking in Bulgaria, it is crucial to inform citizens about these platforms where they can review whether a news article is based on confirmed facts.

These platforms are helpful for both consumers and citizen journalists. They are effective for widely spread news, yet news created by citizens often remain within their communities and never reach fact checking platforms. The importance of such news should not be undermined as they help shape the cultural and political environment within society. Information Media Literacy is paramount to understanding linguistic and cultural subtleties and semantics as well as critically evaluating the information (Moeller, Joseph, Lau, & Carbo, 2010). These skills are likely acquired at school but additional initiatives by NGOs can strengthen them. Youth NGOs have been providing non-formal education with a focus on media literacy in Bulgaria. However, more tools and online courses aimed at youth can bring a positive change and more participation in civil life.

Citizen journalism is one component of the media landscape. Therefore, it is important to make young people aware about the traditional role of the media as a watchdog that keeps the government in check. The lack of transparency of ownership in media, the concentration of news outlets and the commercial and political dependence of media outlets potentially threaten the role of media as a counterweight. Understanding the media landscape will contribute to the critical analysis of news but it will also highlight the importance of citizen journalism as civic engagement.

Just like traditional media, citizen journalism can have great political and social implications. Hence citizens ought to use information ethically with respect to their audience and sources and protect personal data.

Egypt

Egypt needs a national strategy in terms of results and goals to develop digital skills among young people. Incorporating media culture into school curricula "to prepare children to confront this flow of false news and inappropriate media messages that affect their traditions and ideas, as the media plays a major role in building public awareness and personal thought for young people and children." Also, by recognizing the vision of youth and academics for the role of citizen journalism as the nucleus of the future will empower young people to develop media literacy skills.

It is important to educate young people about the moral and social responsibility of using citizen journalism and to educate individual citizen journalists on cyber security and how to protect their accounts from hacking, as well as not being misled by false news, and ensuring that information is verified.

Greece

As already mentioned, Greece ranks 25th out of 27 EU member states in the "Digital Economy and Society Index" for 2022, and is included in the low performing countries with respect to Media Literacy and resilience against fake news according to OSIS Media Literacy Index for 2021.

Since 2010, the Ministry of Education has begun various initiatives in order to incorporate digital in schools, such as the 'The New School' with "The Digital School" as a basic pillar, which aimed at a reform of digital education, as well as the professional development of teachers on how to integrate ICT pedagogy in the classroom. Since its establishment in 2016, the Ministry of Digital Policy has approved 213 sectoral ICT projects including digital literacy projects with a budget of almost 800 million euros.

However, the skills that young people need to develop in relation to digital media are not confined to those of **digital tools usage** and of **information retrieval**. As with print, they also need to be able to evaluate and use information critically if they are to transform it into knowledge. This means asking questions about the sources of that information, the interests of its producers, and the ways in which it represents the world; and understanding how these technological developments are related to broader social, political and economic forces and how to do online searches.

In Greece, formal education in schools is heavily content-based. Young people have to deal with tremendous amounts of information, but they do not learn how to use, evaluate and work with this information or how to analyze it critically and benefit from it. This fact is dangerous, especially given that in Greece today, much misinformation and propaganda, especially in online media, are present.

As Katerina Chrysanthopoulou, one of the two founding members of the Media Literacy Institute in Greece, says *"Skills like* ***critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, deduction, abstracting, finding the suitable sources*** *are not given enough attention in the formal education. However, it is crucial to develop these skills, both for academic pursuits and also to engender civic engagement, so that people are able to make the right decisions, as citizens in society or in local communities".*

Greek schools are considered as following and supporting democratic principles, even though there are rarely any democratic structures in them. The democracy in Greek schools is mainly based on the curriculum related to citizenship education, rather than on practicing it in the classroom and has limited association with an egalitarian relationship between teachers and students. One way for democracy to mature is to ensure that citizens are well informed and comply with ethical standards of communication. News literacy skills (such as **discerning fact from opinion, understanding a source's agendas, motivations and backgrounds, recognising unreliable information or fake news, effectively expressing own views but also actively listening the views of others**) play an important role in democracy and, thus, should be protected as a fundamental right of all citizens.

Another learning need that is highly relevant for youth in Greece is revealed by the findings of a study that was published in 2019 by the "Safer Internet Centre" of the Foundation for Research & Technology of Crete (Greek Safer Internet Centre, 2019), which presented some interesting but

also rather unsettling results about the use of the internet by Greece's minors. According to the study, 94% of Greece's adolescents and 60% of primary school students have at least one social media profile, while approximately half of Greece's middle school and high school students have never talked about internet security with their parents. Other figures of the study that raise concerns are that approximately 41% of respondents said that they have accepted friend requests from strangers on their social media profiles, and that 21% have met someone they got to know online. Moreover, of the respondents, 20% admit having an online addiction problem, while another 20% of the children are unsure about whether they have an internet addiction problem. Rates are very similar for all ages. Finally, an alarming rate of 1 out of four children (specifically 26%) report that they have been at some point in their life the target of cyberbullying.

Based on the study's findings it is clear that focusing on basic skills for **securing online safety and digital well-being** (**e.g., safe online navigation and online communication, responsible data sharing and safeguarding privacy, understanding the online community, managing negative online behaviour/dealing with online harassment**) and social media is imperative.

Finally, another need became apparent as result of the outbreak of Covid-19, and more specifically the huge amount of relevant information that was increasingly available in digital information sources -reliable or not-. People feel the need to seek for information when they are uncertain about a specific situation or context, but at a certain stage, the news might also simply be "too much", and can have negative consequences, such as harming people's mental well-being (de Bruin, de Haan, Vliegenthart, Kruikemeier, & Boukes, 2021). One study examined positive and negative effects of health communication on the fight against the COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic in Greece. The results showed that in response to COVID-19 information overload people tended to produce negative thoughts and more negative (fear and anger) than positive (protection) emotions (Gardikiotis, et al., 2021).

A heavy load of information does not need to concern a serious health threat to have detrimental effects on mental well-being. In fact, it is a well-established phenomenon that surfeit of information can cause a variety of symptoms such as sleeplessness, mental fog, anxiety, attention deficit, self-doubt and in some cases even depressive mood (Bawden & Robinson, 2020). It could be said that the overloaded with information face the same difficulties as those suffering from information poverty; they are both unable to make good decisions or take effective action – the latter because they lack information, and the former because they are not able to process it.

Media Literacy Education handbooks and guidelines never fail to emphasize that we need to train young people on how to find and use media and technology tools skillfully; how to access (quality) information in order to escape information poverty. However, the importance of training the ability to deal with information surfeit is often overlooked.

Hence, the final learning need has to be addressed through MIL education programs and material, concerns **skills of effectively filtering and managing information to avoid cognitive overload.**

Italy

1. **Knowledge of how media funding works**

The media system is also a production system with economic rules. Newspapers, TV news, online newspapers, social media and all other media follow a system of rules to be economically sustainable. To critically use the media, it is important to understand this operation from within. It is important to understand what their funding means are and how they affect them. It is important to understand how the working conditions of journalists affect their production of articles and news. Can a precarious journalist criticize a company sponsoring the newspaper where he works? Can a precarious journalist of a newspaper working with public funds criticize a public or government body? It is also important to understand the economic dependence on the online newspaper display system. How much can this affect the quality of the products produced? The visualization system can lead to writing articles that are more impactful, but less accurate. Knowing the media funding system can help young people to critically approach any media.

2. **Knowing and understanding direct sources**

The internet gives us the great opportunity to easily access data, reports and information directly. The figure of the journalist is certainly important to correctly interpret these data, but knowing how to observe them helps us to read them more critically. If you learn to read a report and understand how it was built, you can use that data in a more conscious way, aware of the limitations of the analysis that has been carried out. The data presented by newspapers are often summaries that hide a more complex reality. Being able to analyze the methodologies with which a survey has been carried out or with which a parameter has been estimated allows us to understand how truly representative it is. The same applies to statements by politicians and public figures in general. We often read in newspapers a single sentence taken out of context. Learning how to look for the entire speech from which it is drawn, understanding where it was pronounced, in front of which audience and in which temporal moment helps us to understand the real meaning of that statement.

3. **Information comparison with foreign countries**

On issues of national interest, it is common for foreign newspapers to talk about it. Learning how to compare the news disseminated on national channels with those disseminated on foreign channels helps to observe them from a new point of view. If national media conform to a vision, it may be due to a cultural approach that is not necessarily correct. Observing the media views of other cultures will help us understand misconceptions that would otherwise escape us.

4. **Debate and criticism**

Receiving information is not enough to analyze it and understand its effects on reality. Politics, economics and current events affect communities and their complexities, so it is necessary that there are moments of confrontation and debate. Only through the sharing of news and a healthy debate conveyed by clear rules can we use information correctly.

Jordan

The widespread availability of new media has generally encouraged the view that anyone can practice citizen journalism with relative ease. But without learning the digital citizenship skills that media literacy training provides, citizen journalists may be as likely to engage in self-censorship as they are to incur legal liability for the content they publish. Also introduces Center for News Literacy.

1. **Educate about standards, ethics, and the role of media:**

This training can give citizen journalists not just training in journalism skills, but also can help them learn best practices in standards and ethics. They can learn how to understand the needs and demands of their audiences; manage and evaluate information; and understand the roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent governments.

2. **Educate about technology and responsible interactivity:**

That training can educate citizen journalists about how to use new technologies. Because the technologies that citizen journalists use are typically interactive, media literacy projects cannot only train them to use their power responsibly but also can educate the community about what ethical standards should be expected from news and information providers.

3. **How to create alternative voices to traditional media:**

Both geographically based and distance-learning modules can foster the creation of new cadres of citizen journalists by giving members of the public who already own the technological tools the skills and the confidence to let their voices be heard.

Tunisia

The Tunisian media has played a more important role than schools, which can be explained with the influence of communications that have grown. Hence, the media has become the undisputed

first authority. It has tightened its control over the world, a world that is governed by political expediency and attracted by conflicts, interests, and whims. In fact, the challenges imposed by the new media have increased, as deception, lies, misrepresentation and distortion of facts spread. Each of us is exposed daily to a massive influx of information, news and advertisements.

Hence, with the increase in our media consumption, there is a need to evaluate and even dismantle its media content, and to know the messages implicit in it, its sources and the goals behind, and then ways to engage with it.

Thus, it is imperative to raise the level of intellectual awareness and critical analysis among individuals and develop a culture of interculturalism in its philosophical value concept and the ability to get out of the ideological media to blaze new paths for humanity.

Section 4.2: Measures to facilitate media literacy and citizen journalism

Albania

The media education of journalists themselves is in its infancy; where the code of ethics of journalists is regularly and more often violated by the biggest actors of the media scene in Albania; and where a regulatory framework welcomed by all media actors is lacking, which are possible steps that can be taken?

A potential step could be to promote the role of the Ombudsman Media, where the latter serves as an internal observer of news agencies and newsrooms, playing a critical role in strengthening good and ethical practices in reporting and the media, monitoring accuracy and balance in the news. Further the latter can serve as one mediator between citizens and the news agency.

Further, fixation and further increase of the steps taken in the field of education media through mobilization, forums and public debate, is an initiative which in the plan long-term has the potential to reap achievable and measurable success in some areas, including public awareness, pressure on the media itself for ethical and quality products, and state authorities to take tangible steps to include this subject in general school curricula. Beyond the educational context, creation and promoting interactive spaces for citizens and other stakeholders interested in it to freely discuss and debate current issues, media practices and rights and obligations of citizens can be seen as a key step.

Promoting public forums to encourage dialogue between different actors, including regulatory authorities, associations, educators, citizens and media professionals; encouraging other actors in the public sphere, such as regulatory authorities and CSOs, to raise public awareness of media

education, laws and regulations; involving citizens in discussions about adult codes of conduct raising awareness and ensuring that the latter are implemented; increase the capacity of CSOs on media education and encouraging projects common to citizens, the media and regulatory authorities, can be seen as a start auspicious in an extremely uncertain and problematic climate for readers, citizens, the regulator but also the media itself .

Bulgaria

While social media and new technology provide the opportunity to create communities, they exclude economically disadvantaged individuals (Moeller, Joseph, Lau, & Carbo, 2010). Governmental and Non-governmental organizations could provide access to marginalized people in order to engage them in the online social communities. Schools should provide the base for media literacy such as linguistic skills, critical thinking and analysis, knowledge of civil society and the media landscape. Other organizations can expand on that knowledge by organizing workshops, training and conferences. It is important to emphasize local projects to train people on how to consume and create content thus expanding their community's influence in the decision-making process.

Egypt

In Egypt, there is a need for establishing bodies whose mission is to develop and disseminate media education. They should focus on developing a comprehensive plan and funds to raise awareness of media education. It is advisory motivating stakeholders (civil society, private sectors and educational institutions) to launch national or local campaigns to educate young people about digital skills.

Integrating media and digital education in schools' and universities' curriculum, as well as basic digital skills, coding and computational thinking would be beneficial for Egyptian youth. It is also suggested to develop new methods in educational materials related to media education.

Greece

Proposed Community Initiatives

1. **Mapping existing learning needs, as well as community resources devoted to digital and media literacy, as well as citizen journalism upskilling:**

City and community leaders, as well as sponsoring entities are often unaware of the needs of their community, as well as of existing initiatives, projects and services for digital and media literacy education. A better communication and coordination between them and civil society actors/community groups, by means of mapping existing needs and practices, would help develop

leadership, build networks, and enhance organizational capacity to support the expansion of work in the community, as well as detect gaps in programs and services and identify underserved groups.

2. **Development of Community media associations:**
   Securing strategic partnerships among CSOs active in the field of media literacy promotion and citizen journalism is very important, as it will leverage the community media sector's capacity in terms of advocacy and of influencing policy making processes and funding decisions.

3. **Designing of education-entertainment initiatives and promoting them through social media campaigns:**
   The most effective way to raise the level of visibility and understanding of basic digital and media literacy concepts among young people is to utilize the channels and means that are most popular to them; social media and various formats of "edutainment". When trying to promote responsible/proactive behaviors and critical thinking about certain MIL issues, targeting a specific dimension of digital and media literacy each time, using short but clear messages, embellishing messages with audiovisual accompanying material, ideally infused with humor too (e.g. videos, infographics, memes), or creating some sort of "challenge" that has the potential spread from one youngster to the next, are some effective tricks to secure that young people will engage with the content and retain the information.

4. **Involving individuals or groups from diverse and partly marginalized communities in the field of digital and media literacy:**
   In Greece, as well in other countries, initiatives promoting MIL and community media take place mainly in larger urban areas and their focus tends to be on students, educators or journalists, and less on parents, senior citizens or other social groups (i.e., ethnic minorities). To bring digital and media literacy closer to underserved communities and special populations, following strategies may be applied:

- multilingual media production to represent the wide range of languages present in today's European societies (including production of materials in native languages and not just in English). These activities provide unique opportunities for people, especially the elderly, and those with less formal educational backgrounds, to re-engage with learning.
- to accommodate often busy lives, parents need flexible, short-term and drop-in programs, where they can explore and learn, supported by assistants who offer real-time guidance.
- investing resources for intensive outreach activities and potential cooperation with other educational actors is needed for catering to difficult-to-reach groups, such as youth living in peripheral or remote areas, NEETs, school dropouts, etc.

Policy Recommendations

1. **Funding opportunities for community media:**

As outlined in the 2018 Council of Europe Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership (Council of Europe, 2018), Member States should encourage and support the establishment and functioning of community media, including by providing financial mechanisms and support programs to foster their development within and across communities and at regional and local levels.

2. **Developing a common Media Literacy Framework among EU-Member States:**
   Cooperation between media experts, educators and authorities is a challenge, as there is no common regulatory framework that aligns learning objectives, priorities, responsibilities and practices in terms of Media Literacy. The development of a **common Media Literacy Framework** (a MedLit Comp similar to DigiComp and EntreComp) would help systematize and orchestrate MIL education policies and efforts among different EU member states along common axes and with common directions, to avoid the development of transnational MIL divides.

3. **Recognizing of the high potential of community media as a partner to the formal educational system:**
   Cooperation with schools, universities and adult education should be supported on a long-term basis. A community education movement for digital and media literacy must include a prominent role for youth media advocates, involving students in video, print, and online media production, in the form of a project-based course or internship included in the formal curriculum. This would empower students to discover fresh ways to engage with local news and assume an active role in the mediascape of their community.

4. **Prioritizing the upskilling of teachers and educators:**
   Digital and media literacy education cannot come into the classroom without teachers who have the knowledge and skills to teach it. Future teachers could be well served if schools and universities invested in the creation of preparatory programs, as well as programs that bring faculty and students together for co-learning opportunities. Equally important is the attention to educators' continuous upskilling and life-long learning, through regular coordinated staff development programs in digital and media literacy at the level of the educational institution or municipality. Such programs could be staffed by a range of experts, including technology specialists, media educators, education and communication faculty and community partners, including those from professional media organizations. An important component of those trainings should also concern instructional practices of digital and media literacy education ("MIL pedagogy").

Italy

In Italy, the measures to facilitate media environment should include encouraging the media to declare what funding they receive, how and from which organizations and the contractual terms of their journalists. Media outlets should start indicating for each article sources and data used to

achieve it and report foreign versions of news. Public funding for publishing should be managed by independent bodies.

When it comes to media education, there is a need for promoting citizen-wide debate and information review groups, training session in schools to analyze the structure and funding of media sector. Meetings between newspaper editors and citizens in order to share doubts and ideas about news production can be also beneficial course of action.

Jordan

Mobile journalism has transformed the way we consume information. With instant updates and live feeds, this digital form of storytelling has caught the world by storm. While portable electronic devices have made this art form possible, the work done by newsrooms, cell phone carriers, and social media platforms alike have supported its continued growth, supporting them to develop skills in citizen-photo-journalism and encouraging them to develop personal projects in which they used photography, storytelling and journalistic techniques to report on issues of relevance to their own lives and communities.

Tunisia

There is no traditional media that divides out of communication technology, the internet, and new media. Similarly, there is no blogger or activist in the internet that is indifferent to traditional media, and therefore opportunities for coexistence and perhaps cooperation between the two parties is possible and required.

Citizen journalists may turn out to be the 21st century's most potent force for creating, supporting, and building open and democratic societies. In environments where poor infrastructure, minimal access to technology, and small-scale economies impede the creation or sustainability of mainstream independent media, and in countries where repressive governments limit the ability of professional journalists to operate freely, citizen journalists are filling the gaps. Yet, citizen journalists often have no formal journalism education nor the knowledge of the essential roles independent media plays in ensuring accountable and transparent government.

Programs for citizen journalists serves to:

- Educate about standards, ethics, and the role of media: The programs can give citizen journalists not just training in journalism skills, but also can help them learn best practices in standards and ethics. They can learn how to understand the needs and demands of their audiences; manage and evaluate information; and understand the roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent governments.

- Educate about technology and responsible interactivity: That training can educate citizen journalists about how to use new technologies. The technologies that citizen journalists use, are interactive, hence, media literacy projects can not only train them to use their power responsibly, but also can educate the community about what ethical standards should be expected from news and information providers.

- Create appetites for accurate and fair news: The training can help bloggers and others learn how to be credible information and news providers. Setting and adhering to standards can help educate a sometimes-unsophisticated public to publish trustworthy, reliable, and fair information from news outlets.

- Create alternative voices to traditional media: Both geographically based and distance-learning modules can foster the creation of new cadres of citizen journalists by giving members of the public who already own the technological tools the skills and the confidence to let their voices be heard.

- Train bloggers to become enterprise and investigative reporters: In countries where the government exercises control over mainstream media, bloggers can provide not only alternative voices but also enterprise and investigative reporting not possible in the regular press.

Section 5: Conclusion

Albania

The press is free. This is a common phrase declared from Albanian politicians but the real situation is different. Albanian government has taken several steps to regulate disinformation and fake news but it has led to restrictions of media freedom. The law against disinformation has its flows as it is used sometimes for governments own benefit. Also, the independence of media market is jeopardized as the biggest media companies are allied with state leaders. Lack of transparency, hidden ownership, influence of political parties are features that have negative effect on media transparency.

In the recent years, it has been a booming of online media. For this reason, media literacy, disinformation and fake news are hot topics in our country. Civil society has undertaken several initiatives to educate the stakeholders and raise awareness on fake news. But still these actions are minor to the real needs. It is important to continue the support given to youth, journalists, teaching staff, state institutions related to media literacy and citizens journalism to enhance transparency and trust.

Bulgaria

Ranking at position 91 in the World Press Freedom Index, compared to 2021 of position 112, Bulgaria is still experiencing socio-political factors that largely infringe the freedom of speech and quality of journalism in the country. Media are almost entirely dependent on advertising revenues. The distribution of national and European funds for the media by the government is non-transparent, which allows trade in public funding against favorable coverage. Investigative reporters covering organized crime and corruption are regularly threatened. Threats and physical assaults against journalists are a constant problem, but an even bigger problem is the reluctance of the authorities to investigate or convict them, which further deteriorates the quality of journalism in the country. The risks for media pluralism in Bulgaria are significant and within a year the situation has visibly deteriorated, calling for urgent measures to be taken. Analysis shows that Bulgaria is improving its ranking for media freedom, but reforms are needed to strengthen the independence of public media.

In the current situation, the role of NGOs and youth leaders is crucial in promoting media literacy and encouraging citizen journalism. Media literacy is essential to citizen journalism in order to avoid disseminating disinformation and fake news. For 73% of Bulgarians, fake news is a national problem, but their ability to recognize it is questionable (Capital.bg, 2022). This increase in negative attitudes towards disinformation puts Bulgaria close to the EU average. The government is slowly recognizing the need for state policies regarding media literacy. Therefore in 2020, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive was introduced aiming at measuring and improving media literacy of the citizens of all ages.

Egypt

With the development of various communication tools, rumors and misleading news have become more prevalent and rapid. The problem lies in not knowing the source of this information and news, unlike traditional media that provide a source of different information and we can verify it. So, society needs to develop the analytical and critical skills necessary to evaluate the media. These thinking abilities should be planted from childhood so that we create a generation conscious of how to deal with social media, select information and media content carefully.

Countries now seek to empower individuals, especially young people and children, and enable them to deal with the virtual world in general, and this is done through several factors, including the family and the school.

Hence, it can be emphasized that the role of civil society and NGOs is important in media literacy. Civil society can take upon itself the need to empower children to deal with these means of social media and raise their awareness of media content, in cooperation with
educational institutions.

Greece

Greece is ranking almost the last among all European countries in the World Press Freedom Index in 2022. During the last years professional journalists have been assassinated in order not to reveal information they have found about burning issues.

In Greece, citizens believe that most of the media are controlled by political parties and people who own the media outlets have ties to the political elite. They do not have confidence in the media and content creators.

The latest researches have shown that Greece faces a rapid downslide regarding media pluralism that brings the level of democracy into question. As Walter Cronkite once said *"Freedom of press is not just important to democracy, it is democracy".*

In Greece, Media literacy is on the political agenda but remains relatively underdeveloped. There are no organized actions, government-led measures and public programs to promote Media Literacy and citizen journalism. Citizen journalism became more and more known in the last years especially because of many abusive attacks to citizens by police officers and the need that the general public had to record these attacks and share them with other people.

Greece is one of the most vulnerable countries in Europe to misinformation and fake news. That's why it is very important to develop Media Literacy skills. Young people have to deal with tremendous amounts of information every day, but they do not really learn how to use this information, how to evaluate and work with it, or how to critically analyse and benefit from it. So, the level of media literacy among young people in Greece needs to be improved. Media Literacy must become an autonomous object of study in the formal education system in Greece.

Italy

Italy is a country theoretically with a lot of freedom of the press, because there are no laws that provide for censorship, but the reality is a little different. Mainly economic and political reasons limit the effective possibility for journalism to be independent. In addition to misinformation and false information are very frequent and widespread, impacting greatly on the quality of public life. The problems of the media are also reflected in the workers, in fact among journalists there is much precarious and this affects the quality of their work. This situation makes it necessary for all citizens to have the means of critical media analysis and civic journalism.

There are activities at national level to encourage media literacy and to combat the spread of fake news, but they are mainly specialized information channels, not initiatives in its territories. There are initiatives at a local level, but it has not been possible to identify a coherent and structured

strategy. It is important to give the citizens the tools to understand which information is reliable and which is not and also to make information independently.

In order to improve citizens' ability to understand the quality of information, it would be useful to have more transparency on funding and organizational models of the media. However, citizens should also be more involved in verifying sources, as they are often easily accessible via the internet.

The initiatives that are identified as necessary therefore provide for greater transparency by the media and greater initiative by the citizens. Quality information requires commitment from all sides.

Jordan

The most interesting finding of citizen journalism and media literacy in Jordan is that there are many projects with the goal to spread a basic understanding of media education tools and information in schools and universities and building the capacities of educators working in these institutions, such that they are able to pass on the knowledge and skills they gained in this field to their students. The projects also aim to ensure responsible engagement with content from traditional and digital media sources through the examination of sources of information. It furthermore seeks to prevent the spreading of rumors and fake news and to promote the inclusive language.

The second one is that Jordan administers sub-grants targeting a group of civil society institutions interested in launching new and innovative initiatives in the fields of media and information education under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and the Office of the Minister of State for Media Affairs, and the implementation of awareness campaigns to spread the concepts of media education and informatics through a group of public service media, and the creation of a digital platform for free education and training.

One of the important things to be focused on in Jordan is teachers and trainers of digital media literacy who must be specialized in digital media to provide content related to digital media literacy in a professional and beneficial way for the teachers and trainees.

Tunisia

Tunisia is going through a difficult transition phase, the major outcome of which will highly depend on the degree of civic commitment that its citizens will display. Such commitment will in its turn depend on the amount of work to be done to sensitize and train citizens, and especially the youth, on the merits and ways of being actively involved in civic work. Reconsidering the status

of civic education in the Tunisian educational system by integrating innovative ideas in the official curricula and teacher training programs seem to offer unlimited opportunities to develop the youth's awareness about the importance of their adherence to civic work.

Differently from many other countries in the region, mainly those rich in natural resources, Tunisia has always relied on its human resources to face all sorts of challenges. In such a post-revolutionary scene, one of the major challenges facing the newly-born democracy seems to be enhancing the youth's energy to work for the common good. One of the shortest ways to do that is through investment in education, namely in improving the status of civics in the national educational systems.

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