



OMEDIA LITERACY

OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF MEDIA LITERACY POLICIES IN EUROPE

Documenting Media Literacy Best Practices In Europe: A Report

W.P. 2.2

OMEDIALITERACY Partners

The OMEDIALITERACY project brings together four leading European universities who contribute their expertise in the fields of political and communication science and journalism studies.



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SUMMARY

This report, “Report of Initiatives and Good Practices in Europe Concerning Disinformation” is a comprehensive review of initiatives and good practices aimed at promoting media literacy actions and preventing the effects of disinformation from international organisations in the European Union and the four partner countries of OMEDIALITERACY project: Portugal, Austria, the Netherlands, and Spain.

A total of 64 initiatives were found, 50 of which were analysed in depth after applying the inclusion criteria. The results obtained on existing initiatives on this issue highlight the importance of media and digital literacy good practices in the fight against disinformation and the promotion of critical sense among citizenship. Most initiatives focus on training youngsters on the essential use of the media and raising awareness on recognising trustful sources of information. Although more initiatives need to be developed aimed at other groups of the population to strengthen their digital and media literacy skills, more studies will need to be carried out in the following years to check on the effectiveness of the current initiatives and the implementation of new ones.

KEY FINDINGS

- There has been an essential increase in implementing both public and private MIL initiatives in the last five years.
- The existing MIL initiatives so far seek to introduce digital skills in the educational environment and increase students’ critical thinking spirit.
- The initiatives implementation process started before the policies definition process.
- As stronger the national policies and regulations on MIL, fewer the initiatives and good practices developed on the field.
- It needs to be more initiatives beyond the formal educational context, as in the communication and journalism field and other sectors of populations non-directly related to MIL.
- The existing MIL initiatives so far are targeted mainly at students and youngsters, so other publics, such as middle-aged adults, elders, or collectives at risk of exclusion should be more considered.
- It still needs to be more procedures and working groups that evaluate the achievement and effectiveness of the media literacy initiatives implemented.

- More good practices and MIL guidelines to recognize the trustful sources of information and counter the disinformation campaigns need to be developed, beyond the private and public action projects.
- There are loads of prizes and competitions rewarding MIL-related schooling projects, but it still needs to be developed more awards to recognize non-formal educational MIL initiatives and good practices and initiatives.

1. Introduction

This report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the public and private initiatives and good practices that seek to promote media literacy actions and counter the effects of disinformation in the European Union, especially in the four partner countries. This report results from the OMEDIALITERACY project (2023), funded by the EMIF and the Fund Partners, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the European University Institute. The main objective of this report is to provide an overview of the initiatives and good practices implemented from 2018 to 2023 in different European countries to address the problem of disinformation and improve media literacy efforts to counter it.

The report begins with describing the methodology implemented to search for the initiatives and good practices to be analysed. After briefly introducing the results, the information follows by describing the main initiatives carried out by the European Union on the matter. It concludes by studying the case of Spain, Austria, Netherlands, and Portugal while addressing their standard working lines and main differences and summarising the main results.

2. Methodology

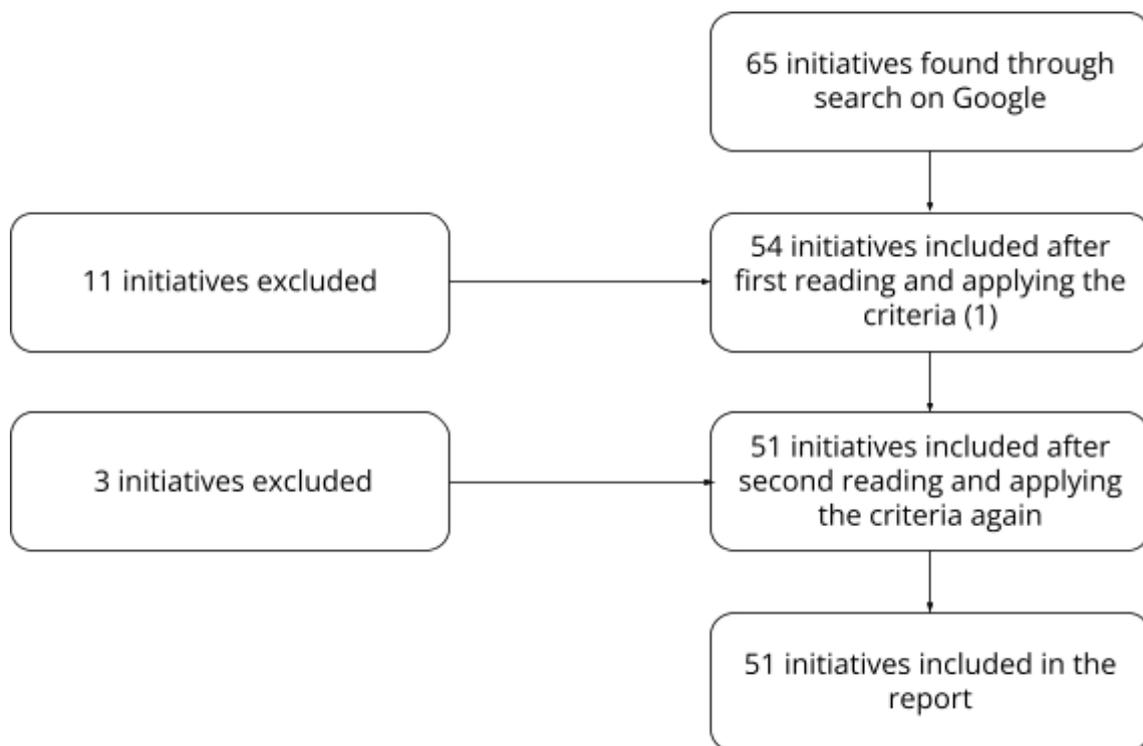
We have reviewed the Media Literacy and Disinformation initiatives and good practices of the European Union and each of the partners' countries. The initiatives references were either extracted from the previous literature review, manually searched on the governmental and private companies' official websites, or provided by the partners' research teams, following these criteria: initiatives or good practices that aimed to promote media literacy actions or prevent the disinformation effects and that either started or were functioning on the period 2018-2023. The search was carried out on Google using words such as "initiative", "good practice", "action", "misinformation", "disinformation", "Europe", "Austria", "Spain", "Portugal", and "The Netherlands". In addition, each partner searched the reference pages related to their disinformation initiatives, and the coordinator also searched European and international bodies. We finally obtained 65 references, which were deeply studied for further analysis.

The research group first read all documents to learn about the initiatives on disinformation and media literacy that are being implemented in member countries. While the reading was in progress, the research team applied the selection criteria. The inclusion criteria referred to (1) initiatives, actions, good practices, educational programs, campaigns, etc., (2) implemented or promoted by a government, NGO or private organisation at either European, regional or municipal level, (3) that impulse specific actions for combating and protecting the

citizenship from the effects disinformation and/or promote effective media literacy interventions (4) either implemented after 2018 or currently working, (5) that were either available in English or allow translator programs and (6) if being a scholar initiative, it has won or been nominated for a media literacy award. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria were related to drafts, summaries, reports, news releases, etc., published before 2018 or were not currently applied and did not contain any considerations for the effects of the disinformation or media literacy initiatives.

After applying the criteria, 11 references were excluded. The 54 included references were read a second time and studied in depth for further analysis. The researchers reapplied the inclusion and exclusion criteria to the concerns and made a content screening. After careful consideration, 51 references were finally included in this report.

Figure 1. *Flow Chart of the MIL initiatives report.*



3. Results

The European Union started the decade by setting up some funds that would be assigned to leading media literacy initiatives and strategies in the fight against the disinformation campaigns for 2021-2027. It also established the yearly European Media Literacy Week campaign. For the past five years and especially since the pandemic, the members' states have been increasing their efforts on the task and using these European funds as well as their funds to develop a set of national and regional initiatives and good practices to face the disinformation campaigns by reinforcing the schools' CVs on Media and Information Literacy and strengthen the media and journalism activities to promote citizenship free and safe access and usage of veridic information.

The initiatives and programmes aiming to promote media literacy analysed include prizes, competitions, educational programmes, and online resources. A total of 50 initiatives have been found its aim to act across Europe. Spain and Portugal have the most initiatives listed, with a total of 15 each one, followed by Netherlands with 7 and Austria with 9. The overall results show ongoing efforts to foster media literacy in Europe, especially on issues such as misinformation, fake news, cyberbullying, and safe use of digital media (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Main Results of the initiatives analysed.*

Initiatives Name	Territory	Main Results
MEDIA	Europe	They promote the media literacy founding program NEWS - MEDIA LITERACY CREA-CROSS.
The European Media Literacy Week	Europe	Underline the importance of media literacy and promote initiatives and projects across the EU.
The European Media Literacy Awards	Europe	Reward projects in the field of media literacy.
Media Literacy for All	Europe	To pursue innovation and collaboration across media literacy communities within the EU.
Plataforma Leer.es	Spain	Offer educational projects and resources to work on different kinds of literacies, including media literacy.
Pantallas amigas	Spain	Programmes, activities and talks on media literacy such as The Control + Z encounters.
Asociación de Prensa Juvenil	Spain	The primary objective is increasing the number of readers.
Amibox and Amibox Kinds	Spain	First hand recommendations on media literacies by celebrities and professionals on the matter.
Efecto MIL	Spain	Video contest to raise awareness about the risks and opportunities of digital environments.
Mentes AMI	Spain	Awards to promote, recognize and disseminate educational initiatives that foster critical thinking.
Programa EDYTA	Spain	Educational program on digital skills for women at risk of exclusion
Talleres 'Alfabetización digital'	Spain	Online and free orientation program for unemployed people on digital skills

'Fake News. La fábrica de mentiras'	Spain	Exhibition to review the phenomenon of fake news over the centuries and reflect on its impact.
TELOS magazine	Spain	The issue 122 addresses topics such as manipulation, fake news and misinformation.
Aquí Tv3	Catalonia (Spain)	Educational platform that helps the kids to understand the functioning and the language used on TV

AulaMèdia	Catalonia (Spain)	They work in the development of digital publications and audio-visual productions and training activities on the development of critical and creative thinking
Verificat	Catalonia (Spain)	Fact-checking organisation that also fund media literacy projects.
Concurso El Audiovisual en la Escuela	Andalusia (Spain)	Contest between schools to develop a creative media product.
Grupo Comunicar	Andalusia (Spain)	They carried out different research works on media literacy such as <i>Yougrammers</i> and Media in action
Critical media literacy. Civic Adult Education in the Digital Age	Austria	Two-day workshop on critical media literacy.
Saferinternet.at	Austria	Initiative for the safe use of digital media through the promotion of media literacy.
Mediamanual	Austria	Interactive platform to integrate media work at schools
Austrian Youth Information Centre	Austria	Specialist agencies for youth-oriented information processing and education for non-commercial purposes.
MitFaktengegen Fake News: Klimawandel	Austria	Campaign to support young people in debunking fake news on climate change.
The Media and Information Literacy Network in Austria	Austria	Network of professionals that stimulate media education and the examination of media and information literacy.
Wiener Bildungsserver	Austria	NGO that promotes media literacy among students of Vienna.
De Week van de Mediawijsheid	Netherlands	Platform that offers different resources on media literacy and the fight against disinformation.
Lees je digiwijs	Netherlands	Publisher that offers some book series and materials on media literacy

		concepts.
DigitaleGeletterdheid	Netherlands	They organise the 'Media Literacy' module, that offers interactive lessons about the use of online media
MediawijsheidEducatiepaginaKinderen: Hoe?Zo! Mediawijs	Netherlands	They offer some resources on media-wise themes: social media, passwords, cyberbullying and vlogging.
Slechtnieuws game	Netherlands	The Bad News game trains on resisting "bad online information".
MediawijsheidEducatiepagina	Netherlands	They offer some resources to discuss in class about the 2022's Media Literacy Week: Like & Cancel.
PlusmoduleEcht Nep	Netherlands	They offer the PlusModule Real Fake – Fake News Teaching Materials.

isdatechtzo.nl	Netherlands	They offer a wide range of resources on disinformation and fake news.
Checklist 'Is die informatieecht?'	Netherlands	This is a series of guidelines/recommendations by the Central Government to recognize and fight against fake news and disinformation.
7 dias com os Media	Portugal	National campaign, locally organized by schools, libraries and other entities on media topics.
MILOBS. Observatório Media, Informação e Literacia	Portugal	They offer different initiatives, action projects and trainings on MIL.
LEME, Literacia e Educação para os Media em Linha	Portugal	It offers resources to be used in formal, non-formal and informal contexts of learning and includes contents on disinformation.
Associação para literacia para os media e jornalismo	Portugal	It promotes training on news media literacy.
Centro Internet Segura	Portugal	They offer different resources on Fake News: definition, who may be affected, dissemination, etc.
Manual de Instruções para a Literacia Mediática - Rede de Bibliotecas Escolares - MILD - https://mild.rbe.mec.pt/	Portugal	They offer different resources on media literacy, including information literacy, visual culture, content creation and production.
RTP Ensina - O que são fake news?	Portugal	What is Fake News: short explanatory video.
Público na Escola	Portugal	Several initiatives including a contest that prizes the best school and group newspapers.
Aveiro Media Competence Center	Portugal	They offer different workshops; seminars for journalists and students and some resources on MIL.
Polígrafo	Portugal	Online newspaper about fact checking.
Observador	Portugal	Online newspaper about fact checking.
Deco Proteste	Portugal	Portuguese consumer protection organization. Fact-checking tool for general public.

Media Veritas	Portugal	It aims to promote Media Literacy among the most vulnerable communities.
CENJOR	Portugal	They organise workshops; seminars for journalists and students.
Media Trust Lab	Portugal	They fund some studies on disinformation and organise workshops, seminars for journalists and students.
Prova dos Factos	Portugal	It is a fact-checking platform for the Público newspaper.

The following sections detail some of those initiatives and finally recommend the entities establish a methodology for further analysing the efficiency of the current initiatives so they can be later replicated.

3.1. UNESCO's Media Literacy Program

As we observed in the last document, '**Report of documentation on policies in Europe concerning disinformation**', the early 2000s were defined by the development of the ICTs and the expansion of the digital world and ever since the beginning, the local, national, and supranational governments strongly tried to regulate and direct those changes to protect citizens rights and save democratic values. Nevertheless, social movements and technological developments have grown faster and wilder than political agreements and bureaucracy. So, the aim for private initiatives to start reaching awareness in the fight against disinformation and developing good practices on media literacy began a few years before the first regulations appeared, as we are now about to discover.

On a global scale, it is again the **UNESCO** that has led and supported the development of media and information literacy strategies with the aim of tackling disinformation and empowering citizens in the use of digital tools and developing a critical spirit. Specifically, it has been the organisation's goal to "to enhance the capacities of policymakers, educators, information and media professionals, youth organizations, and disadvantaged populations" in this regard and to help them make informed choices while building "peace, equality, freedom of expression, dialogue, access to information, and sustainable development" (2023). To do so, they work to provide the guidelines and researching support for the national and regional organizations to develop their own strategies and media literacy initiatives. In this regard, they offer a full range of online consulting **resources** and some training courses on the matter denominated **Massive Open Online Courses** (MOOC).

When it comes to resources, we must point out the publication of '**Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation: handbook for journalism education and training**' (2018), '**Media and information literacy in journalism: a handbook for journalists and journalism educators**' (2019) and '**Media and information literate citizens: think critically, click wisely!**' (2021), three volumes that define the "the definitive" global framework for the journalism, communication, and educational organizations to learn and teach the key twenty-first century skills to identify and benefit from trustworthy sources of information while practicing their rights and obligations as free democratic citizens. To highlight the fourth module of this last document: '**Media and Information Literacy competencies to tackle misinformation, disinformation and hate speech: in defence of truth-seeking and peace**', its objective is to examine the different types of misinformation that pervade in the

so-called post-truth era and to illustrate how this misinformation can lead to distrust, division and intolerance. It aims to reinforce the previous modules on how media literacy competences and tools can support the defence of the truth, prevent the spread of disinformation and promote an inclusive, participatory and open society.

As for the training programmes, it stands out the publication of **'The Deep Dive for Policymakers into Media and Information Literacy MOOC'** (2022) and **'The Media and Information Literacy for Inclusive and Better Futures for educators and learners MOOC'** (2022). The first one was developed in cooperation with the United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV) and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain) and was aimed at policymakers to gain a comprehensive understanding of how ensuring **Media and Information Literacy** while contributing to sustainable development. The second one was designed by the Athabasca University (Canada) and intended for educators and learners "to acquire the skills to effectively analyze online information" and help the citizens make informed decisions about the information they handle.

3.2. Media Literacy Initiatives in Europe

From a European approach, we have found out how those countries with more substantial, wider more comprehensive, more effective regulations in terms of media literacy seem not to have later developed as many resources and private initiatives to counter the effects of disinformation as those states whose political framework on the matter is still being defined. So, the private and non-governmental entities have been taking the lead. However, this tendency may differ as pronounced on the European level as in the national contexts, so the first international initiatives came nearly along with the first regulations.

On the other side, the working lines for the reinforcement of media literacy knowledge and capabilities to counter disinformation seem to be the same as those that were later addressed by the policies and regulations, with the educational environment and the journalism practice the two main focuses of the national and international entities. The civilian society and the general political framework have been less addressed by private initiatives and more relegated to governmental regulatory procedures.

So, firstly, the European Commission started the funding program **'Media Literacy for All'** (2020) that aimed at boosting media literacy in Europe through pursuing innovation and collaboration across media literacy communities within the EU, including by building on and scaling up existing solutions. Innovative strategies were sought to raise awareness about the disinformation issues among citizens and to promote the responsible use of communication channels and social media. The tools and activities proposed should directly or indirectly benefit the target group of

citizens lacking media literacy skills, particularly the skills needed to evaluate content accessed via social media critically.

This program was quickly substituted by the Spanish '**Media**' (1991) which had begun to depend 2014 on the **European Commission 'Creative Program'** and the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency**. With a budget of around 1.4 billion Euros established for the period 2021-2017, it started promoting and funding some innovative developments within the European countries, and it assigned yearly funds for the **News Media Literacy Crea-Cross program** that calls for the development of innovative cross-border media literacy initiatives and communities across Europe. This first initiative is intended to encourage media literacy actions and the exchange of knowledge between communities to develop further policies and good practices.

In the same context, the **European Commission** initiated the **European Media Literacy Week** (2019a); its primary goal is to underline the societal importance of media literacy and promote good practices and projects in the fight against disinformation across the European Union territories. Every year, the Commission selects a week and a general theme for the member countries to work on and develop their perspectives by organising workshops, seminars, contests, and networking activities on different subjects. The 2022 Media Literacy Week focused on promoting trust and cohesion after the COVID-19 pandemic and featured a series of events around media literacy in times of crisis.

During the first European Literacy Week, the Commission also promoted **The European Media Literacy Awards** (2019b) to reward the most inspiring and impactful projects in the field of media literacy. The projects were selected by their originality, innovation, impact, scalability and the clarity of their presentation and the best applicants were flown to Brussels to compete for three awards at the high-level conference of the European Media Literacy Week. Although those awards seemed to need more continuity, they set up the base for other national and international awards and recognitions to be promoted in the same field during the following years.

3.3. MIL Initiatives and good practices by countries

After carefully analysing the European set of initiatives and funding programs regarding Media and Information Literacy, we are about to carry out a study of the projects and good practices implementations of the member states on a national and regional basis, focusing on the four partners' countries (Spain, Austria, Netherlands, and Portugal) and searching for the ordinary working lines and the main differences while addressing the international guidelines.

3.3.1. The case of Spain

In the last 70s and the early 80s, Spain rapidly started to develop and grow its own free national and regional media and communications organisations and to reach awareness among the citizens about the new values of democracy and the press, such as objectivity, freedom of speech, transparency, and critical thought.

Journalism and media

The Youth Press Association (APJ) (1981) emerged in this context. This non-profit organisation collaborates with the institutional policies on socio-cultural and educational matters to increase the number of press readers, placing particular interest among the youth. The idea was to promote rapprochement between teachers and journalists and raise awareness among all the sectors involved in the Press-School relationship and society in general about the role and importance of a free, plural, and objective press. To achieve these pedagogical objectives and to collaborate with public institutions, they stimulate the publication of articles teaching guides, and research projects and organise conferences, seminars, courses, workshops and other specific training and awareness-raising programs and activities for students, young people, teachers, and other mediators. It was one of the first national organisations to promote the values of clarity, transparency and the importance of a free, plural, and objective press and critical thought, matters of great importance in the fight against disinformation.

Education and professional training

In the education field, it first appeared the online platform "***Pantallas amigas***" (2004); its main goal was to promote the safe and healthy use of the Internet and other ICTs among children and teenagers. They still do so by offering different resources and promoting projects for their training so they can surf autonomously and safely the net, its ultimate objective being to develop the digital skills and competencies that allow them to participate in an active, positive, and healthy way on the Internet. In terms of media literacy, for instance, they came up with projects such as "Information disorder", "**The Control + Z encounters**", or the campaign "**10**

pasos contra la información engañosa en Internet" that help the users to encourage critical thinking and facilitate responsible decision-making while facing the dissemination of false information. The platform has been rewarded multiple times with the "**2020 Internet Awards for Digital Transformation**" given by "Día de Internet".

Later, the Government's General Subdirectorate of Territorial Cooperation and Educational Innovation started the website '**Leer.es**'(2013) to promote educational projects and resources to work on different literacies, including media literacy. On their blog, they usually share articles regarding this last topic for the educators' community to be aware such as "**La alfabetización mediática en centros de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria**". All the contents are written by teachers and professionals and supervised by the Education Ministry.

More recently, major media companies started to be concerned about the effects of the spread of disinformation among their users, especially the younger and those at risk of exclusion. It is the case of the **Orange Foundation** that started to organise the yearly '**EDYTA Program** (2018) that aims to empower women, increase the social impact of their actions, and promote their social inclusion through the development of digital skills. It consists of equipping the association with different technological devices such as computers, tablets, etc., and designing an educational program adapted to the situation and training of the participating women. Thus, a course is taught with training on digital skills, from learning to navigate and search for information online, preparing a curriculum, online job searching... Although this program does not explicitly aim to promote media literacy to fight against disinformation campaigns, it does take the first steps to increase participants' digital skills and capabilities when trusting or untrusting the information.

The **Atresmedia Foundation** did want to work on a media literacy program and so it launched the '**Amibox**' and '**Amibox Kids**' platforms (2022a) to provide content on media, information and devices while teaching essential concepts and skills to properly use them, focusing on the maximum opportunities they can offer and the risks they can entail. Here, they offer different kinds of tools like, for instance '**Amitools**', made up of theoretical pills that address, from the hand of content creators and in an entertaining way, various topics related to MIL or the '**Amichat**' that are pills focused on the practical aspects of AMI on an interview format in which journalists, 'influencers', content creators, presenters or psychologists tell their own experiences and the 'tricks' learned during their professional careers. All those contents are supervised by a group of experts in education and media and information literacy from the University of Huelva and coordinated by Ignacio Aguaded, professor of Education and Communication and president of Red AlfaMed, and the Comunicar Group.

This initiative was instantly followed by the **'Mentes AMI' educational challenge** (2022c), which wanted to promote, recognize and disseminate educational initiatives developed in the classroom that foster critical thinking, promote responsible audio-visual creativity and promote values and coexistence as well as contribute to the development of skills and competences related to Media and Information Literacy (AMI) and provide them with tools for their application in the classroom through presentations, debates and experiences of professionals from different fields. This led to a call for awards to promote, recognize and disseminate those scholarly initiatives at a great annual educational meeting where they are presented and rewarded. This project was rewarded as well on the 2022 "Premios Magisterio".

Finally, the **Atresmedia Foundation** promoted the **'Efecto MIL' national contest** (2022b), aimed to promote the proper, ethical, self-critical use of social media among youngsters. Through a video of less than 1 minute for Instagram or TikTok, participants, using their creativity, talent, and their tools, are challenged to raise awareness about the risks and opportunities of digital environments by choosing one of the topics that are proposed: the dangers of viral challenges, harassment on social networks, hate speech, detection of false news and social media addiction. All the finalists' videos can be watched on the platform, and the winners are rewarded with a three thousand Euros voucher to be spent on technology.

The **Telefónica Foundation** started its own media literacy program and presented the **'Alfabetización digital' workshops** (2023b) that offer free training in basic digital skills for unemployed people in Andalusia, the Canary Islands, Castilla-La Mancha, and the Region of Murcia. The participants can choose between the basic or advanced level, depending on their knowledge and use of certain computer tools and programs. The materials are related to using of social networks for employment, emailing, social media and digital and training resources to improve their employability.

General public

Telefónica has also organized the exhibition **'Fake News. La fábrica de mentiras'** (2023a) to review the Fake news phenomenon over the centuries. The show began with an introduction to the world of fake news —what it is, how it is generated and transmitted— and our brain's predisposition to accept it easily. On a journey through history, from Antiquity to the present, the exhibition covered the great lies of past. It explored how media and technology had contributed to their propagation and "viralisation", for which the Internet, social networks and the recent emergence of artificial intelligence have played a decisive role. It opened until 19th November 2023.

This last company, one of the most significant media conglomerates in the world, has always been interested in raising awareness on the different topics related to media consumption, digitalisation, users' skills, etc., and already in the mid-80s, it founded the **TELOS magazine** (1985), that have analysed the technological and scientific advances and their impact on all areas of our lives: from the individual, intimate and personal space to the public environment of governance, relationships or work. Now as a fully digital publication, the last 122nd issue addressed manipulation, fake news, and misinformation and how modern technologies and artificial intelligence have fuelled them.

On a regional basis, a few initiatives are also worth mentoring, such as the case of '**Aquí Tv3**' (Audiovisuals, 2023). Promoted by the Catalan government, it offers educational resources for children (3-12 years old) to understand how TV broadcasting and programming works, and it explains the different intentions of the TV texts so their users would learn how to recognise the truth.

It is also the case of '**AulaMèdia**' (2023), an independent research group from Barcelona that offers the teachers permanent training courses, resources, and good practices guidelines to facilitate the implementation of media education in the classroom, and organizes seminars, conferences, and summer schools on the matter. On the topic of media literacy, for instance, they created the course "Media Education to educate the eye", it aims to share methodologies, resources, and experiences of audio-visual and media education and to provide elements for audio visual production, critical analysis, and reflection of media content, to generate a critic spirit while "using the screens".

Although educating citizens on information contrast and interpretation might seem the key pillar of media literacy, some organisations and media companies believed that it was sometimes not enough and started developing their verification systems to offer the population trustworthy information and so that was how the fact-checkers were born. In Catalonia, they created the fact-checking platform '**Verificat**' (2019), which already has the recognition of the **International Fact-checking Network** (IFCN) and the **European Disinformation Observatory** (EDMO). International entities such as the Open Society Foundations, Google and the European Commission have also backed them. They are also members of the Platform for Media Education of Catalonia and one of the finalist projects of the B Value social entrepreneurship program. Its final aim is to fight against misinformation and manipulation on the internet by double checking the information it publishes and funding some media literacy projects such as SUM: which promotes media education for the elderly in collaboration with the University of Lapland and Housatonic SL.

In the south of Spain, the primary force in terms of media literacy would be the

'Comunicar' Group (1987), which started as a small teachers' network and has grown to be the prime Andalusian association of journalists and teachers whose aim is to promote the educational, critical, creative and plural use of the media in the classroom by collaborating with the administration, teaching centres and private institutions to educate and sensitise the educational community. Regarding media literacy, they have carried out different research works such as **'Yougrammers and Media in action'** along with other European partners and the **MOOC 'Media Education for Primary and Secondary Teachers: by Bubuskiski as an educational resource'**. The Group also works as a supervisor or advisor for other media literacy initiatives such as the aforementioned **'Amibox'**.

The regional government has taken part as well in the fight against disinformation and started the contest **'El Audiovisual en la Escuela'** (2014). Its objective is to reinforce the skills in audio-visual communication in the educational centres of the autonomous community, as well as to stimulate the critical capacity of the youngest in the face of the messages and advertising to which they are exposed through media. In this regard, the jury asks every year for video capsules on different topics, and the winners earn a monetary prize that educational centres must allocate acquire material or carrying out of activities related to audio-visual communication. The jury prizes audio-visual works or projects based on educational experiences, curricular and support materials, as well as all those complementary and innovative actions that contribute to providing critical capacity to the students regarding the content they consume.

3.3.2. The case of Austria

Education and professional training

Austria stands out as one of the best examples of private initiatives advancing, for years, the policies and regulations on media literacy. For instance, the online platform **'Mediamanual'** (2001) was born as an interactive platform to integrate media work in schools and offer students and teachers material for practical media education. It contains essential knowledge through lectures and workshops in which practical courses are offered on film, radio, video, and new media. Thematically, they work with problematic subject areas in media education, such as the question "How common media knowledge influences value systems and ideas". The media manual is also a forum that organises an annual media literacy award.

Later, the **Austrian Institute of Applied Telecommunications** (OIAT), in cooperation with the **Association of Internet Service Providers Austria** (ISPA), started the educational program **"Saferinternet.at"** (2005) intending to reach a safer use of digital media for the youngster through the promotion of media literacy and the coordination centre for safer internet use and media competence in

Austria. The portfolio of ongoing activities includes free school resources and booklets, workshops, and helpline services throughout Austria, networking with relevant players and a contact point for journalists. Furthermore, the yearly international Safer Internet Day has inspired Safer Internet Month in Austrian schools, further fostering education on a safe online environment.

The **Austrian Society of Civic Education** promoted the “**Critical media literacy. Civic Adult Education in the Digital Age**” (2023) a two-day workshop for the participants to understand interests, power structures, economic conditions, and social dynamics too enable the conscious use of media: in the sense of receiving, analysing, and shaping the content on an individual, social, and cultural level. Aimed at educators, trainers and different media actors, this initiative focuses on media, economy and digitalisation, filter bubbles and echo chambers, fake news and hate speech, big data, privacy protection, and media and personal rights, among others, and it is promoted by Mag. Helmut Peissl and Simon Olipitz, two media and communication specialists.

A significant group of educators and media professionals started the **Media and Information Literacy Network in Austria** (2010). Its main objective is stimulating media education and examining media and information literacy in the country. The association, whose activities are not profit-oriented, aims to represent the common interests of media education associations in Austria, to disseminate, support and secure media education projects and initiatives and to disseminate media education, media literacy and digital literacy among the population. They do so by organising different networking sessions around the country to discuss different issues related to media literacy.

Similar is the aim of the **Austrian Youth Information Centres**, specialist agencies for youth-oriented information processing and education for non-commercial purposes. They provide teaching and practice manuals, publications, presentations, and accessible learning and teaching resources. They have offered some media-literacy-related resources on specific themes, such as health literacy or the **‘With Facts against Fake News: Climate Change’ campaign** (Jugendinfos, n.d.). This last one intends to support young people in debunking fake news on climate change and having fact-based conversations. They clarified that “as Fake News influence societal discussions such as environmental protection, it is important for young people to recognise the means and tricks used to spread and influence opinions as well as how to classify information.”

There also some organizations working on a more local level, such as the non-profit organization **Wiener Bildungsserver** (1997), which was funded by the **City of Vienna** to promote the media literacy of Viennese children and young people in kindergarten, school, and extracurricular areas with the help of the possibilities of

modern information technology. At the beginning, the focus was on the pedagogical support and connection of Viennese schools to the Internet, but over the years the mission has changed to develop and implement a wide variety of media education and media literacy projects as well as organizing workshops, training sessions, consulting operations, etc.

3.3.3. The case of the Netherlands

Education and training

In Netherlands, the need for fighting against disinformation also began early at the 2000s and so they first found the **Netwerk Mediawijsheid** (Media Literacy Network) Haga clic o pulse aquí para escribir texto.(2018), an online platform to provide the Dutch public with information and an overview of relevant news and developments about media literacy and to serve as a link to other organisations, companies, and institutions that would offer wider information on the matter. They have joined the **Week of Media Literacy** year after year and usually organise different activities in primary schools and local libraries. A permanent part of their collaboration on the Week of Media Literacy is also the serious game **Media Masters** (2023), which is about the opportunities and dangers of (digital) media, especially for students between the ages of 10 and 12. By playing the game, students develop basic knowledge of media literacy while playfully addressing language skills and, where applicable, basic numeracy skills.

More recently, the **Dutch DROG Group**, whose prime aim is to work against disinformation campaigns, and some Cambridge University researchers developed the '**Bad News Game**' (2017). This initiative seeks to confer resistance against "bad online information" by putting players in the position of the misinformation-content creators and showing the public possible reactions. The idea was to teach the users the consequences of participating actively or unintentionally in spreading non-verified information. The game was featured on several international news organisations such as The Guardian, CNN and the New York Times and gained an honourable mention in the Fast Company's 2018 Innovation by Design Awards.

The **Media Literacy Network** launched the following year the **Hoe? Zo! Mediawijs online platform** (2018) that aims for youngsters to get reliable information about the safest and most innovative way of using the Internet and (social) media. They do so by offering resources such as videos and do-assignments on media-wise themes such as social media, passwords, *cyberbullying* and *vlogging*. The site was created with the help of several media literacy-related organisations such as Youth News, 7 Days, Code Talent, Vodafone, and The Children's Telephone, among others and has partnered with around another 1000 organisations involved in the matter and helped develop such resources.

Later, the online platform **Go21** organised its own '**Media Literacy**' module (2019) that proposed a wide range of themed, topical, and interactive lessons about the use of online media. The module is being constantly developed to keep up with current events, and the material is updated every six months. In addition to the theory and the assignments, the media literacy lessons always have a page with a unique working method and seven propositions that can be discussed in plenary. The platform was built to offer good, affordable services to supplement regular education, so they first started offering tutoring and exam training. The initiative grew to include homework tutoring, spring schools, summer schools, temporary substitutes, and invigilation.

Although media literacy has not only been addressed in online formats, **Zwijsen Publisher** has also been working on some physical materials for the children to learn, be motivated, and get the best out of themselves from home. It is the case of the book series '**Read Your Digiwijs**' (2020), where they can read about recognisable stories on contemporary topics such as gaming, being hacked, fake news, robots, and computer- controlled environments. Those concepts are explained in informative boxes, and the books contain a glossary. During the stories, the main characters experience adventures in the digital world so children can empathise with them and think along to solve "dangerous cases". The company also helps with some training methods for the teachers to include these materials and facilitates a network of methods experts all around the country that will help you with the integration.

The **NGO HUMAN** and social and creative partners also develop programs that help people "move forward by promoting autonomy and responsibility". In addition to TV, radio and online, HUMAN is active in education and events. They participated in the "2022 Media Literacy Week: Like & Cancel" by offering resources such as videos and teaching materials to discuss the theme in class. Those teaching materials could be used for the upper years of primary education, secondary education, MBO and HBO (HUMAN, 2022).

The social enterprise **Codename Future** also contributed to the task by offering the "**Plus Module Real Fake - Fake News Teaching Materials**" (2022). Thanks to this educational program of three lessons, students can become aware of how online information can sometimes be confusing, disturbing, and misleading. So, they offer resources to recognise the trustful sources of information. The Codename Future Foundation was founded in 1995 by Ernest van Hezik and Aart Hageman within the framework of the Nature Environment Education (NME) program. The NME wanted to educate young people on the issues of nature and the environment, social behaviour, and future sustainable developments. The program intended for the youngsters to investigate as 'spies' or 'detectives' to uncover facts and develop solutions. As the organisation sustains, "they are the future, and so they can

positively influence it themselves.” The team is still formed by young people interested in the matter, and its mission is to prepare other young people for their active role in society.

General public

The **Media Literacy Network** also partnered with **Sound and Vision, The Hague** and **ECP** to develop a second platform called **isdatechtzo.nl** (2022). Its main objective was to offer a wide range of resources on disinformation and fake news to raise awareness about the phenomenon among the citizens and advise them on how to fight against it. The site was developed on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) and fully funded by them. The partners also work with some fact-checking organisations to verify the news section on their website.

3.3.4. The case of Portugal

While the political and regulatory framework is still being defined, Portugal is a good example of some public-private, academic and media initiatives stepping in and leading the media literacy implementation process. As the examples of good political practices on this matter have yet to address the problem completely, sectorial policies, non-governmental organisations have successfully implemented actions to counter the disinformation campaigns for a few years.

Education and training

Part of **Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade** (University of Minho), the **Observatório Média, Informação e Literacia** (MILOBS) (2012), has been gathering relevant and up-to-date information on the various areas of Media Education and building interaction networks with national and international entities whose concerns are similar to those of **MILOBS**. MILOBS has also provided services to third parties in the area of training, consultancy, studies and opinions, action projects and training on MIL; most of them were executed by partners and linked to MILOBS. It also developed some of those actions, such is the case of the program **“Média na escola”**, which proposes a monthly Media Literacy activity to be developed by teachers and students in a school environment, or **‘Média em casa’** which offers simple proposals that could be by children and adolescents, independently or with the help of parents or teachers, in remote contact. They also left suggestions for television, radio, video games and books so that the time dedicated to the media can be quality. Both programs were developed and applied during the lockdown, and they seem not to be working now.

The portal **MILD- Instruction manual for digital literacy** was financed by the

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and offers resources regarding media literacy, this includes pedagogical practices and tools concerning social networks, digital literature, images, and visual culture. This portal of the School Library Network aims to develop the skills of young people aged 14 to 18 in the fields of reading, media, and digital citizenship. Resources on media literacy include pedagogical practices and tools concerning social networks, informational literacy, images, and visual culture. MILD also includes a guide to good practices for digital citizenship and identifies the importance of ethics and responsibility in the use of digital tools. The website is fully directed to young people, with topics and questions related to media literacy and with external links to support the reader's learning. At the end of each section, the reader is challenged to learn more about the topic, to participate and interact with the website with answers to questions about the section. Young readers are also challenged to answer a quiz to cement the knowledge acquired.

The national campaign "**7 dias com os Media**" (2013), launched in 2013 herald of the later European Media Literacy Week. Since then, this campaign has been promoted by the **Grupo Informal de Literacia Mediática** (GILM), a partnership between the public service media, the Regulatory Entity for Social Communication, media experts, Ministry of Education, among others. Since then, this event is yearly and locally organised by schools, libraries, and other entities during the first week of May to increase students' awareness and knowledge on media. In 2023, the main themes were artificial Intelligence and Algorithms. All interested parties were invited to participate by promoting and exchanging projects and initiatives that help improve how we use and relate to the media.

Created in 2007 as the national consortium for the **EU Safer Internet Program**, the **Centro Internet Segura** (2020) is led by **the National Center for Cybersecurity** and includes the **Doctorates General of Education and Youth**, an **NGO** and **Microsoft Portugal** as partners, besides an extensive Advisory Council. Centro Internet Segura is one of the instruments that contributed to the implementation of Axis 2 of ENSC, mainly for the action line "Creating a more resilient society, stimulating in citizens the development of digital skills". Its prime mission is to promote the safe, healthy, and conscious use of the Internet, as well as to contribute to the development of skills that enhance more informed and inclusive digital citizenship by offering different resources such as games, brochures, media, articles, e-learning courses and organise informative sessions to reach awareness on those topics. In terms of media literacy, they dispose of different resources related to Fake News that talk about the phenomenon definition, people who may be affected, its dissemination process, cues to identify them, what is being done to avoid them and valuable resources for schools.

Centro Internet Segura later partnered with the **RTP Ensina**, a public online platform founded by **Radio Television Portugal**, to provide support in different

educational fields. Together, they offer a vast range of educational resources such as videos, audio, photos, texts and infographics around other topics for media literacy and the fight against disinformation; they developed various resources on Fake News, how to recognise them and their threats to the democracies, for instance (RTP Ensina & Centro Internet Segura, 2020).

The **Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture** developed the country's last educational initiative in collaboration with media literacy partners, such as the **Observatório sobre Media, Informação e Literacia**. The platform **Literacia e Educação para os Media em Linha** (LEME) (2021) offers pedagogical resources (videos, games and other activities) intended to reach awareness about media literacy and the fight against disinformation in formal, non-formal and informal contexts of learning. On MIL and the fight against disinformation, LEME shared the video "Critical Thinking Tools: *"O que são notícias falsas?"*" that explained what Fake News, for instance. However, this module on media literacy has been an optional section of the Citizenship and Development curriculum.

Journalism and media

In Portugal, the development of initiatives for approaching youngsters to journalism activities and combating disinformation from the media organisations themselves has been incredibly intensive.

An example of a news media initiative targeted to young people is **Público na Escola**. This media literacy project was launched by **Publico** newspaper in 1990 and had a long history of producing resources for improving informational skills. The main objective is "to help young people experience school journalism and make themselves heard", thought the school newspapers project. **Público na Escola** is more than a simple school newspaper contest, because it also provides pedagogical resources and a digital platform allowing young people to act as editors and journalists, creating and modelling their school newspaper, named **TRUE**. This initiative also provides a network space where students can present their school newspaper and, also, checking out other similar projects.

Another case is **Media Veritas** (2019), a program to combat media illiteracy against journalistic manipulation and disinformation founded and promoted by **Associação Portuguesa de Imprensa** in partnership with **Google.org**. Its target audience is the most vulnerable communities: teenagers, young adults, and seniors, and although it was scheduled to end in 2022, **Associação Portuguesa de Imprensa** considers its continuity beyond this period to be very important. They organise different workshops and educational programs with those aims.

Funded and promoted by the **Journalists Portuguese Union** with the partnership of several public entities, the **Associação para literacia para os media e jornalismo**

(2019), on his behalf, emerged from training the students, schools, and communities on methods, resources, and tools for developing media literacies on News. This project has the particularity of having journalists and academic specialists in journalism to train the teachers to contribute to developing critical thinking among students. The training sessions, with a theoretical component (8h) and practical component (12h), aim to provide teachers with methodologies, resources, and tools that they can use in Media Literacy activities in a classroom context.

This project first started in the form of a pilot on January 26, 2019, involving 100 teachers from the 3rd Cycle of Basic and Secondary Education from 40 School Clusters distributed in five regions of the country: Alentejo (Évora), Algarve (Faro), Centro (Águeda), Lisboa (Lisbon) and Norte (Porto). This last season, ALPMJ has created a direct collaboration between journalists and schools in mainland Portugal, the Azores and Madeira, which could be implemented in two ways: (1) development of a project sponsored by a journalist; (2) Organization of unique sessions of awareness and sharing of knowledge and experience, workshops, or lectures to be developed at school. In both cases, projects could apply for three annual awards that reward the best initiatives.

CENJOR (*Centro de Formação de Jornalistas*) whose activity began in 1987 is another major player in this area, organising workshops and seminars for journalists and students to promote training actions in media education. Part of **Iberifier- the Iberian Observatory of Digital Media**, CENJOR offers the Digital Literacy in Action against "disinfodemic" workshop about the Fact-checking methodology and the verification tools (2020)

The **Media Trust Lab - Local Media Lab for Civic Trust and Literacy** (2022) has recently pioneered another methodology for studying disinformation campaigns in contexts of proximity in Portugal, seeking to identify and analyse strategies and practices of fact-checking by local journalists and the potential collaboration of local media audiences in the process. Through training and promoting digital tools and their mobile app, this action research project also aims to instruct journalists and audiences to fact-check more effectively and efficiently. They share the final results of their investigations on different workshops, seminars for journalists and students, and more during their own Fact- Checking Spring School.

Lastly, the **Aveiro University** and the **Portuguese Association Press** developed the **Aveiro Media Competence Center** (AMCC) (2023), an online platform for the support and promotion of the Local News Media sector of the European Union (EU) in the implementation of digital transition projects. This support is sustained through the sharing and structuring of knowledge of the global technological market, access to European teams with multidisciplinary skills, training actions,

support for technical regulation, access to public and private financing, and the most varied innovative solutions that make the digital transition effective. Regarding media literacy, they offer different workshops, seminars for journalists and students and some resources and studies such as “Digital Literacy as a Pathway to Professional Development in the Algorithm-Driven World”. Furthermore, they promote the project “**Yomedia Youngsters. Media Literacy in Time of Crisis**”, which aims to fill the gap in the information about media literacy in times of crisis, such as in an outbreak crisis or during military/war conflicts. The research question is “In what way can game-playing foster youngsters’ media literacy in times of crisis?”, and a mixed-method approach is, therefore, followed. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are combined to assess the feasibility of game-playing to create awareness of misinformation through learning by doing and doing by playing.

Besides the training field, the Portuguese press organisations have assisted the citizens while getting properly informed as two important fact-checked digital newspapers have recently emerged. **Polígrafo** (2018) and **Observador** (2019) both intend to ascertain the truth in the public space through the active scrutiny of the various protagonists who move in the communication ecosystem and to create innovative solutions that allow the readers to approach better and faster to the truth and shorten the distance between journalism and readers. The first one claims to base its texts only on credible sources, sharing, whenever possible, links, videos, photographs, documents, or other material that may contribute to clarifying the ongoing discussion and not accept anonymous sources. Meanwhile, the *Observador* seeks the truth and subordinates himself to the facts by never allowing themselves to be conditioned by partisan and economic interests or any group logic.

Prova dos factos (2021) was founded later by the PÚBLICO newspaper as a rubric for verifying information. The idea was to fight against the proliferation of hate speech on the Internet, to tackle disinformation and to specifically avoid deepfakes among the traditional media but also on social media. Their mission is to establish the most appropriate contextualization based on criteria of editorial rigor and creativity, without any dependence on ideological, political, or economic order. To do so, the PÚBLICO team of journalists work with the support of different sources to analyse the different news, generally about politics, populism, and environment. Whenever possible, they try to confront the author of the content in question to obtain an assessment as balanced as possible. The contents are then categorized in a 5 degrees coloured scale that goes from “True”, when a particular statement or publication is clearly true and there is no doubt to “False”, when a particular statement or publication is clearly false beyond a doubt. More recently, this initiative has been granted with one of the Global Fact Check Fund awards that are

supported by the Poynter International Fact-Checking Network, Google, and YouTube. The grant is planned to be invested for keeping the provision of technology and knowledge to tackle disinformation as well as for collaborating with the community, particularly the youngest and the elderly, in the creation of media literacy programs to train the different generations in the fight against this phenomenon.

General public

Launched in 1991 to protect Portuguese consumers' rights and to consistently get more informed, participatory, and demanding consumers, the **DECO Proteste** organisation has evolved to include a fact-checking tool for journalists and the general public. DECO has also developed a new department on their web called "**Campus Digital**", where they share good practices in online shopping and the use of social networks, services, and banking operations to increase the consumers' self-confidence and consciousness while surfing the net.

4. Conclusions

The new **Information Technologies** development has been on for a few decades now. Although the general aim for developing media literacy actions to counter the disinformation campaigns is still very recent, we can testify now how the private sector started to become concerned about the ICTs changes, the mass media development and the subsequent disinformation campaigns and the later Fake News phenomenon some years before the governmental organisations came up with the first regulations on the matter. Loads of media literacy campaigns and initiatives started to work in the field in the last years of the past decade. Nevertheless, it is also relatively straightforward how the impact of **COVID** and the damage caused by the misinformation media movements have pushed mainly the private and the public sectors to increase their investment in developing new more targeted initiatives since 2020. In this regard, Irene Khan (2021) pointed out that the recent pandemic had only shown how disinformation could have grave consequences for democracy and human rights, especially among minority groups and so it was essential to get “robust public information regimes and increase digital and media literacy among the general public”.

On the other hand, and as we saw in the last policy's report, **education** has been the key pillar that sustains this battle against disinformation campaigns. Most initiatives are being developed in educational and training centres for students and youngsters under 25. Journalism and media stand as the second field on which the media literacy campaigns focus, distantly followed by the general public. Rather than simply avoiding the use and spread of disinformation, the main focus of most of these initiatives is to provide the users the proper tools and skills for developing a critic sense of spirit to decide whether an information is trustworthy or not.

Nevertheless, this report also aims to point out the need for all the governmental organisations and private entities involved to start investing in the development of procedures, strategies and independent analysis groups that evaluate the achievement and effectiveness of these initiatives regarding media literacy so they can study their replication in other levels and targeted groups. In this regard, more research must be conducted in the following years to analyse the evolution of the initiatives and good practices that are currently being implemented and how the countries that may be now lightly laggards increased their efforts to promote media literacy among European citizens.

Moreover, the **United Nations** (2022) showed its concern in his analysis report about the countering disinformation process in Europe and Central Asia by describing how actors were still implementing traditional tools while monitoring and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the media literacy initiatives and

how much space there was for more innovative approaches. On the other hand, it highlighted the efforts of the media and civil society across these regions when producing “effective and innovative responses to disinformation”. According to **Věra Jourová**, Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency (2022), the member states shall promote measure for the development of media literacy skills and most importantly report on such measures to the European Commission. He specifically emphasized the importance of collaborating between UNESCO, the European Commission and all the actors involved, not only in the European Level, but also at a global scale, to keep improving media literacy and strengthening the control and evaluation of both the policies and initiatives on media and information literacy.

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