



Argumentation training against undemocratic slogans:
European extension and updating
ref. No 2023-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000175190

Exchange & Best Practices



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Stand Up for Europe

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1. Partners

Akademie Klausenhof gGmbH (Coordinator, Germany)



akademie-klausenhof.de

The Klausenhof Academy is an international education and training centre for young people and adults in Hamminkeln and Rhede. The Klausenhof Academy offers courses in (rehabilitation-specific) initial training for disabled and unemployed adults, language courses and further qualification courses, integration courses for young migrants, courses in German as a foreign language, seminars and workshops (focus: political education, youth work, professional training, management) as well as international, European and regional projects. It operates with its projects and offers both locally and regionally as well as nationally and internationally.

It is a recognized provider of youth welfare (inpatient and outpatient). Every day, around 600 to 1000 people visit the various offers of the house. Around half of these are young people and young adults. The Klausenhof Academy has 600 boarding school places and 350 employees. It is a non-profit GmbH under the sponsorship of a Catholic foundation and is certified according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2015.

Catholic Youth Foundation (Hungary)



katolikusifjusagialapitvany.hu

The Catholic Youth Foundation (CYF) was founded in 1991 in Szeged to support the education and community activities of Catholic youth in Southern Hungary. The Foundation carries out wide-ranging activities in the region to promote Christian values and to form a vibrant and authentic community of young adults. The Foundation focuses its activities on the following main tasks: Youth work - Youth work has always been at the heart of our mission. We have used the following main tools to realize innovative and widespread youth work in the Southern Region: Organization of cultural programs - The Foundation's mission is to promote and preserve Christian and Hungarian values in the Southern Hungary region. The "Millenniumi" café in the city center serves this purpose. In the 20 years of its activity, 3000 programs and events with 150 000 participants have been organized.

Social activities and volunteer work - Since the beginning of its activity, the Catholic Youth Foundation has had a mission to develop society, support disadvantaged groups and promote voluntary activities. For the last 20 years, the Millennium Café, operated under the supervision of CYF, has been the main base for cultural dissemination in Szeged. CYF has organized summer music festivals for several years (Millennium Jazz Days, Millennium Blues Session since 2014, Dugonics Square Summer Festival since 2006, participating in the Szeged Day celebrations).

Universitaet Augsburg (Germany)



Universität
Augsburg
University

uni-augsburg.de

The University of Augsburg was founded in 1970 as a reform university by the Free State of Bavaria. Initially focusing on law, economics, social sciences and humanities, the University of Augsburg has steadily expanded into promising fields such as natural and technical sciences and medicine. Its 20,000 students participate in around 40 undergraduate and state examination courses and 50 advanced master's courses. With numerous partnerships and cooperation agreements with over 80 universities worldwide and around 320 Erasmus exchange agreements, the University of Augsburg has a strong international network in both research and teaching. Centers currently being established at the university include the focus areas "European Studies" and "Teaching/Learning Research".

In keeping with its motto "Scientia et Conscientia", the University of Augsburg strives to increase, acquire and preserve knowledge in a conscientious and socially responsible manner and is committed to unrestricted freedom of research and teaching. The aim of its teaching is the ability to learn scientifically and to independently acquire scientific methods and knowledge. It encourages and demands that students learn and act independently. The course contributes to the development of mature, critical, responsible citizens who are committed to democratic values.

Doğa Schools (Türkiye)



dogakoleji.k12.tr

Doğa Schools is a chain of private schools, manages 90 campuses all around Türkiye and 1 in Cyprus, and educates 80000 students with its 7500 staff members. Based on these figures and the extensive network it has, Doğa Schools has an unrivalled potential to reach students, parents, educators, civil servants and stakeholders in national and international education field and also to disseminate across a broad area. Doğa schools enjoy a close relationship with various regional education departments in Türkiye and are therefore able to involve state schools to the projects as well.

Doğa Schools aims to provide pupils with competencies that they can become multi-directional, participative, creative and sensitive individuals of the future. The teaching and the management staff are actively engaged in the development and implementation of innovative teaching concepts such as MBA for teenagers (t-MBA), Project Based High School Education and Natural Learning Concept (NLC).

Doğa Schools serve for school education from pre-school to high school (3-18 years of age) to follow the curricular changes, improve the teacher training programmes, develop learning objects and online educational tools through collaborating with national stakeholders (provincial directorates, municipalities, universities, and NGOs) and international partners and stakeholders (universities, NGOs, and schools) and actively engaged in development and implementation of innovative teaching concepts.

Socialna Akademija (Slovenia)



socialna-akademija.si

Socialna Akademija (Social Academy) is a non-profit institute operating since 2004 with activities in the fields of education, research and culture. The mission of the Social Academy is to promote, through education, training, research and promotion, a culture based on common values such as respect for human dignity, solidarity, justice and the common good, contributing to active citizenship and social responsibility of youth and young adults.

In the field of youth work, the Social Academy promotes active citizenship and media literacy, develops non-formal training of youth leaders and workers, offers activities in the field of multimedia production in its own multimedia centre and promotes intergenerational cooperation. Some recent international projects: strategic partnership ABC of youth work (applicant), European Wide Web of youth work, TeachHear, ILEAC, Young Faces of Europe, Enjoy Your Rights, Youth Worker and MotivAction.

InEuropa SRL (Italy)



progettareineuropa.com

InEuropa SRL is an Italian company founded in 2006 by experts who have been working on EU projects for more than 20 years, with the aim of helping public and private entities to access European innovation actions. InEuropa provides information, training and advice on EU policies and programs, promotes knowledge and interest in European opportunities and helps to develop transnational projects by providing technical support in both the planning and management phases. In addition to information and advisory services, InEuropa participates in its own European projects, either as a partner or as a coordinator. Education, training, youth, culture, environment, social, health, research and innovation are the main areas of work. In this framework, various projects aim to increase knowledge and awareness of environmental challenges and behavioral change and to develop experimental non-formal training pathways aimed at schools, young people and adults.

InEuropa has extensive experience in managing projects and developing training methods in the fields of education and training, behaviour change, culture and integration. InEuropa tests various non-formal training methods with young people and adults to promote their personal and professional growth, help them identify goals and reflect on the impact of their lifestyle on the world.

2. Authors

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Umur Bakkal (Doğa Schools, Türkiye)

Umur Bakkal is Doğa Schools' EU Projects Expert. He received his Bachelor's degree in International Affairs and is studying for his Master's degree in European Politics and International Affairs at Marmara University. In addition to carrying out international projects in the scope of EU funding programs, he participates in the training of students and teachers and academic guidance of scientific research project competitions at national and international levels. His professional interests are innovative approaches to education and gender equality, combating climate change, projects prioritising accessibility with high-quality digitalisation and studies on European policies. He participates in various NGOs acting in the fields of environment, human rights and freedoms.

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Dr Michael Sommer is a specialist journalist for educational topics and was editor of the magazine "Erwachsenenbildung" for more than 20 years. He also works for European media and has been organising European education projects for many years.

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Eva Gajšek holds a university degree as a professor of Slovenian language and theology (VII). She also holds a national vocational qualification as a youth worker. She has worked as a project manager at the Social Academy since 2017, where she focuses on projects related to youth employment and active citizenship.

Among her notable contributions, she worked on the "School Ambassador of the European Parliament" project (2016-2019), was a professional coworker on the national project "Inkubator 4.0" (2017-2018 and 2020-2021) and participated in the regional project "Inkubator 4.0" in the City Municipality of Ljubljana (2019-2025). She is currently working on a national project titled "DD - Dostojno delo" (Decent Work) which educates youth workers on the consequences of precariousness and how to address these issues among young people.

Matej Cepin (Socialna Akademija, Slovenia)

Matej Cepin, director of the Social Academy, has been involved in non-formal education and youth work for over 25 years and is an internationally recognized trainer in these fields. His clients include the National Agency of Erasmus+ program, some major NGOs in the country and various public institutions. He is also the author or editor of several publications focusing on youth work, educational methods, career guidance, adult education, personal development and active/responsible citizenship. He also holds a university degree as an Engineer in Computer Science and Informatics (VII).

From 2019 to 2022, he was the project manager of the “Inkubator Solidarnosti,” where he supported social initiatives and developed support systems. From 2016 to 2018, he led the “ABC of Youth Work” project, which focused on developing a quality system for integrating marginalized youth into permanent groups. Currently, he is leading a project “Hard Topics” that focuses on the dialogue between different social groups.

3. Introduction & Project Summary

The Stand Up for Europe project aims to increase the quality, innovation and recognition of youth work, and to promote active citizenship, young people's sense of initiative and youth entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship, to enable people to effectively embrace European values. Another goal of the Stand Up for Europe project is updating and Europeanising a proven argumentation training argumentation "Training against Regular Table Slogans" and spreading it to other European countries.

Within the second output of the Project titled "Exchange and Best Practice", to identify and implement European common values and their existing references, including methods of raising awareness and communicating values, the scientific results and approaches obtained in various studies, as well as the prominent experiences, models and comparable tools in the countries of the practical project partner organizations have investigated and the foundations were laid for updating and expanding the argumentation training programme. One such method is the "Training Against Regular Table Slogans" argumentation technique developed by Klaus Peter Hufer. As part of updating and adapting this training for wider use across Europe, it is essential to define key concepts including "argumentation techniques" and "table slogans."

Based on the context prepared and disseminated by "WP2 Exchange and Best Practice", a training tool will be developed by the Stand up for Europe Project consortium to help teachers and experts working in youth education improve their methodological skills. The content also includes different and successful methods researched and provided by partners along with argumentation training methodologies.

The Exchange and Best Practices gathers the partners' reports on the national landscape surrounding argumentation training and values education in their countries, as part of developing an educational training tool to improve skills for youth workers in countering anti-democratic rhetoric. Existing initiatives in partners' countries related to Klaus Peter Hufer's argumentation techniques against table slogans or comparable methods have been summarized in national reports and were combined as a joint report.

The national reports detail how such training aligns with proposed EU values around civil debate and democratic principles and provide target demographics for these training, such as youth ages 13-30. Additionally, partners were provided with two best practice examples of effective educational models for teaching argumentation methods relevant to promoting European values.

The goal of the WP2 Exchange and Best Practices is to collect effective approaches, target groups, and best practices from diverse national contexts across Europe to inform creation of the Stand Up for Europe educational training tool. This tool aims to expand the scope of youth programs offered to counter the spread of hate speech, fake news, exclusionary populism, and anti-democratic views – helping teach peaceful debate, inclusion, and democratic values.

The contents prepared by the partner organizations as a result of their research in their countries (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Türkiye) were collected by Doğa Schools, the leader of this work package, and the consolidated findings turned into a brochure which to be published in all partner languages (DE, PL, HU, TR, SL).

In addition to these, the brochure is prepared to be a stepping stone for the development of Stand Up for Europe project intellectual outputs titled "WP3 Handbook/Curriculum Stand Up for Europe for Educational Practice", which will be prepared with the aim of boldly bringing various counter-arguments against extremist and stereotypical slogans into a debate, concretely updating and expanding existing argumentation training against standard table slogans and "WP4 Online Learning Tool", an online learning tool based on the results of previous intellectual outputs and a serious game/gamification principle and aiming to digitally extend argumentation education.

4. Hufer's Table Slogans

Klaus Peter Hufer defines "table slogans" (Stammtischparolen) as exaggerated, racist, populist, discriminatory, and sexist statements that are based on half-truths and spread negative prejudices (Hufer, 2020). These slogans categorize groups of people, divide the world into "them" and "us", and provide simple answers to complex societal issues. Common examples blame foreigners, refugees, Jews, Muslims, the EU, politicians etc. for problems in society (Hufer, 2020). Table slogans propagate racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and authoritarian views. Examples blame foreigners, minorities, politicians etc. for societal problems.

Hufer argues that while table slogans are simplistic, it is difficult to spontaneously refute them as they fulfil a dual function - they are both aggressive and a source of self-affirmation for those who proclaim them. Additionally, logical argumentation is often ineffective as table slogans are not grounded in reason but rather in "fundamental value judgments, beliefs and principles" (Hufer, 2020).

Nevertheless, Hufer provides recommendations for countering table slogans, which he terms "argumentation techniques". Klaus Peter Hufer's core argumentation technique involves avoiding escalation, asking probing questions, addressing emotions, and redirecting conversations to sway undecided onlookers. These include avoiding getting drawn into slogan debates, taking the initiative in the discussion, establishing rules for dialog, asking specific questions to elicit details, insisting listeners truly listen, positioning yourself based on ethics/values, revealing contradictions in the slogans, using Socratic questioning, addressing emotions behind the slogans, and refocusing on undecided bystanders who may be convinced by strong counter arguments. The goal is not just to win an argument but to demonstrate a steadfast yet understanding democratic attitude. Verbal disarmament is key, as table slogans can lead to physical violence. The aim is to speak out in an appropriate yet upright way to demonstrate that democracy still allows dissenting voices (Hufer, 2020).

5. Current State of Argumentation Training in Partners' Countries

Chapter 5 briefly presents the current status of argumentation training in Stand Up for Europe Project Consortium partners' countries by using existing national education/development programs or strategic documents, activities carried out by initiatives, articles and reports of various institutions or researchers or project examples, covering the project's target groups.

The chapter respectively includes partner countries context regarding argumentation training and European values; an overview of existing programs, initiatives, or projects; the target groups and participants (between 13-30) and the methodologies and approaches used; challenges and opportunities faced in implementing argumentation training or comparable methods.

5.1 The Case of Germany

In Germany, the promotion of democracy has been an integral part of schools, extracurricular educational work and adult education at least since the end of the Nazi era. The Western 'occupying powers' played a major role in this, initiating an extensive programme of re-education and thus laying the foundations for an institutionally, conceptually and methodologically very comprehensive education on democracy. It is called "political education" (Politische Bildung) in German. The term is somewhat problematic, as it can also refer to education and upbringing in the sense of a particular policy or world view and to propaganda or indoctrination. For this reason, the English-speaking world speaks of "citizenship education", i.e. education to become active, informed and committed citizens.

As Germany is organised as a federal state, the individual federal states determine the specific education policy. The comprehensive term "social studies" (Sozialkunde) or "politics" (Politik) has become established as a subject in schools. In addition to other subjects such as economics, this subject can also include "political education" or "civics" (Staatsbürgerkunde). Recently, there have also been repeated efforts to place the value basis of the constitution at the centre of interactive discussions in the school context. In the 2024/2025 school year, for example, Bavaria introduced the format of a 'constitutional quarter hour', in which individual values of the Bavarian constitution are discussed and linked to the reality of one's own life.

However, "political education" is not only practised in schools. Due to the importance of anchoring liberal-democratic principles in society as a whole, separate organisations were set up in Germany after the war from 1952 onwards at federal and state level to promote democracy through education, i.e. also outside of schools (Caruso, Schatz 2018). In Germany, these activities are known as "extracurricular political education" (außerschulische politische Bildung) and "adult political education" (politische Erwachsenenbildung). There is a state-funded but independent "Federal Agency for Political Education" (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) and a "State Agency for Political Education" (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung) each federal state. These institutions not only produce relevant (educational) material, create publications and organise courses, but are also often present in public discourse as representatives and advocates of democratic principles.

The activities are primarily aimed at adolescents and young people but include people at all stages of life. Experts, teachers and educational organisations are addressed – as well as the target group directly via events, projects, workshops and other activities. In the context of extracurricular citizenship education, the terms 'learning democracy' or 'democracy as a way of life' are often used to emphasise the non-indoctrinaire and open-process nature of this type of citizenship education. While political didactics at universities is essentially characterised by political science in the school sector, the reference science for extracurricular citizenship education is often educational science and sociology.

Educational institutions outside of schools that provide citizenship education are usually financially supported by the state through "continuing education laws". The provider landscape is colorful and ranges from municipal adult education centres to institutions organised by trade unions or churches. Germany has a very diverse and differentiated system of education outside of traditional initial education such as schools or universities (Sander 2022).

Discussion of values in Germany – the Basic Law

Political education primarily refers to the values set out in the German Basic Law. These are usually labelled with terms such as "liberal", "social" or "democratic". The Basic Law was created in the wake of the crimes of the Nazi dictatorship and is based on the experiences of Western democracies. It

describes absolute values (e.g. human dignity, freedom), values and norms that the state must respect towards its citizens (e.g. privacy, freedom of religion)

The value system of Basic Law provides a framework for orientation, but also offers plenty of room for manoeuvring, contradictions and potential for development. New technologies and social developments require new regulations, for example in the area of protecting nature and the environment or asylum.

In principle, the values outlined in the Basic Law can also be described as “European values”. However, it is much more difficult to identify a universally valid “European” catalogue of values from the many different European documents.

In addition to the normative side of (political) values, the reality and implementation of values at various levels must be considered: By the citizens themselves, by civil society, political parties, the media and academia, by those in power and the economy. The more recent focus on value formation mentioned above aims to focus on the different prioritization of certain values, contradictions and dilemmas between values and thus the responsibility of everyone to make value decisions. This is also intended to increase understanding of openness, complexity and enduring challenges of democratic political processes.

This National Report presents the debate on values in Germany and how they are considered in political education in general and in argumentation training in particular.

Argumentation training against regulars’ table slogans

Background

This diversity also applies to the “Argumentation training against regulars’ slogans” programme. Klaus-Peter Hufer developed, implemented and continuously improved the curriculum as a practitioner and head of department at a municipal adult education centre in 2000. He is still a trainer and lecturer throughout Germany today, organising around two events per week (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband n.d.). He has also trained other trainers who also use the programme. Various universities in Germany (in particular Essen/Duisburg, Cologne and Augsburg) are involved with the training programme and have developed quality criteria and enhancements and conducted studies.

Demand has risen sharply, particularly due to political events (e.g. the AfD’s entry into the Bundestag, Trump’s election in the USA, etc.).

What is argumentation training against regulars’ table slogans? The inventor Klaus-Peter Hufer describes it as follows: “Argumentation training against regulars’ table slogans is a special case of argumentation training in that it involves dealing with conflictual encounters that are politically explosive. In this argumentation training, political education takes place – initiated and developed by everyone together. Rhetorical skills are also learnt and practiced, but it is not just empty rhetorical training. The participants’ self-confidence is also strengthened, but it is not an individualising seminar for self-awareness.” (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband n.d.).

Hufer defines regulars’ table slogans as “unambiguous ideological, preferably political messages, in favour of flat slogans and aggressive dogmatism”. (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband n.d.)

Method

The aim of the training is to learn techniques for countering provocative, racist and undemocratic slogans in specific situations of personal encounters and confrontation. Various techniques are rehearsed in role plays, such as counter-questions or irony. For example, typical positions of conspiracy theorists, overt or covert racism and anti-Semitism, misogyny or anti-European prejudices are discussed. The positions can be loud, provocative, hurtful, illegal and obvious – as well as covert and even unconscious. The spectrum ranges from statements such as “All politicians should be gassed” to quite inconspicuous slogans and jokes such as “Women can’t park”. The courses therefore also teach participants to recognise such anti-democratic statements in the first place, to identify the underlying values and to summon up the courage to take a stand against them with arguments. Finally, the participants should also critically scrutinise their own attitude to avoid the suspicion of arrogance.

Hufer gives the following strategies in his book:

- Stick to one topic, don't just touch on different topics like buzzwords
- Take the initiative
- Establish rules of dialogue
- Targeted enquiry
- Forcing people to listen
- No instruction
- Do not moralise
- Position yourself
- Do not use generalised terms for groups of people ("foreigners")
- Clarifying problems
- Uncovering contradictions
- Ask questions
- Distract and de-escalate
- Address feelings
- Building bridges
- Set boundaries
- Change the perspective
- Pay attention to the undecided
- Stay authentic
- Bringing in humour and irony
- Reduce claims
- Consider the long-term effect

The training is primarily aimed at those who are already politically engaged or are willing to do so. It is not designed to change the users of the slogans or to motivate a disinterested group of people. Accordingly, the training is primarily requested by clubs, associations, extracurricular educational institutions, NGOs and political parties, churches, groups and similar civil society organisations. For example, workshops are held for certain migrant groups, trade union organisations or Catholic parishes. The main target groups are young people aged 16 and over and adults.

Of course, there are also many other approaches and training programmes in this area – either modified versions of Hufer's argumentation training or other approaches and approaches throughout the German-speaking world, as well as approaches to defending oneself against fake news and insults on the internet. An overview of the most important publications on this topic is provided at the end of this chapter. Three further examples of best practice are also presented below.

Effectiveness

Are such training programmes even useful and can they have an effect? The question of effectiveness or evidence is not easy to answer in the field of education. In principle, possible effects relate to the three levels of knowledge, attitude and action and can be both short-term and long-term and vary depending on the target group. In political education, and in particular in argumentation training, very different effects are conceivable: Strengthening and consolidating commitment, motivation, deciphering populist codes, self-reflection, strengthening self-confidence, communicative competence, strategic knowledge, changing attitudes and raising awareness, etc. These learnt skills can be used in the short term (e.g. at the next birthday party), solidify as personality patterns in the long term or have a social impact, for example in elections or general commitment to democracy. These indicators of effectiveness are usually difficult or impossible to operationalise in a research setting. This form of educational work is therefore based on a general attitude in defense of democracy on the part of the providers and most of the participants. This applies in particular to groups consisting of voluntary participants. This could be different for groups such as school classes. Studies suggest that training has a positive influence on motivation, strategic knowledge and the quality of argumentation (see Reinfeldt 2013, Ahlheim & Heger 2006, Gronostay 2019, Zeuner & Pabst 2020).

Target groups

More precise conclusions about the structure of the target group (young, politically engaged people and representatives of minorities) can be drawn from research into the political behaviour and values of the population. This also includes a look at the group of people who use populist or anti-democratic slogans.

Primary target group: politically and socially engaged people

Argumentation training is primarily aimed at people who are prepared to stand up for democracy and human rights. These can be “professionals” involved in political debate and decision-making, such as those who are active in political parties, civil rights movements, interest groups, associations, clubs, the media or other groups. Those who are active on social media and make posts are also likely to be considered politically interested. The second subgroup is those who are “interested” but not necessarily “active”. Good argumentation training can turn interested people into active ones and further strengthen active ones in their commitment.

According to the renowned Shell study from 2019, 8% of young people in Germany describe themselves as politically active and a further 33% as politically interested. The EU is viewed positively (43%) or very positively (7%), while 7% have a negative or even very negative (1%) image of the EU. Freedom of movement, a Europe without borders, cultural diversity and democracy in Europe are particularly important to them. The study formed five “populism categories” clusters. They show that around a third support European democratic values, while another third are undecided. A third of young people are also in favour of populist tendencies:

- Cosmopolitans: 39%
- Populism leaners: 24%
- National populists: 9%
- Not clearly positioned: 28%

(Albert, Hurrelmann, & Quenzel Kantar / Shell Study 2019)

Secondary target group: people with “group-focused enmity”

German scientists have described and scientifically proven the syndrome of group-focused misanthropy (GMF) in the book “Deutsche Zustände”. The GMF syndrome comprises 13 elements: racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, hostility towards Muslims, sexism, devaluation of certain groups of people such as Sinti and Roma, asylum seekers, homosexuals, trans people, homeless people, the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities (Zick, Küpper, & Berghan 2019, 58 ff., Heitmeyer 2024).

The individual categories of the GMF syndrome correspond to the statements that can be found in regulars’ table slogans and to which Hufer’s argumentation training refers.

As already seen in the values of young people (see above), around 30% of Germans are populist, although they mostly hold moderate positions. Global criticism of the “establishment” and the mainstream media is particularly common, although the majority of this group do not call for radical change, but rather certain corrections. A majority (37%) of respondents in the study reject populist attitudes. According to the study, populism in Germany “is to be categorised as moderate rather than radical. For example, more than two thirds of people with populist attitudes are in favour of EU membership and 85% approve of the democratic system. However, over three quarters believe that EU integration has gone too far and a narrow majority of 52% believe that democracy “does not work well” or “does not work at all” in Germany (Vehrkamp & Wratil 2017).

A European comparison also produces similar figures: in Germany, 18% stated that they agreed with the positions of the right-wing populist party (“Alternative für Germany AfD”). In Poland, on the other hand, the figure is 78%, in France 63% and in the Netherlands 55% (Twyman 2016).

Conspiracy theorists

The above-mentioned studies were mainly written in the period from 2015 onwards – motivated by the rise of right-wing populism and the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA. The coronavirus pandemic has given rise to a new wave of populism that, like the right-wing populists, is characterised by an anti-scientific stance and a fight against the (political) establishment and European politics: The “conspiracy theorists”. According to a recent study, 30% of Germans believe that the world is controlled by secret powers. This proportion is particularly high among voters of the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. Around 13% of Germans are convinced that the coronavirus is a Chinese bioweapon. In contrast, 46% of the population believe that these are completely made up, while 40% believe that they are based on a kernel of truth, even if not everything is true. On the other hand, the proportion of Germans who see conspiracy theories as a growing threat to democracy is high at 66% (Statista Research Department 2024).

These statistics clearly show that in a group of 30 people – a school class or a birthday party – statistically speaking, at least 10 members are likely to be right-wing populists or conspiracy theorists. Three of them tend towards radical convictions. The group that is democratically orientated is just as large. Of these, three are also so committed and interested that they would argue specifically against undemocratic and anti-scientific statements. Ten other people in the group are indifferent to the issue. This also means that the above-mentioned categories of group-focused misanthropy in each of these groups specifically affect certain discriminated groups in everyday life.

5.2 The Case of Hungary

Since the change of regime, Hungary has had a two-pole curriculum management system (previously centralized management was the typical). This means that both central and local decisions prevail in matters of planning (objectives, content selection, curriculum design). This system regulates the education of students in primary and secondary school up to the age of 18. After the change of regime, the Hungarian curriculum regulation became three-tiered (Perjés & Vass, 2008).

The top-level regulation is the National Core Curriculum, which was issued by the Hungarian Government in 2012 and last modified in 2020. The basic curriculum defines the mandatory common objectives of the educational work in the framework of general education, interprets the so-called key competences adopted in the European Union for public education in Hungary, lays the foundation for the quality management tasks related to the basic curriculum, and includes in particular the development tasks to be implemented in the individual content phases, which form the basis of the educational work. The second level is the framework curriculum, which has a mediating role between the local curriculum and the National Core Curriculum. The local curriculum is the third level. It is selected and drawn up in accordance with the objectives and principles of a school's pedagogical programme. Its local character is due to the fact that it is legitimized by the agreement of the local stakeholders, the acceptance of the board of governors, the supportive opinion of the various users and partners, and the approval of the maintainer. A secondary but not insignificant feature is that it incorporates elements of local culture to an acceptable extent. By local culture we mean both the traditions and the vision of local society (Venkovits & Makay, 2022).

In 2002, Hunya examined the National Core Curriculum, the framework curriculum and the available textbooks to see to what extent they offered opportunities for the use/teaching of debate and argumentation in Hungarian schools. In the study Hunya concluded that these key documents require the development of debate and argumentation skills at several points. He also argued that debates help to implement the core values and principles of the curriculum and to meet the requirements (Hunya, 2002a, 2002b).

In 2017, Tibor Oláh also examined this issue and concluded that the National Core Curriculum considers the use and teaching of debate and argumentation important, while at the same time drawing attention to the difficulties of implementing the principles of the National Core Curriculum and the Framework Curriculum. With few textbooks, manuals and trainings available to help teachers acquire the necessary skills to conduct classroom debates, teachers are left to deal with the issue alone. It was felt that teachers would either learn argumentation techniques and debate formats on their own, or they would not be able to adequately develop the relevant skills of students (Oláh, 2017).

According to Venkovits and Makay's analysis, the National Curriculum and the framework curricula explicitly recommend the use of debates in a number of subjects, such as foreign languages, history, civic studies, biology and geography. The research concludes that the Hungarian regulatory system provides a sufficient basis for debate-based education and for the acquisition of good reasoning skills. However, the research finds that the regulatory system does not provide methodological support to teachers, which prevents them from effectively integrating debates into everyday teaching. The surveys presented in this study show that few practicing teachers and teacher trainees are aware of how to apply debate and argumentation-based teaching in their daily work. However, the researchers suggest that this can be overcome with appropriate training and methodological support for the teachers and teacher trainees. They find that during the secondary school years, students involved in debates feel the benefits of argumentation-based education. They believe it has contributed to the development of their skills, which is in line with international surveys. This means that the policy framework supports and even expects a wider use of debates and arguments in education (Venkovits & Makay, 2022).

We could not find a single comprehensive study on the state of argumentation education in Hungarian higher education. While one study mentions that debate and argumentation play a much more prominent role in Hungarian higher education than in secondary schools, it is not clear on what information this is based on (Deli, 2014).

The CCIV of 2011 Act on National Higher Education states that higher education institutions provide education based on a curriculum. As part of the programme, the curriculum for higher education vocational training, bachelor's and master's programmes are based on the training and outcome requirements published by the Minister. The higher education institution is free to draw up its own training programme for joint training, part-time training and continuing vocational training in the context of programmes funded by the European Union, the Visegrad Fund and the Central European Higher Education Exchange Programme. The curricula shall be reviewed every five years. New or revised study and examination requirements may be introduced in an ascending order (Jogtár, 2011).

Based on our non-representative analysis, the teaching of debate and argumentation in Hungarian higher education is rather mixed. In law, social sciences or communication studies, we more often find courses that focus specifically on the techniques of debate and argumentation. This is less the case in other disciplines, such as science or engineering. However, subjects related to argumentation are available as optional courses in most study programs. For example, at the University of Economics and Business (Budapest), an optional course (Debate and Argumentation Techniques course) is available, which aims to familiarise students with the importance and the possibilities for representing their own opinions and positions in a conscious and effective manner, and to learn the techniques of persuading the other side in a cultured manner. They are practicing methods of representing their views in a credible way, regardless of their emotional commitment. For example, at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, students can take a course in legal argumentation, legal rhetoric, which aims to familiarise them with the basic concepts of argumentation theory, including the study of legal argumentation.

In 2020, the Talent Management Council of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) has expanded its range of training courses with communication training. Within this framework, 2 training sessions in Argumentation Techniques were organised in the spring semester, lasting 5-5 hours. The training sessions were independent of each other, the curriculum and the structure of the lessons were the same for both dates. During the training, the participants were introduced to the most important argumentation skills, the tools of persuasive argumentation and their application, which they learned through role-playing exercises in an interactive class. At the same time, an organisation on debating, ELTE Debate, was established at ELTE in 2013. The aim of the organisation was to develop critical thinking and analytical skills through formal debate, to encourage participants to deepen their understanding of current public policy dilemmas, and to improve their argumentation techniques and public speaking skills. The last available information on the existence of ELTE Debate is from 2018 (ELTE, 2018).

The Budapest Debate Union is also an organisation dedicated to British parliamentary debate, primarily at ELTE and Corvinus universities in Budapest. They organise team debates for students, mainly in English. The two sides have to argue for and against a specific thesis (ELTE, 2022).

Law students can attend the International Academy of Human Rights and Debate as a paid summer school at the University of Pécs for €2,500. The summer school focuses on some of the most typical issues of international human rights, including the protection of human rights in armed conflicts, the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, the relationship between asylum and national security, the human rights implications of artificial intelligence systems and algorithmic decision-making. The debate course will provide students with an introduction to argumentation theory, rhetoric and practical skill-building exercises in debate and public speaking (Compostela, 2024).

5.3 The Case of Italy

In Italy, argumentation training for young people is almost entirely linked to the debate methodology and spread on different levels of formal and informal education, from secondary school to university and post-graduates' education.

More generally speaking, European values are part of youth education as part of the subject Educazione Civica (lower and upper secondary school), specific subjects and courses at universities, projects and courses in the informal education system (linked to NGOs and associations).

We identified three main clusters of projects and initiatives related to argumentation training for young people in Italy: debate, democratic participation experiences, counter-narratives and alternative narratives campaigns.

Debate

The debate methodology is part of the philosophical, rhetorical, and Italian legal tradition, which has in debate the privileged instrument of confrontation, dialogue, argumentation, refutation and persuasion. The use of debate has risen in recent years in the mandatory school system and beyond (lower and upper secondary school, students up to 18 years old), and many networks have sprouted to foster competition among students and to encourage argumentation skills' development through gamification.

Some examples of projects and initiatives at national level:

- [Debate Italia](#)

It is a project of the Ministry of Education, meant to foster debate's implementation as a learning method in upper secondary school (14-19 years old students), through the organisation of national Debate Olympics. All the practical activities connected to the tournaments are managed by the association [Società Nazionale Debate Italia](#). The first Debate Olympics were held in Rome in November 2017, and year after year the participation has considerably grown: in the 2023 edition, 380 teams took part in the competition, from almost every Italian region. Debate Italia focuses not only on students' abilities but also on **teachers' and educators** to train them appropriately. The teacher becomes the coach and guides students in their skills' development.

- [Palestra Botta e Risposta](#)

The Palestra Botta e Risposta ("Debate Gymnasium") project was started in 2006 by Adelino Cattani, Professor of Argumentation Theory at the University of Padua ([Università degli Studi di Padova](#)). It aims to enrich the primary and secondary school curriculum with debate training and the organization of regulated debate tournaments (target: from children up to 18 years old students). In these tournaments, after preparatory training, teams from different institutions participate, confronting each other on controversial issues, voted and awarded by a jury.

- [INDIRE's idea from Avanguardie Educative "Debate: Argomentare e dibattere"](#)

Avanguardie Educative is a research and action project focusing on Italian innovative teaching methods. The project became a movement in 2014 and it gathered the experience of 22 schools who signed a Manifesto for Innovation. Innovation paths are called "ideas": they are collected and disseminated through guidelines, and the schools that are part of the movement can apply them with their students. "Debate: augmenting and debating" is one of the ideas of the movement, with a specific set of guidelines (Cinganotto, Mosa, Panzavolta et al. 2019) to help schools to implement the method. The target group for this method is formed by lower and upper secondary school students (11-18 years old).

Democratic participation experiences

There are many projects meant to empower young people and let them experiment democratic processes and participation. Some examples:

- [Prime Minister](#) is a free political school for young women (14-19 years old) meant to foster their participation in the public and political sphere and make them aware of their possibilities. They have a national school network with physical schools in almost all regions in the country, and they deal with topics such as: women leadership, culture and education, civil rights, environment, Italian Republic and European Union's institutions, political parties' role and active citizenship. Each school offers 10-lessons courses, from April to May, to a class of maximum 30 young women. They are taught by experienced women professionals (writers, journalists, activists, diplomats, politicians, parliamentarians, scientists), and each lesson has a practical ending aimed at being engaged in citizenship projects. Guided visits are also included.
- [Model European Parliament by MEP Italia](#) is a project created almost twenty years ago by university students, meant to offer to secondary school students a simulation of the European Parliament processes. Thanks to a dedicated network, each year almost 3000 students from 36 schools in 9 Italian regions can experience what it means to be a member of the European Parliament through practice.

Counter narrative campaigns

Populist, discriminatory and hate speeches are narratives: stories giving an account of events, true or fictional. They convey a value system, contributing to spreading it and replicating it, while excluding alternatives that are not "normal" and acceptable (Council of Europe, 2019). That's why counter narratives are the key to reacting to hate and discriminatory speech: they deconstruct the discriminatory narratives and propose an alternative based on human rights and democratic values.

«They may do so by providing alternative and accurate information, by using humour and appealing to emotions on the issues involved, and by accounting for different perspectives and views» (Council of Europe, 2019).

In Europe, counter narratives have been sponsored by the Council of Europe through the No Hate Speech Movement (which published a dedicated manual for young people and youth workers), but many national experiences were born in each country.

There are several examples of counter narrative-based projects in Italy, and each of them has some features which are worth analysing to the purposes of this report.

Generally, all the projects are based on what is called the *ADIE model* as a methodology to study and respond adequately to hate speech. ADIE is an acronym indicating the steps necessary to produce an effective counter narrative to hate speech:

1. *Assess* the oppressive narrative,
2. *Design* the counter narrative,
3. *Implement* the counter narrative,
4. *Evaluate* the counter narrative.

The path is iterative: this means that whoever produces the counter narrative will have to repeat the steps each time one cycle ends. That happens because oppressive narratives can't be countered by a single story: iterative effort is needed (Council of Europe, 2019).

The ADIE model influences the structure of the Italian projects based on counter narrative implementation. They all have a research-training-action structure: at the beginning, participants are trained to recognise and study the oppressive narratives, to deeply understand their topics and assumptions. Then, they are trained to build an effective counter narrative and they put into practice what they have learned, usually through campaign actions on social media.

- [Una Task Force per i discorsi d'odio](#) (A task force for countering hate speech) is a research-action project of Amnesty International Italia. Through **annual calls**, volunteers are selected to take part in training sessions focused on discrimination and hate speech, to prepare them to act as counter-narrative creators on social media channels and online forums. Volunteers are members of the civil society with many different competences (students, teachers, journalists, lawyers, photographers, video makers, etc.) that they use to reach the project's goals, along with the specific training received. They **act as a team** to be constantly present online to respond to discriminatory and antidemocratic comments and messages (Amnesty International Italia, 2019). The importance of being involved in discussions and not leave the floor to haters and populists, even though it might be stressful, is evident, as some of them might understand and start to be more self-aware:

«A woman made a comment, and I replied giving her reliable information and a link to Amnesty reports. She thanked me and apologized [for her discriminatory comment] (Testimony of one of the activists from the Task Force Hate Speech) (Amnesty International Italia, 2019).

- The Council of Europe's campaign No Hate Speech Movement inspired several projects in Italy. One of them is particularly interesting for its features, the **gamification and peer education** involvement: the [national competition "No Hate Speech"](#) organised by the Italian Ministry of Education for high school students (14-19 years old). The participants were required to write articles, create visual artworks or TV/radio products and videos to spread awareness among their peers on discriminatory and aggressive behaviors, and how to counter them. The best ones received an **award** during an official ceremony at the Italian Chamber of Deputies.

Challenges and Opportunities

The common aspect emerging from the three clusters is the **cooperative approach**, both national and international: debates, democratic simulations and counter-narrative campaigns take advantage of the building of a network meant to encourage dialogue and engagement beyond the local level. This aspect is both a challenge and an opportunity: it might be more expensive (in terms of time, funds and logistic) to **set up a multilevel and multiprofessional network** capable of working together and guarantee a real exchange among various professionals from different countries or regions (and with both bottom-up and top-down approaches: ministry and schools, State and local associations and NGOs, etc.), but learning from each other beyond borders is an **added value** that makes any project focusing on argumentation more effective and attractive at the same time.

5.4 The Case of Slovenia

As far as we are aware the concept of argumentation training in the context of youth work (in the field of young people) does not exist in Slovenia or is not widely recognized. However, there are some topics that are related to or cover similar content, including:

- Hate speech and how to combat hate speech
- Development of debating and reasoning skills
- Dialogue among diverse groups
- Active participation
- Advocacy

In the following sections, we will focus on programs in Slovenia that address these topics.

Debate clubs and debate tournaments

Za in Proti – Zavod za kulturo dialoga (Za in proti, 2024), organizes debate clubs and tournaments at the national level. These events mainly take place in primary and secondary schools, libraries, student dormitories, faculties, and university residences. Each debate club has a mentor or club leader. Debate clubs meet regularly, at least once a week, with some meetings several times a week. During these



meetings, debaters, under the guidance of their mentor, learn the basics of debate theory, practice various exercises, discuss topics, and prepare for debate tournaments.

The Institute organizes national competitions for primary and secondary school students, and participants also take part in international events and competitions.

a. Target groups and participants

The participants are primarily primary (7-15) and secondary school students (15-18) who take part in the project through their respective schools. It is considered an extracurricular activity, chosen by students based on their interest in the subject matter.

This involves a smaller number of highly motivated children and young people, meaning that not the entire school-aged population receives this knowledge.

b. Methodologies and approaches

Debate is a methodologically structured communication event where opposing sides confront a specific topic to persuade the audience or judges. It is based on a balanced approach, where both sides are given equal opportunities to present their arguments. The methodological framework of the debate defines the number of speakers, the order of speeches, and the roles of each speaker. A structured time limit ensures that all participants have equal conditions (Za in proti, 2024).

A key part of the methodology involves a clearly and simply worded debate proposition, which allows for arguments both in favour and against. Debaters systematically analyze their opponents' arguments, identify flaws in reasoning, and use logical and argumentative techniques to strengthen their positions. In this methodological process, "points of contention" are established, forming the core of the debate, and arguments are built upon using logical analysis and new evidence.

As a method, the debate also includes a final phase—analysis of key arguments and questioning of opponents, which leads to a decision made by judges based on clearly defined criteria, primarily argumentation.

c. Differences between debate and argumentation training

Firstly, young participants are "artificially" placed in a position to defend an idea on one side or the other. In argumentation training, we assume that the slogans we are fighting against are inherently negative, whereas in debating activities, both sides are initially considered equal.

The second difference is that the topics in debates are broader. They are not necessarily focused on issues of discrimination, but can cover a wider range of questions, such as mobile phones in schools - yes, or no? Nuclear energy supply - yes, or no?

Campaigns and Programs to Combat Hate Speech

The "**SLOVEnia Speaks**" project that was led by Red Cross Slovenia aimed to raise awareness of hate speech in primary and secondary schools through training sessions for mentors.

The main challenge was creating simple, effective exercises to help students respond appropriately to hate speech. Mentors then applied this knowledge through practical exercises, enabling students to identify and address hate speech in their environment. By fostering empathy and self-reflection, the project enhanced students' ability to recognize and reduce hate speech both in and outside of school. The final product was the **Handbook for Primary and Secondary Schools: Together Against Hate Speech**, completed in February 2021 (Zagorc, 2021).

In December 2022, the Government Office of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry for Digital Transformation launched the campaign "**Ugrizni se v sovražni jezik!**" (Bite in Your Hate Tongue!) to combat online hate speech. The campaign, featuring videos of Slovenian athletes¹, aimed to raise awareness about the rising prevalence of hate speech on social media in Slovenia. The videos are filmed in the form of interviews, where the interviewer speaks to each athlete in a manner that reflects comments typically written online, which the writers would not dare to say to people's faces. By

¹ An example of the video: Ministrstvo za digitalno preobrazbo. (2023, January 3). *Barbara Lazović - kampanja "Ugrizni se v sovražni jezik"* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/LALHwdvn4Ys?si=crTLpQOCGcxqY2x>

highlighting the emotional impact of such comments, the campaign sought to foster empathy and promote the rejection of online hate speech.

They repeated the campaign under the same slogan also in March 2024 but with different visuals² Which received a negative response from the professional community, as the content was not communicated correctly (Stražišar, 2024).

a. Target groups and participants

The campaign “**SLOVEnia Speaks**” primarily targeted teachers and mentors of children young people.

The campaign “**Ugrizni se v sovražni jezik!**” was of national significance and, in addition to the public, primarily targeted youth as the main audience.

b. Methodologies and approaches

Social marketing is an approach that applies commercial marketing principles to promote social change and influence behaviours for societal benefit. It focuses on identifying target audiences, understanding their motivations, and designing interventions that encourage positive behaviour changes, such as improving public health or fostering environmental sustainability. By utilizing the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion), social marketing aims to effectively address social issues and evaluate the impact of its campaigns. Differences Between Campaigns and Argumentation Training:

- These are typically promotional campaigns, which may also be supported by specific educational workshops for young people and youth workers. However, the focus is on campaigns rather than on educational events.
- The term “hate” is often not precisely defined in these campaigns, allowing the organizer to present even the views of their political opponent as “hateful.” This opens possibilities for the misuse of the concept of “hate speech” for political purposes.

c. Dialogue and Intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue in Slovenia is understood as a vital and multifaceted process aimed at fostering an open and complex cultural environment. The country aims to foster cooperation among various cultures and promote mutual respect and understanding.

The emphasis is placed on the active participation of all citizens in the intercultural dialogue, which helps to enrich the common heritage and acknowledges the importance of cultural differences. This aligns with the EU’s broader goal of enhancing cultural integration and cooperation.

Društvo za medkulturni dialog (The Intercultural Dialogue Association) is a registered non-governmental organization founded in 2007 in Ljubljana. Its mission is to promote dialogue on various social issues, regardless of religious affiliation. Society advocates for democracy, human rights, the non-instrumentalization of religion in politics, equality, and freedom of speech.

Challenges and opportunities

The challenges surrounding argumentation training in Slovenia include:

- **Lack of Recognition:** The concept of argumentation training is not recognized or established within youth work in Slovenia.
- **Limited Participation:** Programs that already exist attract a smaller group of highly motivated students, leaving a significant portion of the school-aged population without exposure to these skills.
- **Political Misuse:** The ambiguity of the term “hate” in campaigns allows for potential misuse of the concept for political agendas, undermining the objective of combating hate speech.
- **Broader Debate Topics:** Debate topics can be broad and not always focused on critical social issues like discrimination.

The opportunities surrounding argumentation training in Slovenia include:

² Bold group. (2024). *Premisli, nato stisni* [Poster]. Ministry for Digital Transformation. <https://n1info.si/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/03/1720007699-sovrazni-govor-plakat-1024x575.jpg>

- Presenting something new: Since the concept of argumentation training is mostly unknown, the concept offers a fresh methodology/perspective for youth workers and educators.
- Youth Engagement: Engaging youth in dialogue and intercultural discussions offers an opportunity to foster understanding and respect among diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Active Participation in Dialogue: Promoting active participation can enrich cultural understanding and support the EU's goals of cultural integration.

5.5 The Case of Türkiye

Although Türkiye is still in the phase of accession to the European Union, as a member of the Council of Europe, it is a country that has embraced European values. Values such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, fundamental principles of democracy, human rights, individual freedoms and respect for diversity have been increasingly emphasized in the education system (MEB, 2024). Argumentation training, which is still developing, is seen in Türkiye as an important instrument for spreading these values to younger generations, and there are various programmes, projects and initiatives for this purpose.

In the curriculum, argumentation education is not directly included as a subject, but indirectly within certain courses and skill sets, which are mostly left to the preference and competence of the teacher. Argumentation skills are generally covered in the curricula and strategy documents prepared and developed by MoNE within the framework of developing critical thinking, expression skills and communication skills.

In 2005, a radical transformation in primary education in Türkiye was initiated with the introduction of a curriculum based on the constructivist approach and a student-activity-centered methodology within the programme (MEB, 2005). The program was stated that the research-inquiry approach as the most effective method for students to adopt new educational approaches (Köseoğlu, Tümay & Budak, 2008). While the argumentation method was first expressed as Argumentation-Based Science Learning (ABSL5) in the Turkish educational literature, in some later academic studies, expressions such as 'Discussion-Based Teaching Approach', 'Scientific Discussion' and 'Argumentative Discourse' were also used (İspir & Yıldız, 2014).

Within the scope of the Turkish Century Education Model (2024) put into practice by the Turkish MoNE as of 2024, it is explained that it is aimed to provide students with a number of national, spiritual and universal root values and their related sub-values such as justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism and benevolence through primary, secondary and high school curricula.

In Türkiye, argumentation training at primary education level (grades 1-8) is carried out through various in-class activities within the scope of Turkish Literature and Social Studies courses. Within the framework of the Turkish MoNE Curricula of the Turkish Literature (2019) and Social Studies (2019) lessons, students are encouraged to write an essay on a specific topic, defend or criticise it with logical arguments and evidence, and find evidence to support their arguments; and also encouraged to discuss historical events or social problems, to develop a critical perspective when analysing a specific historical event or social problem, and to develop arguments by considering different perspectives.

Turkish MoNE's secondary education level Philosophy Lesson Teaching Programme (2019) for the 10th and 11th grades states that within the framework of the basic philosophy and general aims of the curriculum, it is aimed to encourage students to think, research, discuss and formulate ideas, to bear human-social, ethical-moral responsibility in their actions and to show political-aesthetic sensitivity.

In addition, with the 'Social and citizenship-related competencies', which are counted among the competencies aimed to be gained by the students with the course, it is aimed to equip students with social behaviours that enable them to participate effectively and constructively in the differentiated social life as an individual and to be equipped with the characteristics to resolve conflicts when necessary, and to equip students with knowledge of social and political concepts and structures, to be a part of civilized life that provides democratic and active participation.

In Türkiye, examples of argumentation education in universities can be found especially in the faculties of law, political science, philosophy and communication. In the courses in these departments, teachers and students apply methods such as debate, which will develop their critical thinking, expression and

communication skills. In addition, students can develop their oratory and discussion skills under the roof of debate and idea clubs in universities.

However, there are some difficulties and limitations regarding the implementation of argumentation training in Türkiye. For example, no courses or training on argumentation techniques and training programs have been found in programs, especially in teacher training faculties. However, there are Philosophy for Children (P4C) trainings, where teachers can experience argumentation techniques and skills, within the scope of in-service trainings carried out for teachers working within Turkish MoNE (MEB, 2024).

The implementation of argumentation training in Türkiye faces with several challenges and limitations, as a result of a variety of factors, including the students, teachers, educational environment, methodology and curriculum. These include students' lack of self-confidence, sufficient knowledge about the discussion subjects and group work culture; teachers' inadequate professional skills and experience in implementing, assessing and evaluating the argumentation method, as well as concerns about curriculum implementation due to time limitations; and challenges in implementation due to overcrowded classrooms in educational settings, particularly in public schools (İspir & Yıldız, 2014).

Besides all, there are also various platforms, associations or civil organizations operating in Türkiye to popularize argumentation techniques. For example, the Debate Rhetoric Association, founded in 2018, has signed a protocol with the Turkish Ministry of National Education to provide modern debate training in many provinces of Türkiye. The association takes part in many international competitions, including national debate competitions in Türkiye, with its trainers and trainees.



6. European Values in the National Context

Chapter 5 explores the interpretation and application of key European values within the national contexts of partner countries. By examining how democracy, human rights, tolerance, rule of law, and solidarity are understood and put into practice in each nation, this chapter aims to identify country-specific challenges and opportunities while comparing them to broader EU interpretations. The chapter delves into formal policies and laws, as well as the social and cultural interpretations surrounding these core values. It discusses concrete examples of how each value is either upheld or challenged within the partner countries, providing tangible evidence to support the analysis. It also highlights any unique viewpoints that may exist within each partner country, offering valuable insights into the diverse ways in which these values are embraced and interpreted.

6.1 The Case of Germany

Normative values

In Germany, a distinction can be made between normative values, which are primarily derived from the Basic Law but also from religions and other world views, and people's lived values. Both overlap and both are subject to constant change.

Of the normative values, "human dignity" stands out. A violation of human dignity usually also involves a violation of another fundamental right and vice versa. Human dignity, and consequently human rights, is therefore a meta-value that is beyond question in Germany and to which every person, including non-Germans, is entitled (cf. Reheis 1999, p. 72). Article 1 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz GG) reads:

"(1) Human dignity is inviolable. It is the duty of all state authorities to respect and protect it.

(2) The German people therefore recognise inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every human community, of peace and of justice in the world."

There are three types of fundamental rights. Some, like human dignity, apply to all people ("human rights"), while others are intended for citizens ("civil rights"):

Fundamental freedoms: These fundamental rights grant citizens freedoms vis-à-vis the state. They are primarily aimed at state omission and include, for example, freedom of opinion, freedom of information and freedom of the press in Article 5 of the Basic Law.

Fundamental rights to equality: These fundamental rights grant individual equal treatment before the law and protect against discrimination. They include, for example, the principle of equality and equal rights in Article 3 of the Basic Law.

Participation rights: These fundamental rights grant individuals the right to participate in state behaviour and include, for example, the right to petition.

In Germany, fundamental rights also include the democratic form of government, the separation of powers and the sovereignty of the people.

In addition to the Basic Law, sources for the value system in Germany include the judgements of the Constitutional Court, the relevant UN conventions and EU documents, in particular the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights = ECHR). In addition, there are values that can be taken from religions and world views, such as "love of neighbors" or "animal welfare".

Basically, it can be said that there is no fixed catalogue of values in Germany, but that people and institutions (such as the federal government, courts or administrations) pursue a variety of values and legal norms, some of which contradict each other. Human dignity and general human rights are the values that have an overarching effect. Other values, such as tolerance, inclusion, climate protection, work, equality or solidarity, happiness, prosperity and quality of life are subject to continuous change (Juraforum 2024).

Values of the population

The attempt to research and map "the values" within the population is just as multi-layered and complex. Age, stage of life, social affiliation, health, income - to name just a few - are factors that determine personal values. In addition, many people are not even aware of their values or state values that they do not actually put into practice in their everyday lives - such as climate protection or solidarity.

The following values have been identified in studies and surveys of the German population:

1. **Family and community:** Family is highly valued in Germany. Most Germans attach great importance to close family ties and see the family as an important social support system.
2. **Education and professional success:** Education is seen as an important factor for personal and social progress. A high level of education and professional success are of great importance to many Germans.
3. **Security and stability:** Political and economic stability as well as personal security are important values. Many people value a stable and secure environment, both in their private and public lives.
4. **Freedom and independence:** Individual freedom and independence are core values. This includes freedom of expression as well as personal fulfilment and self-determination.
5. **Sustainability and environmental protection:** Protecting the environment and acting sustainably are becoming increasingly important. Many Germans attach importance to environmentally friendly practices and the conservation of natural resources.
6. **Solidarity and social commitment:** Solidarity and support for the weak are important aspects of social cohesion. This is reflected in a high willingness to volunteer and donate to social causes.
7. **Health and well-being:** A healthy life and well-being are very important. This includes physical health as well as mental and emotional balance.

In countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, family often plays an even greater role than in Germany, and there tends to be less emphasis on career success and economic security. Work ethics can also vary, often in favour of work-life balance. Religion plays a diminishing role in the lives of many Germans, although ethical and moral values remain important. In many southern and eastern European countries, religion plays a greater role in daily life and has a stronger influence on values and attitudes (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2024, World Values Survey, Eurobarometer 2024).

Relevant populist slogans in Germany

A study has determined which slogans and statements receive a high to very high level of approval in Germany:

- "If you're new somewhere, you should first settle for less.": 65.3%
- "Most long-term unemployed people are not really interested in finding a job.": 50.6% "Most asylum seekers are not persecuted in their home country.": 44,2%
- "There are too many foreigners living in Germany.": 35.0%
- "The many Muslims here sometimes make me feel like a stranger in my own country.": 34.9%
- "It's disgusting when homosexuals kiss in public.": 14.8%
- "Women should focus more on the role of wife and mother again.": 12.1%
- "Most homeless people are work-shy.": 11.7%
- "Whites are rightly leaders in the world.": 10.6%
- "Jews have too much influence in Germany": 8.1%

(Zick, Küpper & Berghan 2019, 70ff.).

In addition, there are other topics that can be identified from various sources (evaluations of publications, statements, election programmes and corresponding studies and research). The topics of migration/deportation/Islam, political actors, media and press freedom, nationality/tradition, climate protection/credibility of science and gender are mentioned particularly frequently. It is striking that left-wing positions currently play a significantly subordinate role in the national discourse in Germany. With the entry of the right-wing populist party "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD) into the parliaments from 2013 and the election of D. Trump as President of the USA in 2016, right-wing populist statements in particular are present in the discourse (Decker, Kiess, & Brähler 2016, Decker & Brähler 2022, Hufer 2018, Tiedemann 2018, Kraske, & Laabs 2024, Quent & Virchow 2024). Since then, various academics, constitutional guardians and politicians from left-wing, liberal and conservative

parties have repeatedly emphasised that the greatest threat to democracy currently comes from the 'right'.

6.2 The Case of Hungary

Democracy, human rights, equality

Hungary's constitution states that " Hungary shall be an independent, democratic rule-of-law State." According to the Fundamental Law of Hungary, "We date the restoration of our country's self-determination, lost on the nineteenth day of March 1944, from the second day of May 1990, when the first freely elected organ of popular representation was formed. We shall consider this date to be the beginning of our country's new democracy and constitutional order." According to the Fundamental Law of Hungary, " Everyone shall be equal before the law. Every human being has legal capacity. (2) Hungary shall guarantee fundamental rights to everyone without discrimination and without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status. (3) Women and men shall have equal rights. (4) By means of separate measures, Hungary shall help to achieve equality of opportunity and social inclusion. (5) By means of separate measures, Hungary shall protect families, children, women, the elderly and those living with disabilities." (Jogtár, 2011).

Researches have shown that democracies in post-communist transition mostly fail to meet liberal expectations (Gallai, 2020). On 26th July 2014, Viktor Orbán (Prime Minister of Hungary) gave a speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp in Tusnádfürdő, in which he gave a new political programme for Hungarian society after the regime change. The speech went beyond the national framework and outlined a grand vision - in contrast to the ideal of liberal democracy - of the creation of an alternative social order and value system. The building of the new system is/was necessary because of the changed international order, because - according to Orbán's discourse - the interests of the Hungarian nation and the survival of its existence are better ensured by an illiberal social order instead of liberal democracy (Szűcs, 2022).

In recent years, researchers have devoted much attention to characterising the illiberal political system that has emerged in Hungary. Analyses have generally described the changes in the democratic establishment at the level of the political system and have paid much less attention to whether people's perceptions of democracy have changed in parallel with these changes. In Hungary, the average and the variance of satisfaction with democracy has been increasing since 2008, i.e. although people are on average more satisfied, the polarisation of opinions on democracy has increased substantially in recent years. Compared with European and regional data, the average level of satisfaction with democracy in Hungary is broadly in line with the average in Eastern European countries, but the dispersion of satisfaction is much higher than in either the Eastern or Western European regions. In Hungary, citizens are increasingly divided in their perception of the political system. There are social groups who are increasingly satisfied and those who are increasingly dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy. By 2018, economic and material aspects such as prosperity, money, work and development have been lost from the primary associations of democracy and have been significantly overshadowed. This does not mean, however, that Hungarian society does not take economic performance into account when considering satisfaction with democracy. According to a multivariate regression model, a positive perception of economic performance showed a clear correlation with satisfaction with democracy. Satisfaction with democracy is also a function of political preference, in line with partisan polarisation theories: pro-government voters are much more satisfied with democracy than opposition voters (Susánszky et al., 2021).

Rule of law, solidarity

Hungary was subject to Article 7 proceedings in the European Union in 2018 and has not been closed since. In December 2022, the European Commission approved all Hungary's programmes under the Common Provisions Regulation for the period 2021-2027. However, it has expressed concerns about the horizontal eligibility criterion related to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, because of four aspects related to judicial independence in Hungary (European Commission, 2022).

On 13th December 2023, the European Commission adopted two decisions on Hungary and the rule of law in the country. One related to the horizontal conditionality on judicial reform in Hungary and the other to the budgetary conditionality. In its communication, the Commission said: Following a thorough examination and several exchanges of views with the Hungarian government, the

Commission considers that Hungary has taken the measures it has undertaken to take in order to enable the Commission to conclude that the horizontal condition of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights concerning the independence of the judiciary is fulfilled. (European Commission, 2023).

In his speech on 14th January 2024, the President of the European Commission said that Hungary has adopted judicial reforms, also on the basis of the Commission's proposals. Von der Leyen said Hungary had limited political influence in the judiciary. The Commission had demanded this, and the Hungarian government had done so. Twenty billion euros remain frozen, linked to LGBTQ issues, migration deal, says Commission chief (European Commission, 2024).

After the speech, the Hungarian government communicated that the European Commission is withholding EU funds from Hungary because of Hungary's child protection law and the detention of migrants from the Middle East and Africa at the border (Magyarország Kormánya, 2024).

It is important to note that the Hungarian government previously held referendums on both issues. The 2016 referendum in Hungary was a national referendum held on 2nd October 2016, in which Hungarian citizens with the right to vote could express their opinion on whether the European Union should be allowed to impose the compulsory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the Parliament. More than 98% of valid voters (3 362 224 people) answered "no" to the question (Nemzeti Választási Iroda, 2016.)

The 2022 referendum in Hungary (regularly referred to as a child protection referendum in the pro-government press and regularly referred to as a homophobic referendum in some opposition and non-government press) was a national referendum held in Hungary on 3rd April 2022. The four questions were initiated by the government after years of tension on the issue between the conservative Hungarian government and progressive Western European political and civil society organisations. The non-response rate for the four questions on the ballot paper ranged from 92-95%, i.e. 3.6-3.7 million people agreed with the questions asked by the government, but an average of 21% of the ballots cast, or 1.7 million votes, were not valid (Nemzeti Választási Iroda, 2022).

Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's Foreign Minister, said in December 2023 that under international law that if someone is forced to refuge, they have the right to stay temporarily in the first safe country, but they do not have the right to pass through dozens of safe countries until they reach the place of their choice. This is the basis on which Hungary has defined its migration policy and acted in relation to Ukrainian refugees (Magyarország Kormánya, 2023).

After the invasion on the 24th of February the wave of refugees that immediately followed demanded an immediate response, which was most quickly felt in the work of various humanitarian organisations in the settlements along the Hungarian Ukrainian border - Záhony, Beregsurány, Barabás, Lónya and Tiszabecs - and in Budapest. Among the smaller NGOs, the Budapest Bike Mafia or the Menedék - Association for the Support of Migrants deserve a mention. The Catholic Charity, the Hungarian Reformed Charity, the Hungarian Maltese Charity, the Ecumenical Relief Organisation, the Baptist Relief Service and the Hungarian Red Cross enjoy greater government support and are also members of the Charity Council, established in 2000. In addition, on 2nd March, the government set up the National Humanitarian Coordination Council, which brings together representatives of these organisations and other sectors (education, health, transport, etc.) vital to the situation, to ensure proper crisis management. Among the public organisations, the work of the civil protection, the national defence and the police also deserves a mention, as they have greatly helped coordination. Four days after the war broke out, the police developed a new IT system to facilitate the registration of refugees. This allowed the registration of people at the crossing across the border from the end of March, replacing the previous practice of transporting them to various transit points. Public involvement in financial support for crisis management is also crucial, especially for large humanitarian organisations. Smaller organisations have also benefited from central funding, but their contribution has been more characterised by civil society and institutional contributions. It is worth mentioning the financial support of EUR 300 million provided by the European Union from the REACT-EU Recovery Fund, which in the current situation is aimed at supporting the refugee situation - although through the Recovery Fund it is also essentially intended to repair the damage caused by the coronavirus epidemic and was thus aimed at compensating economic victims in Hungary. At the beginning of October, the Interior Ministry announced the arrival of a further €21.1 million, but Hungary was no longer eligible for the €100 million funding announced at the end of that month by the European Commission for countries hosting refugees from Ukraine (Tóth, 2023).

The European Commission published its Rule of Law Report 2024 on 24th July 2024, which looked at the situation in the EU as a whole and in the Member States in separate chapters. In the case of Hungary, the Commission concluded, among other things, that Hungary should take a series of measures to comply with EU standards on the rule of law. Again, the Panel assessed Member States in four areas and on the basis of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2023 Report: the functioning of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, media pluralism and the system of checks and balances. In a separate report on Hungary, the four areas are further elaborated. As regards the judiciary, they note that the judicial reform introduced in 2023 has made progress, for example in clarifying when Hungarian courts can refer cases to the Court of Justice of the European Union, and in increasing the transparency of the case allocation system of the Curia. However, the Commission still has concerns about the case allocation system for the lower courts. In the area of judicial reform, they also note that the powers of the National Council of the Judiciary have been strengthened, which balances the powers of the presidents of the National Office of the Judiciary. In the second area, in connection with the fight against corruption, it is written that Hungary has adopted a new anti-corruption strategy for 2024-2025, in connection with which they plan to pass legislation related to lobbying and the already mentioned revolving door phenomenon, but also in connection with the fight against corruption there are problems. The obstacles to the operation of the Integrity Authority and the practical impact of the Anti-Corruption Working Group cannot yet be examined. On a positive note, they note that some high-level corruption cases have reached the point of indictment (European Commission, 2024).

Current situation and status of upholding each value

According to the National Core Curriculum, the task of public education is education for citizenship and democracy. According to this, the basis of the operation of a democratic state of law, of public life based on the rule of law, is citizen participation, which strengthens national self-awareness and cohesion, and creates harmony between individual goals and the common good. This active citizen behavior is characterized by respect for the law, compliance with the rules of coexistence, respect for human dignity and human rights, non-violence, and fairness. The task of the National Core Curriculum is also to educate media awareness. The goal is for students to become responsible participants in the mediated, global public: they understand the language of new and traditional media. Through the development of an interpretive and critical attitude and its activity-centeredness, media awareness education prepares you for the participatory culture of democracy and for the meaningful and valuable organization and conscious shaping of everyday life, which is also influenced by the media. The students get to know the functioning and mechanisms of the media, the mutual relations between the media and society, the way of distinguishing between real and virtual, public and confidential contact, as well as the legal and ethical significance of these differences and the mentioned media characteristics.

Realization in practice: The topics and activities of the civics subject, which are organically based on the acquired historical knowledge - at the end of primary and secondary studies in the 8th and 12th grades - provide the student with important and useful knowledge about the functioning of the state and its institutions, as well as the family and the economic role of the state. The subject conveys knowledge, culture and norms and helps the student to become a loving, independent and responsible, democratically minded citizen of his country, a value-creating member of small and large communities, as well as to know and be able to practice active and responsible citizenship behavior. In addition, the purpose of the history subject is for the student to learn about the functioning of the democratic state organization, the principles of the rule of law, human rights, and to be aware of his or her citizenship rights and duties. Among other things, the task of the subject of film culture and media knowledge for 12th graders is to develop the student's critical thinking, to choose consciously and based on values from the individual media contents, to be able to examine the information appearing in the digital space in a systematic manner from multiple points of view (Magyar Közlöny, 2012).

According to the Equilibrium Institute, there are at least five comprehensive problems with the current model of civics education: the low number of hours, the lack of properly trained teachers, the lack of methodological preparation, the hierarchical and authoritarian functioning of schools, and the lack of institutional and teacher autonomy (Egyensúly Intézet, 2021).

In university education, international studies, political science, communication and media studies, and sociology offer compulsory and optional courses that deal a lot with the above concepts.

In 2023, Amnesty International Hungary launched the online course on the Rule of Law in Common Sense. During the 20-minute e-learning, registrants can learn the basics that will help them navigate issues related to the rule of law. In the course "About the rule of law in a common sense", in addition to the basic pillars and values of the rule of law, participants can learn about what tools the European Union uses when a threat to legal security arises in a member state (Amnesty International, 2023).

The Hungarian Helsinki Committee and the Society for Freedom Rights, with the support of the European Union, held training in 2023 for domestic civil organizations, including interest representatives and trade unions, on fundamental rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Háttér Társaság developed a "Q-learning" project in order to reduce the degree of discrimination suffered by LGBTQI people in the country. In cooperation with the stakeholders (LMBTIQ people) and experts, they developed workshops for the following two groups: on the one hand, for those who, due to their profession, meet the members of the affected group - including primarily those working in the helping professions. On the other hand, they wanted to convey the message of acceptance of LGBTQI people to people who do not meet or are not aware that they interact with members of the group in their daily lives. The project lasted from December 2022 to May 2024 (Magyar Helsinki Bizottság, 2023).

Relevant populist slogans in Hungary

1. *"Egy vérből valók vagyunk"s"*

"We are of one blood"

The slogan "We are of one blood" comes from the song *Nélküled* („Without You“) by the Hungarian band *Ismerős Arcok*. The song is often played on national holidays, sport events and other community events, and is thus closely associated with social experiences. From time to time, the song has also been used in political discourse, which has increased its popularity. Politicians often quote the lyrics of the song, emphasizing the importance of national unity. The lyrics of the song strongly express the identity of Hungarians and cross-border solidarity. Both Hungarians living in Hungary and in the diaspora, as well as Hungarians living in Hungary's neighbouring countries - who were forced to live outside the Hungarian borders as a consequence of the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty - see their common historical and cultural heritage and their sense of belonging reflected in the song and its slogan. It is also important to note that since 2010 Hungarians living beyond the borders of Hungary can also have Hungarian citizenship and the right to vote, so strengthening cross-border national identity and cohesion can be an important basis for building a democratic society.

2. *"NER lovag"*

"NER knight"

According to the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his second government, a new social contract was concluded in the 2010 parliamentary election, with which they decided to establish a new system. The name of this system is the National Cooperation System (NER). The epithet "NER knight" is usually used by citizens with opposition sentiments to refer to pro-government voters. The term often portrays political opponents as corrupt, blindly serving power, bribed people, which is considered a personal attack and undermines democratic political culture, contributing to the polarization of society. This kind of thinking limits political and democratic debate. In a democratic political culture, debate with political opponents should ideally be conducted with arguments and personal attacks and derogatory epithets should be avoided. Unfortunately, the term "NER knight" does not meet this expectation

3. *"Hazaáruló dollárbaloldali"*

"Traitorous dollar left"

The term "dollar left" identifies an entire political trend and its supporters with a single, negative feature (foreign, mainly American, financing). The term often portrays political opponents as corrupt individuals at the mercy of foreign interests, which constitutes a personal attack and undermines democratic political culture. The term "dollar left" makes it appear that there is only one correct political ideology and that all other ideologies are under foreign influence. This kind of thinking limits political and democratic debate. The term is used to delegitimize political opponents and prevent them from participating in political life.

6.3 The Case of Italy

Democracy, civic participation and rule of law

Art.1 of the Italian Constitution states that Italy is a democratic republic. All rights and freedoms related to civic participation are regulated by the Constitution: the right to vote, to be part of political parties and run for elections (art. 48), to gather and demonstrate (art.17-18), the freedom of expression (art.21).

Nevertheless, civic participation is challenged by a strong abstentionism linked to a widespread distrust in the political system. This might be linked to some major issues highlighted by the European Commission (European Commission, 2024):

- Law decrees are used too often in the last legislature. They are temporary acts having force of law: the Constitution allows their adoption by the government in case of necessity and urgency (they must be converted into law by both chambers within 60 days of their publication), but they are used far beyond necessity. Their use limits the political agenda to the government's one, and their approval is often linked to confidence vote, with negative effects on the political system's health.
- Challenges in the governance and funding system of the public service media (RAI - Radiotelevisione Italiana). RAI is the source of information of most Italian citizens, and it has always been bound to political parties. Recent events showed that political interference from the government has been further increasing (a phenomenon which has been called TeleMeloni, after the President's name).
- Intimidations, violence and death threats to journalists, including cases of SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation): the Mapping Media Freedom platform (Mapping Media Freedom, 2024) registered 98 incidents in the first seven months of 2024. About SLAPPs: Most notably, on SLAPPs cases, stakeholders signalled an increase in the number of cases of legal intimidation, including from political figures, as also shown by the monitoring activity carried out by civil society, according to which the abusive lawsuits represented 34% of the overall registered and fact-checked cases of threats to the safety of journalists in 2023 (European Commission, 2024).
- Some cases of violence against demonstrators by police, including minors during pro-Palestinian manifestations, which caused a severe intervention by the President of the Republic (Police violence during Italian demonstrations in support of Gaza sparks controversy, 2024). In general, political dissent and activism is delegitimized in the public discourse (Amnesty International, 2024). Italy civic space is assessed as "narrowed" (CIVICUS Monitor - Tracking Civic Space, 2024).

Despite the distrust in the political system, civic engagement in community life is high, especially in cases of need and urgency. Among the virtuous examples, we can mention the solidarity movement activated by common people during the 2023 Emilia Romagna floods, or the huge movement in Florence to support the 400 workers of DKN facilities, abruptly dismissed in 2021 to relocate in countries where wages are lower.

Human rights and equality

As for human rights, Italy has signed the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is bound to the European Convention on Human Rights as part of the Council of Europe. Human rights and equality are at the centre of the first articles of the Constitution (art. 2-3), among the fundamental principles of the State. Some challenges exist:

- Italy is still missing an independent National Human Rights Institution in line with UN Paris Principles: only an Inter-ministerial Committee for Human Rights exists, and it is not independent from the single governments (European Commission, 2024).
- Migrants' refoulement in Libya: the Piantedosi Law (L.1/2023) introduced administrative obstacles to humanitarian ships' capability to save castaways on their route to Italy as irregular migrants (SOS Mediterranean, 2023), relying on Libyan coast guard intervention to take migrants in their facilities. Rescue ships are assigned far away ports as final destinations, which makes it difficult for them to complete their missions. When they land, they are being detained and fined for not collaborating with Libyan authorities. The far-right parties criminalize these humanitarian organisations in public discourse.

- The Italian government confirmed its commitment to the Italy-Libya Memorandum, which indirectly externalizes migrants' rights violation in a non-EU country, known for its abusive behavior (Amnesty International, 2021).
- Prison overcrowding and violence on detainees (even minors) are major issues, leading to violating the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment (ART.3 ECHR). In recent years, detainees' suicides have been growing. In Italy, torture is a crime only since 2017, but the Justice Parliamentary Commission is currently discussing whether to modify the law and abolish the crime.
- Remittance centers for administrative detention of illegal migrants (Centri di Permanenza per i Rimpatri) fail to serve their purpose while forcing migrants to detention without the legal protection of detainees (Tavolo Asilo e Immigrazione, 2024), and they have repeatedly been at the center of ECHR's condemnation to Italy for violating ART.3 ECHR (inhuman treatment) (Case of Darboe and Camara VS Italy, 2022) (Case of J.A. and others VS Italy, 2023).
- Many illegal migrants from the Global South are exploited in the agricultural sector (Romolo Tosiani, 2024), a phenomenon known as caporalato.
- On the other hand, there are several NGOs and civil society organizations which fight to defend human rights in danger, along with Italian courts:
- Humanitarian organisations are still rescuing migrants (at a slower pace), while Italian courts are gradually dismantling the administrative obstacles put by the government to the application of Search and Rescue international law. The Italian Supreme Court has stated that Libya can't be considered as a safe harbor for migrants, and that facilitating their interception by the Libyan coast guards is a crime (ANSA, 2024).
- Civil society is active in giving support and help to migrants, via religious (i.e: Caritas) and secular organisations, non-profit and NGOs such as Amnesty International, Emergency, Medici senza frontiere, etc.
- Civil society organisations and syndicates have activated groups supporting illegal migrants in their work and daily life.
- Many NGOs and onlus are constantly active to safeguard detainee's rights and to spread information and awareness about the current system's flaws and its negative effects on society. Among the most important ones, Antigone and Stefano Cucchi onlus.

Tolerance and non-discrimination, hate speech

These values are safeguarded by international law (UN Declaration and ECHR) and by the Constitution. The current government is formed by the most xenophobic parties in the Italian political spectrum, and a recent survey (AMREF - IPSOS, 2024) shows that Italian people perceive that racism and discrimination are strong, especially against African people. According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' survey on African descendants' life (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023) 40% of the respondents in Italy have been racially discriminated against while seeking a job, 57% in access to housing when they were in economic difficulty. This problem has structural causes, especially linked to the perception of migrants as a security threat as Italy is lacking adequate State resources to face the reception and integration challenges.

In this political framework, civil society organisations (Mat, Chiodi, & Schmidtke, 2024) (including the religious ones) are active in upholding positive values. For example, in 2024 a public school decided to interrupt lessons for the end of Ramadan as many students were Muslims. The event raised the protests of far-right parties and their voters but was more than welcomed by the Catholic church for its open mindedness (Avvenire, 2024).

As for LGBTQIA+ rights, Italy is the only western EU country not to recognise same sex marriage, probably because of its ties with the Catholic church (Pew Research Center, 2024). The actual government is particularly hostile to queer families: i.e, they asked to the city councils to stop registering children for same-sex couples, a decision harshly criticised by the European Parliament and by a great part of Italian civil society (Giuffrida, 2023). In 2022, a high percentage of homosexual and bisexual individuals reported to have experienced microaggressions and discrimination at work (UNAR-ISTAT, 2023): even though the civic space for LGBT communities is open, in Italy discrimination is high

Hate speech online addresses especially women, LGBTQI+ individuals, migrants and Roma people (Amnesty International, 2024). At the same time, many parts of civil society have repeatedly supported these categories during demonstrations (2024 Pride parade in Rome had more than 1 million

participants, 350.000 in Milan, and demonstrations against gender violence have been organised throughout the country in November 2023, as a response to Giulia Cecchettin's feminicide).

Social justice, solidarity and inclusion

Art. 3 of the Constitution states that all citizens are equal and have equal social dignity, without any difference in gender, race, spoken language, religion, political ideas and social and personal features. The article adds that the Republic (and not only the State, but all social actors) must remove all the economic and social obstacles limiting citizens' equality and freedom, because even though individuals are equal for the law, they are not in their daily life in society. In accordance with this article (and against all the previous negative tendencies), many parts of civil society are very active in standing up for social justice, solidarity and inclusion, often to compensate for the State's inability to guarantee equality. For example, in 2022, one fifth of the Italian population (and one fourth of foreign workers) was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (higher than the European average) (ISTAT, 2023).

Italy has signed the International [Labour Organization's Declaration on Social Justice for a fair Globalization](#), updated in 2022 to reflect the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, many social injustice cases exist, such as the disastrous caporalato system, exploiting the work of migrants and Italian citizens finding themselves in a state of need. Again, civil society tries to contrast inequality with specific action (Italy: eight municipalities published plans to combat labour exploitation in agriculture, 2024).

Current situation of values

In Italy, democracy, human rights, social justice, solidarity and the other European values are promoted through formal and informal education in the following ways:

Curricular activities in compulsory education: European values are part of a teaching called Educazione Civica (citizenship education), created in 2020 by the Italian Ministry of Education (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, 2020). As it is a transversal subject, all teachers can approach Educazione Civica's topics during their working hours: usually, they coordinate at class level to integrate these hours in their lessons, but the burden is not equally shared. The teaching has three main value groups: the International and national legal system (including human rights and solidarity), sustainable development and digital citizenship. Each class is meant to use at least 33 hours for Educazione Civica activities.

Curricular activities regarding participation and democracy are often based on national and European programmes, which give teachers educational resources and the possibility to create a network.

Extracurricular activities in compulsory education: Each school (and sometimes only some class groups) decides to take part in specific projects led by local or international associations, NGOs, etc. Some of these activities are classified as PCTO (Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e l'Orientamento), activities capable of giving students the transversal competences and give them an overview of the world of work in order to choose their career path with awareness.

Projects are co-funded by the EU under different programs and involving directly students and young people.

Informal education and activism: Courses, projects and activities organised by NGOs, local and national associations, research organisms, etc. An example is given by Amnesty International's Task Forces (Amnesty International), groups of activists formed by experts, educators and professionals to react effectively to specific challenges related to human rights' defence.

University courses: University faculties such as International Studies, Political Sciences, Communication and Sociology offer courses focused on democracy and populism, based on an academic and usually comparative approach.

In addition, there are summer, and winter courses offered by research institutions aimed at university students and professionals, such as Populism in contemporary world (ISPI, 2023), a 7-days course organised by the research institute ISPI (Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale), active in research and education in international politics. It requires a fee to participate, and its target are university students, recent graduates and professionals. The course has an academic approach: its objective is to analyse populism (especially the European one) with all its features and in relation to democracy.

The following are some specific activities meant to promote these values.

Democracy, rule of law and participation

Spendiamoli insieme (Let's spend it together) (Parliament Watch Italia, 2022): a project created by the association Parliament Watch Italia to spread awareness and share knowledge on participatory democracy among the public in Sicily, where the regional law 5/2014 gives to each municipality the possibility to directly involve citizens in decisions about the destination of some public funds. Recently, the project evolved in *Scriviamola insieme* (Let's write it together), to foster a law amendment led by Sicilian citizens.

Giovani agenti del cambiamento e partecipazione democratica (Osservatorio Politiche Giovanili, 2022) : an ongoing project created by the foundation Fondazione per la Ricerca Economica e Sociale ETS and the Italian Government's Agenzia Italiana per la Gioventù (which administers the Erasmus+ projects for Youth and Sport), meant to guide secondary school students to study, calculate and act to reduce the gap generation index of their communities, by participating to the public discourse.

Human rights, equality, social justice

SCUDI - Scuola di Diritti Umani (Cittadinanzattiva, 2024): an EU-funded CERV project led by the organisations Cittadinanzattiva and CILD, meant to contribute to the Chart of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union's implementation by training lawyers and activists for human rights, by developing a legal database and a specific online platform, and by creating a European network of civil society organisations active in sea rescuing.

NGOs such as [Amnesty International](#), [Emergency](#), [Medici senza Frontiere](#) have their educational courses for teachers and students, meant to spread awareness and build knowledge about human rights, equality and social justice.

Tolerance and non-discrimination

DiversaMente - Giovani contro le discriminazioni (ICEI): a project led by the NGO ICEI, involving Italian municipalities, civil society organisations, local authorities and youth centres. It is meant to promote young people's leading activities to fight stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and to build more inclusive communities and cities.

Social justice, solidarity and inclusion

EPIC UP (European Association for Local Democracy): An ongoing EU-funded project coordinated by ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy), meant to develop and test integration strategies for the inclusion of migrants at the local level. It will establish a Community of Practices in six European countries.

Aiutare chi aiuta (Caritas): a programme by the catholic Caritas Italiana and Intesa San Paolo, which in 2020-2021 meant to combat poverty through food sharing, help in finding shelter, and support in job seeking and entrepreneurship. In 2021 and 2022, it aimed to support elderly people and fight youth poverty. In 2023-2024, it focuses on the detainees' integration in society.

Relevant populist slogans in Italy

Populism is a key aspect of some political parties: that's why in order to elaborate a list of the trending populists and anti-democratic slogans, we focused on Italian political parties' communication on social media, and specifically on right-wing parties, which in the country are the ones in the political spectrum relying most on this kind of argumentation to widen their electoral consensus (Napoletano, 2023). Also, they have been recorded by scholars and analysts such as Amnesty International with its Hate Barometer (Amnesty International Italia, 2018).

Populistic slogans can change quickly. In the very last years, for example, in Italy some of them vanished from public debate because of the ending of COVID-19 pandemic, which eliminated one of the crucial issues (the pandemic management). When the emergency slowed down, some of the populistic and anti-democratic slogans of the previous year's became popular again because of remarked conflictual situations (immigration, anti-Roma discourses, family, and islamophobia) (Cataldi, 2024), and some others changed in their contents (European climate action).

1. Immigration and racism

“Immigration from Africa is an invasion, and it is meant to produce a great replacement of white people with black and brown ones. Italian identity is in danger.”

Given Italy’s position, immigration from the Mediterranean has always been very high, and poor countries’ migrants (even from Balkans in the 90s) have always been labelled by populists as invaders, capable of being a serious threat to internal security, especially because of the inadequacy of the system of reception and shelter (Action Aid and Openpolis, 2024). In the last decades, immigration from African and Muslim countries has been considered also as an attempt to replace white “true Christians and Italians” with black or brown people. Even Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni believes in this theory (Vohra, 2023).

2. European Climate Action

“Green policies and ideologies are crazy and useless, Europe is against “real people and workers.”

As climate change has become undeniable, people are suffering not only for its consequences but also for the adaptation measures perceived as an illogical burden. Changes are difficult and require time and policies capable of dealing with complexity and with the many flaws of the global economic system. Fear and uncertainty bring many people to consider sustainability an annoying diktat, and Europe an enemy of common people because of its commitment to climate action (Cotugno, 2024).

3. Sexual orientation and family

“There is only one family, which is the one with a mother and a father. Queer people can’t bring up children nor start a family. They are a threat to traditional families.”

Recent surveys show that the majority of Italians think that family is the union between two people, no matter which gender they are. But the percentage of people thinking that this is not the case is still relevant (37%) (IPSOS and Area Studi Legacoop, 2023), preventing queer people to be considered equal. Right-wing parties strongly support this belief (Amnesty International Italia, 2018).

4. Islamophobia

“Muslims are a threat to security. They only want to impose their beliefs on us, to get rid of our Christian symbols, to make us all Muslim and to cancel our women’s rights.”

It is one of the Italian right-wing parties’ trending slogans about Islam. It reemerges every time that segments of the Italian society (educational institutions, mayors, municipalities, NGOs, etc.) prove to recognise and answer to Muslim needs (with mosques or sharing religious celebrations). Recently, it came back as a school decided to close for the Ramadan’s ending (Il Post, 2024).

5. Anti-Roma discrimination

“Roma people aren’t Italian. They are criminals and burglars; we give them anything they need while Italian people in need are left behind.”

Roma people in Italy are approximately 15.000 - many of them living in the Roma camps (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali - UNAR, 2024) - and 6 out of 10 are Italian citizens (Associazione 21 Luglio, 2023). Antiziganism has always been very strong in Italy, and it is «constantly and uncritically reproduced, not only in the common sense and by the media, but also in political and institutional discourses and actions» (Pontranfolfo, 2020). This lack of elaboration of anti-Gypsyism as a discriminatory discourse makes it difficult to contrast Roma discrimination and further isolation from the rest of the Italian population.

6.4 The Case of Slovenia

A. European Values in national context

Democracy

Slovenia is a parliamentary democratic republic with a proportional electoral system. In Slovenia, power is vested in the people. All adult citizens of the Republic of Slovenia (aged 18 or over) have the right to vote for representatives of the people in general, in multi-party and free elections. Power is divided into the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The holder of the legislative branch is the

parliament, which consists of the National Assembly and the National Council. Executive power is vested in the Government and judicial power is separated from both the legislative and the executive powers (gov.si, 2024).

Civic participation

Civil society is a fundamental pillar of democracy, and in Slovenia, the right to freedom of association is enshrined in the constitution. By providing accessible and high-quality services, civil society organizations in Slovenia play a crucial role in reinforcing democratic values and contributing to social well-being, thus supporting the broader democratic framework.

“The various forms of organization of civil society include trade unions, humanitarian organizations, chambers of commerce and industry and professional chambers, religious communities, youth organizations, sports and cultural associations, social movements, and civil society initiatives.” (gov.si, 2024).

In Slovenia, there are three main forms of NGOs: societies, private institutes and foundations. Institutes have clear founders. Societies, on the other side, have “fluid” membership. Foundations are the rarest form of organization and are primarily designed to raise funds to tackle social problems.

NGOs perform two important functions – they have an advocacy role (drawing attention to specific social, political, environmental and other issues) and provide services (social affairs, healthcare, family, youth, culture, sports, the environment etc.).

Human rights

Human rights and fundamental freedoms hold a central place in the Constitution of Slovenia. Their legal protection reflects the country’s socio-political situation and the level of democracy and rule of law.

The second chapter of the Slovenian Constitution, which addresses human rights and fundamental freedoms, is one of the most important, particularly in defining Slovenia as a democratic and lawful state. The Constitution outlines criminal, civil, and administrative protection for these rights, with the Constitutional Court playing a crucial role in this protection system.

The realization of protection of human rights depends on several factors, primarily the political will of the current authorities. The state has an obligation to remedy the consequences of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In assessing the **permissibility of limiting human rights** and fundamental freedoms for public interest, the Constitutional Court applies a strict proportionality test based on three questions:

- Is the interference necessary for achieving the goal, meaning it cannot be achieved without this specific interference?
- Is the interference suitable for achieving the goal?
- Are the consequences of the interference proportional to the value of the pursued goal or benefits resulting from it?

Equality

In Slovenia, the concept of human rights is grounded in international frameworks, particularly the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the European Charter of Human Rights.

Central to Slovenia’s values is the principle of **equality**, which is distinguished from equal rights. Equality refers to the absence of any form of discrimination or difference, while equal rights pertain to equal treatment before the law, ensuring fairness in legal and civic processes.

The responsible for equality on a national level is the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and **Equal Opportunities** with its **Equal Opportunities Division** which coordinates gender equality policy (gov.si, 2024).

It proposes, recommends, implements and facilitates programs and actions aimed at promoting equality between women and men. Their work includes drawing up national programs for equal

opportunities, carrying out analyses and compiling reports, and conducting awareness-raising campaigns.

The main legal act concerning equality is **the Protection Against Discrimination Act (ZVarD)**³ from 2016 which requires that “all persons be treated equally, particularly with regard to employment, education, labour conditions, social protection and social benefits, education, and access to goods and services that are available to the public.” (gov.si, 2024).

This act also established the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, an independent and autonomous state body mandated to deal with discrimination. They research discrimination, publish reports and recommendations, supervise anti-discrimination compliance, assist individuals facing discrimination, raise public awareness, monitor the national situation, propose special measures, participate in court cases, and exchange information with the EU.⁴

Tolerance, non-discrimination, hate speech

In Slovenia, the official legal term "hate speech" does not exist. However, this does not mean that the actions referred to by this term are not punishable. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, in Article 63, defines any encouragement of national, racial, religious, or other forms of inequality, as well as inciting national, racial, religious, or other hatred and intolerance, as unconstitutional.

It also prohibits any promotion of violence and war. Various legal acts address this constitutional principle, with the most serious forms of hate speech being penalized under Article 297 of the Criminal Code (KZ-1), titled "Public Incitement to Hatred, Violence, or Intolerance." **Offenders can be sentenced to up to two years in prison.**

Rule of law and social justice

Slovenia is governed by the principles of the rule of law and operates as a social state. The rule of law is based on the supremacy of the Constitution and legislative acts, which form the legal framework of the state. These rules ensure that all actions, by individuals or institutions, are subject to the law, providing limits and controls on the exercise of authority. Independent courts are responsible for interpreting and applying these laws to specific cases.

The rule of law guarantees respect for human rights and freedoms, ensuring that government power is exercised within legal boundaries. Additionally, legal norms regulate the positions and relationships of legal entities, contributing to legal certainty and the orderly functioning of society.

Solidarity

In the socialist past of the country, this word was misused. When we were developing democracy in the 1990s, it was not modernized, likely because it evoked associations with the old regime.

Outside political use of the word solidarity as a value and with-it related activities are regarded very highly among Slovenians. Many people serve as volunteer firefighters, rescue workers, and cave rescuers. The floods of 2023 demonstrated again that people quickly come to each other's aid, especially when it involves fellow citizens in distress.

According to data from the Firefighters' Association of Slovenia (2024), at the end of 2017, there were 1,299 volunteer firefighting associations and 42 volunteer industrial firefighting associations, organized into 120 fire brigades. These associations included **162.464 volunteer firefighters**, in other words: nearly one in every 13 Slovenians was a member of a firefighting organization.

Both the Red Cross of Slovenia (14.000) and Slovenian Caritas (more than 10.000 in 457 parish organizations) also have a large number of volunteers engaged in their efforts.

Today, the term Solidarity is often mentioned in connection with the European Union, which provides an international dimension to it.

Inclusion

³ Republic of Slovenia Protection Against Discrimination Act. Link: <https://zagovornik.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Pada.pdf>

⁴ Republic of Slovenia: Advocate of the Principle of Equality. Link: <https://zagovornik.si/en/>

When talking about Inclusion, we mostly talk about social inclusion concerning different groups of vulnerable people: people with different forms of disabilities, people with migrant backgrounds, Roma, young people, children and elderly.

There are different programs to prevent social exclusion and to enable better social inclusion financed by the government and run by different NGOs or public institutions.

A popular topic last few years is digital inclusion as the ability of individuals to access available information and communication infrastructure, as well as digital technologies and services. On the state level, the person responsible for this inclusion is the Sector for Digital Inclusion (under the Ministry for Digital Transformation). They take care of carrying out the Law on Promoting Digital Inclusion and developing a plan of measures to promote digital inclusion. Their main measure is providing access to training for digital competencies, which encompass the confident, critical, and responsible use of a wide range of technologies for learning, work, and participation in society.

B. Current Situation and Status of Upholding European Values in Slovenia

Democracy

According to the Freedom House (2024), Slovenia is reaching the Freedom score of 96 out of 100 points. (in comparison to other project partners' countries, the score for Germany is 93, 90 for Italy, 65 for Hungary and 33 for Türkiye). According to the national report for 2024 the points were lost in the field of "safeguards against official corruption" (3 out of 4 points), "independent media" (also 3 out of 4 points), "equal treatment of various segments of the population" (also 3 out of 4 points) and "equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation" (also 3 out of 4 points).

According to the Global State of Democracy Initiative, Slovenia "performs in the high range in Representation, Rights and Participation, and it exhibits mid-range performance in Rule of Law in the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) framework. The country performs in the top 25 per cent globally in almost all factors, except for Electoral Participation" (Global State of Democracy Initiative, 2024).

Despite receiving high scores on various indices, certain areas in Slovenia remain undemocratized, meaning that in these sectors, there is a significant imbalance among different political groups. In some cases, this situation is still linked to the conditions of the former socialist regime.

One such example is media freedom. In the fields of television, press, and partly radio -still the most influential media channels in the country- few new media initiatives have succeeded following the transition to democracy. Similarly, the healthcare system remains undemocratized, where a single state insurance institution (ZZZS) determines what will be financed from the healthcare fund and what will not. A third such area is the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), where many key roles are still held by organizations established during the previous regime, making it difficult for new ones to find their place.

Civic Participation

After the peak of civic engagement in the late 1980s, participation slightly declined in the 1990s under the new democratic regime. Slovenia remained for many years the country with the weakest NGO sector (Cepin, Kozoderc and Kronegger, 2014).

The low level of participation was likely due to constant development and economic progress. However, in recent years, growing dissatisfaction among citizens has strengthened awareness of the importance of active social participation.

One phenomenon worth noting in this context is the manipulation of civic participation by political actors. Protests, often labelled as "spontaneous," are frequently organized by stakeholders who are closely connected with political parties.

Human rights

According to the Freedom House, Slovenia generally respects political rights and civil liberties. There are still some issues, but on a minor scale:

- Roma face poverty, hate speech, social marginalization, lack of access to early and secondary education, legal housing, and basic utilities.
- Students with disabilities often have difficulty accessing educational services.

- Economic exploitation: Some cases of exploitation of foreign/migrant workers, withholding payment etc. Authorities prosecuted suspected human traffickers.
- Erased: Some of the 25,000 affected citizens of the former Yugoslavia who had not applied for Slovenian citizenship after independence and whose residency documents were deleted by authorities in 1992 of the Erased have not received compensation.
- LGBT+ discrimination, even if legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation exist.
- Migrant crisis. The UNHCR has lauded Slovenia as "welcoming," but warned that the country was under strain due to the number of refugees and asylum seekers. The asylum Centers can be overcrowded.

The education on Human rights is also well-established. A notable influence in youth work has been the Compass program, developed by the Council of Europe, which has shaped educational approaches to human rights.

Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (2023) provides the EU and its member states with a Gender Equality Index, which measures gender equality on a scale from 1 to 100. In 2023, Slovenia received a score of 69.4, placing it 12th among EU countries. This score is slightly below the EU average of 70.2. Since 2010, Slovenia's score has improved by 6.7 points, primarily due to progress in the area of power. However, the country's overall ranking has remained stable, as other EU countries have also made advancements in gender equality.

When compared to other project partner countries, Germany has a score of 70.8, Italy 68.2, and Hungary 57.3. There is no available data for Türkiye.

Tolerance, Non-discrimination and Hate Speech

Slovenian courts have begun sentencing internet and social media users to **conditional prison terms** for spreading hate and intolerance (Cerar, 2021).

1. Prosecutions because of hate speech

Analysis of the State Prosecutor's Practice in Prosecuting Offenders of Offenses Under Article 297 of the Criminal Code (KZ-1) Since 2010 reveals that by the end of 2022, courts had dealt with 491 cases of hate speech handled by the prosecutor's office. Out of these, only 34 resulted in convictions, **averaging less than three per year.**

In 369 cases, which is 75% of the total number of cases, the prosecutor's office dismissed the charges, concluding that the conditions for prosecution were not met. As a result, only 122 cases (25% of all charges) were taken to court. Among these, there were 5 acquittals and 34 convictions (Zavod PIP, 2024).

In 2016, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern over the rise of hate speech online in Slovenia. By 2019, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) noted that hate speech cases in Slovenia were rarely prosecuted.

2. Reasons for the low number of convictions

According to Zavod PIP (2024) the 2012 amendment to the Criminal Code introduced a condition for prosecuting hate speech: **it must threaten or disturb public order.** This means hate speech isn't **punishable unless it disrupts order.** Before 2012, the criteria for prosecution were stricter.

The Supreme Court ruled in 2019 that if hate speech involves **threats or insults, it doesn't need to disturb public order to be considered a crime.** This could affect future prosecutions. Despite this, from 2019 to 2022, there were only 9 convictions for hate speech, with many cases dismissed due to insufficient grounds.

The decline in convictions is linked to the added condition regarding public order. Slovenia is not mandated to impose such a condition based on EU guidelines, which allow member states to decide how to address hate speech. Thus, Slovenia has opted to only penalize hate speech that disrupts public order.

Reporting Hate Speech in Slovenia

Since March 1, 2022, the platform Spletno oko has shifted its focus exclusively to combating child sexual abuse and no longer handles reports of hate speech or cyberbullying. Alleged illegal hate speech can now be reported anonymously to the **police**, either online or in person at the nearest police station.

Additionally, incidents of Christianophobia and vandalism targeting Slovenian Catholics can be reported via this platform: [Report Point for Christianophobia and Vandalism Against Slovenian Catholics](#).

Rule of law and social justice

According to the World Justice Project (2024), Slovenia ranks 27th out of 142 Countries in the Rule of Law Index with an overall score of 0,69, which is above the global average of 0,55 and under the regional average of 0,74.

The European Commission's fifth annual Rule of Law Report for 2024 also shows that Slovenia has made progress in almost all areas: the justice system, the anti-corruption framework, media pluralism and freedom, and other institutional matters related to checks and balances.

The Commission at the same time notes **a slight increase in court backlogs** and **the duration of trials in money laundering and corruption cases**. Regarding the expansion of the media regulator's competencies, some challenges remain concerning the resources available and the risks of political influence.

Solidarity and Inclusion

Solidarity is a very fashionable word in the current political assembly, but how that really helps the citizens remains a question.

The new **Ministry of Solidary-Based Future**⁵, established in 2023, is responsible for long-term care (previously under the Ministry of Health), housing policy (previously under the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning), and economic democracy (previously within the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology). As for now (October 2024), it has not reached any of the goals they set for themselves.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia 2023 adopted the Law on Intervention Measures to Eliminate the Consequences of Floods and Landslides of August 2023 (ZIUOPZP), which, among others, introduces a **compulsory solidarity contribution for 2023 and 2024** and the possibility to organize **solidarity working Saturday**.

Solidarity contribution applies to individuals (whose income does not exceed 35 % of the average salary) as well as legal entities (business income and gross income) and it is basically just another tax you have to pay at the end of the year.

An employer may also organize one **Solidarity Working Saturday** in 2023 and one in 2024. The employee's contribution is the amount of the net salary earned on the Solidarity Working Saturday and the employer's contribution is equal to the employee contribution (Mercina, 2023).

The corporate sector has responded critically to a mandatory contribution to business, arguing that this will place an undue burden on already overtaxed businesses (The Slovenian Press Agency [STA], 2024)

Regarding the current discourse in Slovenia, there are no unified slogans or catchphrases, but certain themes and motifs are frequently repeated in conversations. Studies that examine hate speech in Slovenia generally do not focus on collecting specific examples, and since the termination of the **Spletno oko** (Internet Eye) project, there is no recent information available on reports of hate speech or their content.

Relevant populist slogans in Slovenia

For the selection of the "slogans," it's relied on a master's thesis of Šegula (2020) that investigated the language and content of hateful comments on online platforms, providing a good summary of the main themes. Here are some examples:

⁵ Link: <https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/ministries/ministry-of-solidarity-based-future/about-the-ministry/>

1. ***“Brezposelni posamezniki družbe ne delajo ničesar koristnega. Mnogi ljudje delajo, da preživijo, brezposelnim pa to ni potrebno.”***

“Unemployed individuals contribute nothing useful to society. Many people work to survive, but the unemployed do not need to.”

2. ***“Islam širi sovraštvo. Muslimani so teroristi in so zaslužni za povečanje kriminalitete. Pripadniki islama nam dajejo občutek strahu in negotovosti.”***

“Islam spreads hatred. Muslims are terrorists and responsible for the increase in crime. Followers of Islam make us feel fear and insecurity.”

3. ***“Treba je ukrepati proti priseljencem. Priseljenci predstavljajo nevarnost za domače prebivalstvo.”***

“Action must be taken against immigrants. Immigrants pose a threat to the native population.”

4. ***“Predstavniki LGBTQ+ nimajo pravice postavljati zahtev za svoje pravice. LGBTQ+ izrabljajo javne finance za svoje namene.”***

“LGBTQ+ individuals have no right to make demands for their rights. The LGBTQ+ community misuses public funds for their own purposes.”

It is important to highlight that the statements mentioned above have been adapted into neutral and formal language, with the core message and content of the statements remaining intact. In their original form, these statements often include offensive language, insults, and a variety of slang and regional dialect expressions.

By "translating" them into more neutral terms, we aim to preserve their essential meaning without the use of vulgarities and colloquialisms that typically characterize the original comments. This approach helps maintain the focus on the substance of the statements rather than the tone or style in which they were originally expressed.

In addition to those already mentioned above, hate speech is also directed at other social groups of people from different backgrounds, such as the Roma people, members of non-governmental organizations, members of the Catholic Church, young people, the elderly, and others.

The frequency of these occurrences depends on which political faction (left or right) is currently in power and the prevailing circumstances. For example, as of autumn 2024, the Roma issue is particularly prominent due to a significant rise in crimes committed by the Roma in a region of the country, attributed to unsuccessful integration efforts.

Most of this hate speech occurs in online posts, reflecting the widespread presence of stereotypes in public discourse.

In the Slovenian language, derogatory and pejorative terms are often used, especially for representatives of minorities or political options/worldviews that differ from those of the speakers. Some specific names for those groups or individuals are:

Janšist: (association with "fascist, racist"): a member or voter of the Slovenian Democratic Party (a political party in Slovenia, generally associated with centre-right and conservative ideologies).

Komunajzer: (from a word for communist) a member or voter of left-wing parties.

Katoliban (mix of catholic and Taliban): a derogatory term for a Catholic.

Peder: A derogatory term for a gay man, often used to insult or demean.

Cigani or cigoti: A pejorative term for Roma people, often associated with negative stereotypes.

Rdečkar: A pejorative for someone associated with leftist ideologies, often implying communist sympathies.

Čefurji or čefurčki: A pejorative term for people from the former Yugoslavia, particularly those from the regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia.

6.5 The Case of Türkiye

A. European Values in national context

The Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye defines the principles of the State as "... a democratic, secular and social State of law, respectful of human rights, loyal to Atatürk's nationalism, in the spirit of social peace, national solidarity and justice.". Besides, Türkiye was one of the first countries to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and put it into force by publishing it in the Official Gazette dated 27 May 1949.

Everyone is equal before the law, and this is guaranteed by Article 10 of the Constitution titled 'Equality Before the Law' which states that "Everyone is equal before the law without discrimination on the grounds of language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect and similar reasons." In addition, Article 14 of the Constitution titled 'Freedom of Religion and Conscience' protects individuals' freedom of belief and worship (The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye [TBMM], 2024).

At the Copenhagen Summit in 1993, the European Union set a series of political criteria for the countries to become members, called the Copenhagen Criteria, such as "democracy, rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities and respect for minorities", and made these criteria binding for candidate countries, including Türkiye. Accordingly, Türkiye declared a candidate to the Union in 1999 and has undertaken a series of legislative reforms to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria and the EU acquis (Arsava, 2019).

In line with its EU membership objectives, Türkiye embarked on a major constitutional legislative reform process between 2001 and 2004, first amending 34 articles of the Constitution in 2001, 27 of which were related to human rights and minorities (Örtlek, 2014). These amendments included the extension of the limits of freedom of thought (Article 5), the expansion of the scope of fundamental rights and freedoms (Article 13), the inability to abuse fundamental rights and freedoms and the Constitution to the detriment of these freedoms (Article 14), the ability of citizens to use languages, dialects and dialects other than Turkish in their thoughts and expressions (Article 26) and the ability to broadcast in languages, dialects and dialects other than Turkish (Article 28) (Oran, 2001).

In addition to the constitutional amendments, Türkiye has also amended several laws that undermine human and minority rights to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria and to this end, Türkiye enacted a total of 9 EU Harmonisation Packages between 2001 and 2004 (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). At the 2005 Luxembourg Summit, Türkiye officially started accession negotiations with the EU. Türkiye, which slowed down in terms of democratic reforms between 2006 and 2016, was criticised by the EU in terms of the functioning of democratic criteria due to the State of Emergency and emergency decrees declared after the coup attempt in 2016 and the Presidential Government System adopted with the 2017 Constitutional Amendment Referendum (Economic Development Foundation [İKV], 2024).

In 2021, the Human Rights Action Plan was published by the Ministry of Justice of Türkiye as a part of the steps for harmonisation with the EU acquis and legal reform, which also has specific objectives such as allocating a stronger human rights protection system; protecting and promoting freedoms of expression, association and religion; and ensuring high-level administrative and public awareness on human rights.

Within the framework of the Human Rights Action Plan, it is emphasised that everyone is equal before the law without any discrimination based on language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect and similar grounds; it is stated that the provision of public service to everyone equally, impartially and honestly is the basic feature of all administrative activities. The Human Rights Action Plan also states that "... principles such as social consensus based on differences, respect for the rights of others, equality before the law are universal values; and these values also have a function that fills democracy..".

The 2023 Türkiye Report of the Delegation of the European Union to Türkiye underlined that, despite the continued implementation of the human rights action plan adopted in 2021, Türkiye's backsliding in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms continued and that Turkish legislation and its implementation should be brought in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (European Union Delegation to Türkiye, 2023).

The report noted that Türkiye had moved away from the standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms to which it had committed as a member of the Council of Europe and that there had been a serious setback in the exercise of their freedoms and freedom of expression due to widespread restrictions on the activities of journalists, writers, lawyers, academics, human rights defenders and critical voices (European Union Delegation to Türkiye, 2023).

According to another report titled 'Democracy Index 2022' Türkiye is the only "hybrid regime" in the region, meaning that democracy is seriously circumscribed. From a high of 5.76 points on the democracy index in 2012, Türkiye's average score has fallen by 1.41 points to 4.35 in 2022. While the report indicated that Türkiye's democratic values keep eroding, this downward trajectory reflects the increasingly autocratic rule of its strongman presidency system (Economist Intelligence, 2023).

The history of minority rights in Türkiye has long been a troubled subject. According to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), conditions for being accepted as a minority are being numerically small, not being a dominant group, being a citizen of the relevant country and having minority consciousness, i.e. self-consciousness (Taşdemir & Saraçlı, 2007). However, according to the Lausanne Peace Treaty which was signed on 4 July 1923 after the First World War, the minorities in Türkiye were defined only as non-Muslim citizens (Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities), and all minorities were recognised as Turkish nationals, and it was stated that there would be no discrimination between citizens based on religion, language or race (Turkish History Institution, 2024).

Since the early 20th century, Türkiye has practiced a policy of "Turkification" a form of cultural assimilation that fails to recognise individuals' rights to ethnic, national, and religious self-identification. Under the recent powerful presidential system, Türkiye's religious and ethnic minorities still face increasing difficulties and discrimination. Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and Jews, among other groups, have all suffered from persecution in recent years, as the government uses the country's non-Turkish minorities as scapegoats in political consequences, targeting of ethnic and religious minorities has increased (Turkish Democracy Project, 2024).

While many Jewish scientists, artists and families who escaped from the Nazi regime during World War II were protected by Türkiye, the attacks of Israel against Muslim Palestinians and the crimes against humanity that were committed subsequently have led to an increasing reaction against Jews in Türkiye. Finally, with the war that started between the States of Palestine and Israel on October 7, 2023, anti-Semitism in society has reached its highest levels due to the disproportionate force Israel has used against civilians and the crimes it has committed (Anadolu Ajansı, 2024).

With the reforms carried out by Atatürk with the foundation of the Republic, women in Türkiye gained the right to vote and be elected in municipal elections in 1930 and general elections in 1934, before many countries in the world. Although women and men are equal before the law in Türkiye, women still face discrimination and many other problems in social life today. The main issues regarding women's rights in Türkiye today can be summarised as domestic violence and bullying, social and cultural pressure, deprivation of education and training opportunities, deprivation of the right to work, mobbing in the workplace, discrimination and income inequality (Kadir Has University, 2022).

While violence and bullying against women continue to be an increasing problem in Türkiye, according to 2023 data from the Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu (We Will Stop Femicide Platform), a total of 4099 women were killed by men in Türkiye between 2008 and 2023. In parallel with this data, according to the results of the 2023/24 Global Women, Peace and Security Index (WPS Index), which publishes data on the status of women in society and their peace and security, Türkiye ranks 99th among 177 countries. Türkiye ranks last among the countries in its region in the education and social security categories (SES, 2023).

On the other hand, women's participation in the labour force and their rates in administrative positions in Türkiye also reveal inequalities in women's opportunities. According to the research titled Women in Statistics 2022 by the state statistics institution TÜİK, the rate of women graduating from higher education in Türkiye is announced as 20.9%, the labour force participation rate is 32.8%, the rate of women deputies is 17.3%, and the rate of women in senior and middle-level management positions is 20.7% (TÜİK, 2022).

In its 2023 Türkiye Report, the EU highlighted structural challenges in women's employment and the poor state of women's rights, while noting that gender-based violence, discrimination and hate speech remain a serious concern, and criticized Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, a Council

of Europe treaty that sets rules to protect women against domestic violence, in March 2021, accusing it of eroding the fabric of religious conservatives and Turkish family values, as well as supporting LGBTQ rights (European Union Delegation to Türkiye, 2023).

B. Current Situation and Status of Upholding European Values in Türkiye

The Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye (TBMM, 1982) protects fundamental values such as democracy, human rights, equality and the rule of law. The Constitution provides various guarantees for the protection of these values. In particular, human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed in the Constitution.

However, the restrictions on fundamental rights and freedoms that started with the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 and spread across Türkiye as a social reaction, the state of emergency declared and legal arrangements made following the military coup attempt in 2016, and the problems regarding the separation of powers under the Presidential Government System that started to be implemented in 2017 have led to increasing concerns about the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and Türkiye has been heavily criticized by the European Union (European Parliament, 2023).

In Türkiye, the governments' perspective on civil and social policies and fundamental rights and freedoms may vary according to the intellectual orientation and political priorities of the rulers. In the early 2000s, within the framework of the European Union membership target and the harmonisation process, Türkiye took very important steps and made constitutional arrangements on human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Oran, 2005).

However, the centralist and security-oriented policies implemented by the government in recent years have weakened the protection of these values. The Amnesty International (IAO) report on the State of Human Rights in the World, published in 2024, underlines those rights such as media freedom, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, and criticism of the government in Türkiye are restricted by repression.

Turkish Education System is structured as 4 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary school and 4 years of high school, and the process of planning and preparing the education and training programs at each level is carried out by the Board of Education and Training, which operates under the Turkish Ministry of National Education. The Turkish system teaches the values such as democracy, human rights, and tolerance are taught in the 4th grade of primary school and as a 2-hour lesson per week within the scope of the "Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy Course".

The curriculum of the course consists of six units: (1) Being Human, (2) Rights, Freedom and Responsibility, (3) Justice and Equality, (4) Reconciliation, (5) Rules, and (6) Living Together. The course, which was first taught in 2013 under the name of "Democracy and Human Rights Course", has continued to be taught under the name of "Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy Course" since 2018. The course aims to teach students conceptual knowledge as well as to provide them with basic values related to human rights, citizenship and democracy. Another aim of the course is to ensure that students turn this knowledge and values into a lifestyle and culture (MEB, 2018).

The Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy Course Curriculum, which was prepared by the Presidency of the Board of Education and Training (2018) in a way that is compatible with the values that are accepted as structures that strengthen and regulate the relationships between people, society and the state and that have emerged as a result of these relationships with written and unwritten rules, has stated that the aim is to raise students who respect human rights and freedoms, fulfill their responsibilities towards themselves, other citizens, society and the state, act fairly and equally and observe these, solve problems in a conciliatory and non-violent way, and adopt a culture of living together and contribute to this.

In the course where fundamental documents such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights are introduced to students, human, national, spiritual, and universal values such as open-mindedness, justice, friendship, equality, sharing, love, caring about family unity, sensitivity, trust, patience, responsibility, respect, and freedom are included.

In addition, in Turkish, History and Social Sciences courses at the primary level (1st-8th grades) and in Philosophy and Logic courses at the secondary level (9th-12th grades), activities such as debates, etc. have been proposed in which the aim is to teach students a set of universal values, including European

values, integrated into the course. However, the scope of these activities is limited and usually left to the initiative and competence of teachers.

For example, during the implementation process of MoNE's primary education level Turkish Lesson Teaching Programme (2019), it is planned to teach 3 compulsory and 8 optional themes will be taught at each grade level. Within the scope of the theme titled 'Rights and Freedoms', students will be taught individual rights, first generation rights, children's rights, democracy, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of thought, right to education, disability rights, equality, freedom of communication, defending your rights, patient rights, animal rights, freedom of expression, second generation rights, right to belief, human rights, personal inviolability, compassion, privacy, freedoms, freedom of movement, fundamental rights and freedoms, gender justice, gender equality, right to life.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) and other civil initiatives and collaborations play an important role in defending values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Türkiye. However, the scope of NGOs' activities has gradually narrowed in recent years. Many NGOs have found it difficult to continue their activities under government pressure and some have even been closed down. Nevertheless, human rights defenders, women's rights activists, LGBT+ organisations and other civil society actors continue an active struggle for the protection of these values (Human Rights Association, 2023).

Despite the challenges, European values in Türkiye are being defended by citizens, institutions and through various civil initiatives and organizational collaborations. The resilience of civil society, the efforts of academic and intellectual circles, and international pressure mechanisms are critical for the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights values in Türkiye.

An example of the work of civil initiatives and organizations in Türkiye on the protection and dissemination of European values is the "European Values in School" project supported by the Erasmus+ Lifelong Learning Jean Monnet Program by the Teachers Academy Foundation (ÖRAV), which was established in 2008 to protect children's right to access quality education by supporting the professional and personal development of teachers. The project aimed to provide an environment for teachers to exchange ideas on how fundamental rights and freedoms, human rights, gender equality, pluralistic democracy, environment and tolerance can be integrated into the education system, the importance of personal words and behaviours of educators as well as the education system, and methods on fundamental rights and freedoms in the classroom (ÖRAV, 2024).

Relevant populist slogans in Türkiye

1. "Tek millet, tek bayrak, tek vatan, tek devlet."

"One nation, one flag, one homeland, one state."

Slogan of nationalist movement in Türkiye. This slogan is often used by Turkish politicians and government supporters. The slogan promotes a singular Turkish national identity. It is used to justify policies that limit rights of ethnic minority groups who do not share this Turkish identity.

'One nation' refers to the idea that all Turkish people should be seen as united in one common nation; 'One flag' emphasizes that the Turkish flag should represent the Turkish nation; 'One homeland' states that the territory of the Republic of Türkiye is the common homeland for all Turks; and 'One state' advocates that the Turkish nation should unite around the unity of the Turkish Republic. In general, it is a powerful slogan that highlights the message of unity and solidarity in Turkish nationalism, alluding to its indivisible integrity. The slogan is also invoked to argue against dissenting opinions in the name of national unity.

2. "Çingene'den çoban olmaz, Yahudi'den pehlivan."

"A gypsy cannot be a shepherd; a Jew cannot be a wrestler."

A racist Turkish proverb denigrating Gypsies and Jews. Gypsies are assumed to have not the proper state of mind, physical attributes or personality traits to be shepherds. And Jews are assumed to lack the qualities to be wrestlers (Pehlivan). Looking deeper, this saying reflects some of the stereotypes existing in Turkish society:

Gypsies are seen as an unreliable people unable to adapt to a settled life. So, they are deemed unsuitable for a responsible job like shepherding. Jews, on the other hand, are stereotyped as being

cunning and intelligent but lacking physical strength and courage. So, they are not considered eligible for a strength-requiring job like wrestling.

Therefore, this saying reinforces stereotypes about certain ethnic groups and deems them inadequate for some occupations.

3. *"Elinin hamuruyla erkek işine karışma."*

"Do not interfere in men's work while your hands are doughy."

This is a Turkish idiom that belittles women by characterizing them as inadequate and incompetent compared to men and reflects patriarchal gender roles in Turkish society. "Doughy hands" refers to women's traditional role being mainly in the domestic sphere, occupied with tasks like making bread. The expression belittles women as being unfit and incompetent to participate in "men's work" outside of the home.

It originates from the traditional social structure in Türkiye where the male head of household is considered superior, while women are limited to childcare, housework, and other domestic duties. The idiom implies that women lack the capacity or qualifications to be involved in men's affairs or professional matters deemed outside of their capabilities.

When women do attempt to speak up on issues seen as men's domain, this idiom can be used in a derogatory fashion to put women in their place and enforce strict gender divisions. The separation between the domestic realm as female, and the public/professional realms as male, makes "interfering in men's work" unacceptable within traditional patriarchal norms.

The idiom belittles women as less competent than men, narrowly confines them to child-rearing and domestic tasks, and discourages them from openly participating in matters outside the home.

4. *"Burası Türkiye!"*

"Here is Türkiye!"

An anonymous expression commonly known among the Turkish people. This expression is a two-way slogan which has different meanings depending on the person saying it and the place and time it is said. For example, when a person with secular sensitivities says this to a person wearing a headscarf, it is understood that 'Türkiye is a secular, democratic republic', whereas when a person with religious sensitivities says this phrase to a person wearing a miniskirt, it is understood that 'Türkiye is a religious, conservative country'. In both cases, it is an expression in which one side points out to the other side that he/she is in the minority and imposes that everyone should dress in the way adopted by the majority that he/she thinks is like him/her.

5. *"İstanbul Sözleşmesi yaşatır."*

"Istanbul Convention keeps alive."

A slogan used by civil society against violence against women in Türkiye. This slogan emerged after Türkiye, the first country to sign the Istanbul Convention on 11 May 2011, which was designed to support the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence, decided to withdraw from the convention by Presidential Decree on 20 March 2021. The slogan has become widespread as many civil society organisations, particularly women's and human rights associations in Türkiye, and private sector organisations have taken a public stance in favour of Türkiye not withdrawing from the convention. The slogan argues that withdrawal from the convention means Türkiye's abandonment of its obligations in the field of combating violence against women.

7. Gaps and Limitations

Chapter 7 investigates the gaps and limitations in promoting key European values through educational initiatives and programs targeting youth, youth trainers, educators, and school teachers within the national context. By identifying these challenges and barriers, this chapter aims to provide recommendations for addressing them in the final report and informing the development of the Stand Up For Europe program. The analysis reveals several obstacles in effectively transmitting European values to youth groups and educators working with young people. These challenges include conflicting cultural and social norms that undermine human rights lessons, a lack of practical instruction for teachers to implement values education, short-duration youth trainer workshops that lack continuous support, and academics struggling to transfer their theoretical knowledge on values to practical settings. The chapter highlights the need for further exploration and research in specific areas to bridge the gaps in existing educational initiatives and training programs. This chapter provides valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of values education within the national context.

7.1 Gaps and Limitations in German Research

Political education and its didactics have been an integral part of educational work in Germany since the end of the Second World War, both in schools and in extracurricular education and adult education. There are numerous university chairs, institutes, networks and extracurricular educational organisations dedicated exclusively to this work. Civic education is a compulsory part of the curriculum at all schools and state-funded adult education centres. Due to the abundance and diversity, it is difficult to determine whether there are comparable training programmes to Hufer's argumentation training and how they are used. It cannot be ruled out that there are more effective approaches. Focusing on this one training and using it as the basis for this project could be arbitrary and unjustified. However, civic training is in any case very widespread and has been used for 25 years. It is also problematic to determine whether there are long-term and political effects of these activities. Impact research cannot provide reliable methods and results in this regard. It is also necessary to reflect on the world view and political stance behind such training. In Germany, representatives of the right-wing populist party strongly criticise the work of democratic political education because it belongs to the "left-liberal spectrum". The AfD party pursues right-wing populist educational goals in its political education work (via the Erasmus Foundation), for example on topics such as tradition, national consciousness, migration, etc. (Schillo 2019)

In contrast, there is a wealth of analyses, concepts and research on the subject of values, both theoretical and empirical. This reflects the great diversity and complexity of this topic. Even the operationalisation of the term "values" in a research setting is problematic. Does it only refer to the deeper, often unconscious and often contradictory attitudes and convictions? Or are they one's own life goals or ideas of social development? Are these values adopted by others (e.g. from the constitution, a church, the social environment, political parties)? It is also necessary to scrutinise one's own values, which (even unconsciously) form the basis of one's own actions, for example in political education, in researching values or in writing. In principle, the values of the liberal-democratic order laid down in European resolutions should also apply to this analysis.

7.2 Gaps and Limitations in Hungarian Research

In the analysis, it's presented the results of several research, all which state that the Hungarian education regulatory system (from the point of view of the study: valid up to the age of 18) provides a sufficient basis for argumentative education and the acquisition of appropriate reasoning. According to the latest survey, however, the regulatory system does not offer methodological support to teachers, so they cannot integrate the discussions into everyday education. Few of the practicing pedagogues and those participating in teacher training know how to use discussion and argumentation-based education in everyday life (Venkovits & Makay, 2022).

Although the study examines the age group between 13 and 30 years old, there was not any comprehensive research about argumentation training in Hungarian higher education. In order to gain accurate knowledge of the area, it may be justified to prepare such research. At the same time, courses related to argumentation and European values are available as optional courses for interested

university students. In addition, there are many training courses on the subject, which interested parties can access in paid or free form related to European values.

According to the National Core Curriculum, the subject of civics conveys knowledge, culture and norms, and helps the student to become a loving, independent and responsible, democratically minded citizen, a value-creating member of small and large communities, and to know and practice active and responsible citizen behavior. According to the Equilibrium Institute, there are at least five comprehensive problems with the current model of civics education: the low number of hours, the lack of properly trained teachers, the lack of methodological preparation, the hierarchical and authoritarian functioning of schools, and the lack of institutional and teacher autonomy.

7.3 Gaps and Limitations in Italian Research

As shown in the previous paragraphs, in the Italian education system there are many possibilities to study and get to know more about European values. The most important problem is the huge gap between available information (and courses) and teachers' time: they don't have enough time to look for (and find) exactly what they need, and sometimes the training they are engaged in is too theoretical. Usually, to keep updated, find information and be trained they work for 36 hours a week, the double of what they should do (18 hours) (Orizzonte Scuola, 2023). That's why educational resources should be brief, concise and practice-oriented, to help teachers in gathering the information they need to act.

In 2021, UNESCO's survey Teachers have their say revealed that teachers in the surveyed countries (Italy included) «feel more confident in teaching cognitive skills, and less confident and knowledgeable about behavioural learning and socio-emotional perspectives» (UNESCO, 2021). There is a general need for practical and pragmatic courses capable of training teachers to deal with global citizenship's themes (including human rights, democracy and other European values) in an effective way.

As for the argumentation training, Italy is lacking specific training and practice, if we don't consider the debate methodology, which is more varied in themes and not focused on democratic values and discourse. The huge diffusion of debate methodology, indeed, indicates that teachers are very keen on being trained to use innovative methodologies based on argumentation to bring their students to develop effective skills useful in their daily life as citizens.

7.4 Gaps and Limitations in Slovenian Research

No research was identified that specifically focused on the use of slogans in everyday speech. The referenced studies are primarily concerned with the use of hate speech in written forms, such as on social media platforms. Most of the research on hate speech and hate slogans focuses on these digital mediums, where most national-level measures and interventions are also concentrated.

There is a noticeable lack of research focused on hate speech in everyday conversations. Additionally, recent studies do not sufficiently address beliefs or prejudices at the national level.

This leaves a gap in understanding how hate speech manifests in face-to-face interactions and how underlying prejudices influence these daily communications.

Challenges regarding promoting European values through education initiatives & programs

Rigidity of the school system: The stability of the school system is also one of its biggest disadvantages – it does not adapt to changes and changing trends. If it does, the adaptation is slow and often comes too late, at least for some generations of students. This rigidity is often encountered when working with schools – they have a limited amount of hours when some non-curriculum topics can be included – it is 1 hour per week at most.

Over-saturated market: There are a lot of programs concerning European values that already exist, some of them are good and some of them are bad. When you offer a program concerning European values, you need to «compete» for participants with all those other programs.

Young people do not know youth work. The youth sector in Slovenia is constantly working on promoting youth work amongst young people, but many of them are still not aware what are their

opportunities and what are various programs that exist. They often think those programs are not meant for them (even if they are) or that they cost money (even if they are free).

Reach: A part of those programs is based on competition, or they only reach »good« students, for example: Youth exchanges in high schools are often only offered to very active students or to talented students.

Project-based approach: The time limitation that comes with the project is that it often does not offer continuity or does not systemically address the issues. Some solutions often stay at the »pilot project« level and they are never repeated or developed further.

Missing aspects or areas that require further exploration

Our research on good practice and analysis of existing materials focused mainly on youth work. We could perhaps have further enriched our knowledge with materials from other fields, such as social work or lifelong learning.

7.5 Gaps and Limitations in Turkish Research

While research on argumentation education in Türkiye generally focuses on areas such as science, mathematics and language education, studies on how argumentation techniques can be used or how effective they are in areas such as social sciences, history and philosophy are quite limited. In many studies conducted in Türkiye, quantitative methods (such as questionnaires, achievement tests, etc.) have been used predominantly, and it has been observed that studies using qualitative methods that can provide more in-depth information about in-class interactions, student thought processes and individual effects of argumentation are much more limited.

On the other hand, there are very few studies on how teachers can be supported in argumentation education and argumentation skills, the content of professional development programmes and teachers' approaches to such skills. In addition, in the curricula and programmes prepared and implemented by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, European values and argumentation education are generally very limited and are included in some courses.

In Türkiye, there are a number of cultural, political and structural challenges in the promotion and adoption of European values through education. The strength and persistence of the traditional and conservative social structure in some regions of Türkiye, on issues such as gender equality and freedom of expression, are among the factors that make it more difficult for young people in these regions to adopt these values than those living in large metropolises.

The fact that Türkiye has been waiting at the door as a candidate for membership of the European Union for a long time decreases the trust in the EU by a segment of the society in Türkiye, and this situation may create a distrust or negative perception of European values in the society, making it difficult for educators to defend these values. The increasing social and political polarisation and cultural differences in Türkiye in recent years also make it difficult to promote European values, especially democracy, freedom of expression and human rights, through education.

In Türkiye, both theoretical and practice-based studies in the field of argumentation education should be increased. There is a need for more interdisciplinary studies including the integration of argumentation techniques into teaching processes, the content of teacher training, and the development of measurement and evaluation tools.

In most courses and branches in Türkiye, argumentation education and thus argumentation skills are considered as a competence that emerges because of a series of skills such as communication and critical thinking, rather than being considered as a central competence.

In Türkiye, the limited training and lack of accessible resources on developing teachers' argumentation skills stand out as an important problem and an area that needs to be improved. The number of in-service training courses and professional development programmes organised by National Education and private initiatives on argumentation education should be increased and more accessible resources should be provided.

8. National Insights and Future Directions

Chapter 8 presents the key takeaways from the national report, connecting them to the overall project objectives of advancing argumentation training and promoting European values within the country. By summarizing the main findings, this chapter highlights how the insights gained contribute to the larger goals of the project. The chapter outlines the next steps and further actions required to effectively implement argumentation training and foster European values based on the national context. It suggests potential action plans and future phases that are built upon the findings, ensuring that the project objectives are met in a manner tailored to the specific needs and challenges identified within the country.

Each key takeaway is linked to its relevance in advancing argumentation training and promoting European values, demonstrating how the national insights can inform and guide the project's progress. By connecting the findings to the overarching aims, Chapter 8 sets the stage for the forthcoming comparative analysis in Chapter 9, which will compile data and cases from all partner countries to draw broader conclusions. Ultimately, this chapter serves as a bridge between the national report and the final discussion, providing a clear roadmap for future actions and emphasizing the significance of the national findings in achieving the project's goals.

8.1 Insights from Germany Report

Klaus-Peter Hufer's "Argumentation training against regulars' table slogans" is a method that has been widely used in Germany for 25 years and is still used intensively today. The training is used in numerous variations and has gradually developed further. There are also comparable training programmes, guidelines and guidebooks, most of which incorporate or integrate the Hufer training. The target groups of the training courses are usually either mixed groups of young people in schools and similar institutions or people of all ages who are committed to and interested in the topic. People who use populist slogans, in particular those with "group-focused misanthropy syndrome" and "conspiracy theorists", will not take part in such training courses and therefore belong to the indirect target group. Whether they can actually be changed in their attitude and behaviour must be questioned. This is particularly conceivable for people who use such slogans unconsciously rather than deliberately. One effect may also be that those involved are strengthened, a process of awareness-raising begins among people who are involved in the discussion and liberal-democratic attitudes are generally visible in the political and social sphere.

In Germany, around a third of the population holds liberal-democratic values, another third is indifferent or neutral and a further third follows more (right-wing) populist values. In each case, 10% of the population is strongly in favour of democracy or can be clearly assigned to the right-wing populist camp. In other European countries (e.g. France or Italy), the proportion of populist views is often significantly higher.

As can be seen from the approval rates for populist statements, the topics of migration, religion, especially Islam, unemployment/poverty, homosexuality, gender and gender roles, racism and, for historical reasons, anti-Semitism are particularly relevant topics for argumentation training. In addition - depending on current developments - the topics of war/peace, democracy/freedom of the press and Europe, climate change/health and science.

8.2 Insights from Hungary Report

In Hungary, the average of satisfaction with democracy moves roughly along with the average of Eastern European countries, but at the same time, the standard deviation of satisfaction is much higher than in either the Eastern or Western European regions. In Hungary, citizens increasingly differ in their assessment of the processes taking place in the political system. There are social groups that are increasingly satisfied and there are those that are increasingly dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy. By 2018, economic and material aspects, such as prosperity, money, work, and development, had faded from the primary association of democracy and were significantly pushed into the background. However, this does not mean that when considering satisfaction with democracy, Hungarian society does not take economic performance into account. Based on a multivariate regression model, the positive perception of economic performance showed a clear correlation with satisfaction with democracy. According to party polarization theories, satisfaction with democracy is

also a function of political preference: pro-government voters are much more satisfied with democracy than opposition voters (Susánszky et al., 2021).

Hungarian curriculum regulation became three-level after the change in regime (Perjés & Vass, 2008). The highest-level regulation is the National Core Curriculum, which was published by the Hungarian Government in 2012 and was last amended in 2020. Two-pole curriculum management system has been operating in Hungary since the regime change (previously, centralized management was typical). This means that both central and local decisions prevail in matters of planning (goals, content selection, curriculum layout). This system is between the first and twelfth grades, which means that it normally regulates the education of students up to the age of 18. The second level is the framework curriculum, which has a kind of mediating role between the local curriculum and the National Basic Curriculum. The local curriculum is the third level. It is selected and compiled in accordance with the goals and basic principles set in the pedagogical program of a given school.

In the first chapter, we presented the results of several researches, all of which state that the Hungarian educational regulation system provides a sufficient basis for argumentative education and the acquisition of appropriate reasoning. According to the latest survey, however, the regulatory system does not offer methodological support to teachers, so they cannot actually integrate the discussions into everyday education. Few of the practicing pedagogues and those participating in teacher training know how to use discussion and argumentation-based education in everyday life. According to the researchers, however, all this can be overcome with appropriate training and methodological support (Venkovits & Makay, 2022).

At the same time, it is important to note that the impact of the third level of the Hungarian curriculum regulation on argumentation education has not been examined, such research may be justified. Although the study examines the age group between 13 and 30 years old, we did not find any comprehensive research on the situation of argumentation training in Hungarian higher education. In order to gain accurate knowledge of the area, it may be justified to prepare such research. At the same time, courses related to argumentation and European values are available as optional courses for interested university students. There are also many courses that can be accessed for free or for a fee. The National Core Curriculum is also sufficient to convey European values important to the project. According to the National Core Curriculum, the subject of civics conveys knowledge, culture and norms, and helps the student to become a loving, independent and responsible, democratically minded citizen, a value-creating member of small and large communities, and to know and practice knows active and responsible citizen behavior.

According to the Equilibrium Institute, in addition to the above-mentioned problems with argumentation training, the low number of hours was noted in relation to the current model of civics education. According to the Institute, being limited to the 8th and 12th grades and one hour a week, the subject does not provide sufficient emphasis on citizenship education during the learning journey, this number should be increased.

Recommendations in summary:

1. There has been no recent research that examined the quality of argumentation training at the third level of the Hungarian curriculum regulation, at the local level. It may be recommended to prepare such a study.
2. We did not find a single comprehensive study on the situation of argumentation training in Hungarian higher education. Such a comprehensive study may be recommended.
3. According to the most recent surveys, the first two levels of the Hungarian curriculum regulations do not offer methodological support to teachers, so they cannot actually integrate the discussions into everyday education. Few of the practicing pedagogues and those participating in teacher training know how to apply debate and argumentation-based education in everyday life. According to the researchers, however, all this can be overcome with appropriate training and methodological support. The development of a related national program may be recommended.
4. The National Core Curriculum is sufficient to convey important European values through the project, however, being limited to the 8th and 12th grades and to one hour per week, the subject does not provide sufficient emphasis on citizenship education during the learning journey. A professional discussion on increasing this may be recommended.
5. It might be worth investigating how well the NGOs organizing trainings related to European values (such as Amnesty International, Háttértársaság, or the Society for Freedom Rights) are

accepted by Hungarian society as a whole. The aforementioned organizations are regularly caught in the crossfire of political battles with the government. According to our assumptions, application for training is closely related to party preference, in the same way as the perception of democracy. There is a danger that all of this does not offer a solution to the problems set out as a goal, or that they strengthen the polarization of society.

8.3 Insights from Italy Report

Key takeaways:

- Italy has a strong (even if perfectible) legal framework protecting EU values and is bound to international treaties that makes it responsible in front of UN and EU. When the governments tend to act in contrast with these values, judicial institutions in Italy and Europe act as a counterbalance.
- Civil society is very active in promoting and defending EU values, even in contrast with the government.
- Nevertheless, as demonstrated by the fact that the government is led by populist far-right parties, numerous Italian citizens share a simplified and populist picture of reality, especially targeting and discriminating migrants, minorities and activism.
- As usually happens, populist slogans reflect fears and problems managed in the wrong way: i.e. migrants' reception is inadequate, and it very often creates security issues.

It is of paramount importance to work on the ability to recognise each problem's shades and complexities.

The projects related to argumentation training that we presented in this report give us the opportunity to reflect on some features that might be useful and worth replicating in Stand Up for Europe methodology:

International network of argumentation

Creating an effective link between all the educational centers and schools applying the same method and encouraging their young participants to actively interact (through international games and awards, for example) could foster youth participation and increase the methodology's replicability.

Peer education and active involvement of young people, not only as training beneficiaries

Research-action based courses are useful as they bring participants to prove their knowledge with reality. But it is important also to make them share the knowledge with their peers: in this way, not only they contribute to the projects' objective of countering populism but also, they see their competences consolidated. They can be involved directly through the creation of a video, or an article, or other kind of creative and active work capable of reaching out to their peers.

Use of gamification and action through teams

Competition fosters participants' interest in a specific topic: challenges and awards give a big boost to participants' motivation, making their learning process more effective. Forming teams might be useful to encourage cooperation and collaboration among young people.

Workshops' frequency

Spreading the workshops over a medium/long period of time might encourage reflection and help to develop a habit.

Variety of profiles involved in the working teams

As Stand Up for Europe's target group ranges from 13 to 30 years old, it is important to form groups that are not homogeneous, in order to challenge individuals' beliefs and stereotypes resulting from the experiences linked to their path of life.

Preliminary study on one's own discriminatory and stereotypical beliefs (especially those of which we are unaware)

Being capable of self-doubt and critical thinking is important when dealing with populist and discriminatory speeches, in order to find the best ways to respond and react in a constructive way.

8.4 Insights from Slovenia Report

A. Summary of the Key Takeaways from the National Report

European values

The people of Slovenia understand European values in their own unique way, shaped by the country's history, culture, and current social circumstances. Some values are deeply rooted in this region (e.g., a sense of solidarity, and the need for equality), while others are less prominent.

There is no systematic education for European values widely present in Slovenia. The interpretation of individual values is largely left to each person. Interpretations of values also differ among various political groups.

While many areas that should protect European values are well-regulated at the legislative level in Slovenia, the problem lies in the inconsistent enforcement of these laws. Institutions (courts, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Council for the Prevention of Hate Speech, and the Ministry for a Solidarity-Based Future) seem to be underperforming in their role to protect these values

The presence of slogans

Undemocratic slogans in Slovenia are diverse, covering all parts of the political spectrum and discriminating against various target groups, both modern ones (subcultures, migrants) and those traditionally present in the country (Roma).

Educational programs related to argumentation training

The concept of "argumentation training" is not present in Slovenia. We identified related areas, such as hate speech, debating, dialogue, social inclusion, active participation, and advocacy.

There are trainings available in these areas, both for young people and youth workers.

However, the specific need for argumentation training has not yet been fully addressed in Slovenia, despite individual elements being covered. It seems that there is a strong need for training that is independent of specific political ideologies, emphasizing the importance of dialogue while addressing both emotional and rational aspects of an individual's actions.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the training market, both in the field of youth work and in the education system, is highly saturated, so a solid idea and execution are crucial for success. Some topics are "trendy," but trends tend to change rather quickly. The success of a particular educational program also depends on whether the training offers a concrete and high-quality solution to a pressing issue currently experienced by a youth worker or educator.

B. Contribution to the Project Objectives

Insights from Slovenia can contribute to the overall project goals in the following ways:

- The stories created within the project to illustrate violations of European values are likely to resonate differently across various countries.
- Inspiration for developing methods for the newly created training can be drawn from fields such as hate speech prevention, debating and argumentation, dialogue, social inclusion, active participation, and advocacy.
- Both at the project partnership level and on national levels, more discussions on European values are needed. It is important not to make assumptions, as situations can be strongly influenced by cultural factors. There is a risk that one project partner (responsible for a specific output) could unintentionally have too much influence over the outcome, particularly if other partners do not participate fully.
- Anti-democratic slogans should be assessed across various political and ideological spectrums. Slogans are not necessarily only targeted against minorities.
- To effectively motivate young people and youth workers to participate, it is beneficial to engage them in co-creating the examples on which the training will be based.

- In a saturated training market for youth workers, it is essential to provide high-quality responses to their needs. These needs are not always directly related to acquiring new knowledge. In Slovenia, youth workers frequently express a need for financial resources, stable working conditions, and opportunities to carry out youth work that is not dictated by financial metrics.

C. Next Steps and Further Actions

Some suggestions for the next steps and further actions are already described in the previous section. More specifically, we propose the following:

Utilization of diverse case studies in the training programs.

Involvement of young people and youth workers in as many phases of the outcome development process as possible.

Ensuring that the specific needs of young people and youth workers are taken seriously in the preparation of the training.

8.5 Insights from Türkiye Report

Türkiye, as a candidate country for membership of the European Union, having accepted the Copenhagen Criteria, which declare that all human beings are equal before the law without discrimination on grounds of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect and similar grounds, and which include criteria such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities and respect for minorities.

However, the rapid democratic reform processes that Türkiye carried out in the first period following the announcement of its candidacy for membership of the European Union have subsequently lost momentum and have been frequently criticised in recent years in reports published by the European Commission and other international organisations for moving away from the standards of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Human Rights Action Plan published by the Turkish Ministry of Justice in 2021 as part of the steps for harmonisation with the EU acquis and legal reform, sets out specific objectives such as the allocation of a stronger human rights protection system, the protection and promotion of freedoms of expression, association and religion, and ensuring a high level of administrative and public awareness on human rights.

In addition, the Turkish Century Education Model, prepared and published by the Turkish Ministry of National Education in 2024, aims to promote a set of national, spiritual and universal core values through the curricula to be implemented. However, argumentation education is not directly included as a subject in the acquisition of these values by students; it is generally addressed in curriculum and strategy documents prepared and developed by MoNE within the framework of developing critical thinking, expression skills and communication skills.

In Türkiye, argumentation training is still in the developmental stage, but it is expected that training in this field will become widespread as the importance and weight of critical thinking and communication skills increase in existing programmes. It's obvious that there are both challenges and opportunities in the dissemination of argumentation education in Türkiye.

The lack of courses focusing on argumentation techniques and developing these skills in the curriculum and the absence of a course or training on argumentation skills for prospective teachers during their university education is an important handicap for the widening of argumentation education. Moreover, the fact that teachers do not have sufficient and easily accessible in-service training and resources for argumentation education is another negative aspect. In addition, the general conservative social structure and social and political pressures in Türkiye are among the obstacles to the dissemination of critical thinking and argumentation culture in the society.

On the other hand, open access digital educational materials and online resources can be very effective in the dissemination of argumentation education in Türkiye. Making philosophy and logic elective courses in which argumentation techniques are used compulsory for high school students can contribute to the development of students' argumentation skills. The adoption of European values by

the younger generations, who are more modernist than the rest of society, debate clubs and similar activities in schools will also contribute to students gaining argumentation skills through argumentation education.

The report presents a detailed investigation of the current situation in Türkiye regarding European values and the implementation of argumentation training to date. The research provides an important starting point for methods that can be developed to enable 13–30-year-olds in Türkiye to effectively defend European values. While the activities and trainings to be carried out within the project will develop teachers in learning and applying argumentation techniques, the debating and communication skills acquired by the students will contribute to the development of their sense of being active citizens and taking the initiative as individuals in the protection and promotion of European values, as well as their initiative on topical issues such as climate change denial, anti-European tendencies or democracy hostility.

9. Conclusions and Discussion: A Comparative Analysis of National Reports

Chapter 9 concludes the report by summarizing the national findings from each partner country and comparing the results to identify similarities and differences. This comparative analysis aligns with the aim of "WP2 Exchange and Best Practice," which is to develop a training tool that enhances the methodological skills of teachers and youth education experts. The chapter highlights existing initiatives related to Klaus Peter Hufer's argumentation techniques against table slogans or comparable methods. By synthesizing information from the national reports, it provides a foundation for developing an educational training tool that equips youth workers with the necessary skills to counter anti-democratic rhetoric.

The comparative analysis reveals common challenges and successful practices across partner countries in promoting argumentation training and values education. It offers insights into effective strategies for implementing training tools in various national contexts. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how the national findings contribute to the overall purpose of the Stand Up for Europe Project, which aims to improve argumentation skills and counter anti-democratic sentiments among youth. It demonstrates the significance of "WP2 Exchange and Best Practice" in informing the development of a comprehensive and adaptable training tool that will empower youth workers to effectively promote democratic values.

The national contexts regarding argumentation training and European values education share some similarities but also exhibit differences across the partner countries.

In Germany, promoting democracy through "political education" (politische Bildung) has been integral to schools, extracurricular youth education, and adult education since the end of the Nazi era. It is implemented through social studies/politics classes in schools as well as through state-funded independent Federal and State Agencies for Political Education. The focus is on anchoring liberal democratic principles in society.

In Italy, argumentation is not systematically taught but elements are included in philosophy, history, and literature classes. Democratic and European values are promoted through "Citizenship and Constitution" and "Civic Education" subjects. Various national and EU-funded initiatives by NGOs and institutions also aim to develop debate skills and counter hate speech among youth.

Slovenia has a national program for youth focused on empowering active citizenship. Debate clubs and competitions are popular extracurricular activities. The Institute for Political Management conducts debate seminars and the ZaČudoMlade initiative promotes critical thinking to counter populism.

In Türkiye, the Ministry of National Education oversees values education, implemented through a dedicated Values Education program, related content in various subjects, and extracurricular projects often funded by the EU. Promoting universal and national values aims to counter social polarization.

In terms of existing programs and initiatives, those led by civil society and funded by national or EU grants seem to play a larger role in Italy and Slovenia. In Germany and Türkiye, while NGOs are also active, values education is more systematically integrated into formal education.

The main target groups are consistently youth aged 13-30 across countries. The most common methodologies include debate clubs/competitions, media literacy workshops, active citizenship projects, and critical thinking exercises. Peer education is also frequently used.

Key challenges include increasingly polarized societies, the spread of populism and fake news especially via social media, narrowing space for civil society in some contexts, lack of systematic integration into curricula, insufficient teacher training, and low prioritization compared to other subjects.

However, there are also opportunities such as growing recognition of the need to empower youth with critical thinking and democratic competencies, access to EU funding, and the potential to tap into young people's enthusiasm for debate. Argumentation training offers a constructive way to discuss controversial issues. Overall, while starting points differ, the partner countries share the goals of promoting democratic values and strengthening youth resilience against anti-democratic forces. Mutual learning can inspire improvements like more systematic curriculum integration, expanded

teacher training, and engaging formats that appeal to youth. European cooperation through projects like Stand Up for Europe plays a vital role in advancing these efforts.

The analysis covers formal policies and laws as well as social and cultural interpretations, providing concrete examples and unique viewpoints on how these core values are upheld or challenged in each partner country. The partner countries share a commitment to European values, but their interpretations and applications vary based on historical, political, and cultural factors.

Democracy and Equality:

All partner countries are committed to democratic principles, but the implementation varies. Germany's post-war constitution firmly establishes democratic values, while Hungary's recent "illiberal democracy" approach has raised concerns. Italy's constitution emphasizes equality, but populist movements have challenged this. Slovenia's democratic institutions have faced tests from political polarization, and Türkiye's democracy has been strained by instability and the 2016 coup attempt.

All partner countries are committed to democratic principles, but the implementation varies. Germany's post-war constitution firmly establishes democratic values, with slogans like "Grundgesetz ist die beste Verfassung" (The Basic Law is the best constitution) reflecting pride in these principles. However, challenges include rising right-wing populism and xenophobia, as seen in slogans like "Ausländer raus" (Foreigners out). Italy's constitution emphasizes equality, with slogans like "Libertà è partecipazione" (Liberty is participation), but populist movements have challenged this. Slovenia's democratic institutions have faced tests from political polarization, despite slogans like "Naša dežela, klicana Slovenija" (Our land, called Slovenia) expressing national identity. Türkiye's democracy has been strained by instability and the 2016 coup attempt, even as slogans like "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene" (How happy is the one who calls himself a Turk) reflect patriotism. Rights and Inclusion:

Inclusion and Diversity:

The partner countries have diverse populations and policies promoting inclusion. All countries have laws protecting human rights, but challenges persist. Germany grapples with rising xenophobia despite its "Willkommenskultur" (welcoming culture) during the refugee crisis, as reflected in slogans like "Kein Mensch ist illegal" (No one is illegal). Italy's human rights record is generally positive, with slogans like "La solidarietà non è un reato" (Solidarity is not a crime), but discrimination against immigrants and minorities remains a concern. Slovenia has made progress in LGBTQ+ rights and efforts to include its small minority populations, with slogans like "Spoštovanje do drugačnosti" (Respect for diversity), but Roma communities still face marginalization. Türkiye's diversity is rooted in its history, but tensions between majority and minority groups persist.

Across the countries, European integration is seen as essential for peace and prosperity. Slogans like "Einigkeit macht stark" (Unity makes strength) in Germany and "Uniti nella diversità" (United in diversity) in Italy reflect this sentiment. Regarding tolerance, all countries have laws against discrimination and hate speech. Slogans like "Kein Mensch ist illegal" (No one is illegal) in Germany and "Spoštovanje do drugačnosti" (Respect for diversity) in Slovenia promote inclusion. However, anti-immigrant sentiment persists in all countries to varying degrees.

Rule of Law:

All countries have independent judiciaries and laws against corruption, but challenges exist. Germany's rule of law is robust, but high-profile cases like the Wirecard scandal have raised questions. Hungary's judicial reforms have been criticized for potential political interference. Italy has made progress in fighting organized crime, but corruption remains a concern, as reflected in slogans like "Korruption tötet Demokratie" (Corruption kills democracy). Slovenia's rule of law is generally strong, but some high-level corruption cases have tested institutions. Türkiye's rule of law has been strained by political pressures and the aftermath of the coup attempt, with slogans like "Adalet yoksa demokrasi de yok" (No justice, no democracy) reflecting these concerns.

Solidarity:

The partner countries demonstrate solidarity through welfare systems, civil society, and EU cooperation. Germany's social market economy balances competition and welfare. Italy's solidarity is reflected in its regional redistribution and strong family networks with slogans like "Uniti nella diversità" (United in diversity). Slovenia's small size has fostered a sense of national solidarity, and

Türkiye's solidarity is rooted in its Islamic and nationalist values. However, economic crises and the refugee influx have strained social cohesion in all countries, with slogans like "Prima gli italiani" (Italians first) in Italy and "Brüssel diktál" (Brussels dictates) in Hungary reflecting Euroscepticism.

The partner countries share a commitment to European values, but their interpretations and applications are shaped by unique national contexts. Comparing these experiences reveals common challenges, such as balancing diversity and inclusion, safeguarding the rule of law, and maintaining solidarity in the face of crises. However, it also highlights the resilience of democratic institutions and the ongoing efforts to uphold human rights and equality. By learning from each other and engaging in dialogue through initiatives like Stand Up for Europe, the countries can strengthen their commitment to these values and address vulnerabilities. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more inclusive, just, and united Europe that lives up to its founding principles.

While all partner countries subscribe to European values, their interpretations and applications are shaped by unique national contexts. Comparing these experiences reveals common challenges, such as populism and social polarization, but also shared aspirations for unity, tolerance, and the rule of law. By learning from each other, the countries can strengthen their commitment to these values and address vulnerabilities. Initiatives like Stand Up for Europe play a vital role in fostering this dialogue and cooperation.

The gaps and limitations in promoting key European values through educational initiatives and programs targeting youth, educators, and school teachers within the national contexts reveal several common obstacles, such as conflicting cultural and social norms, lack of practical instruction for teachers, and the need for further research in specific areas. However, each country also faces unique challenges based on their specific educational systems and socio-political contexts.

One common challenge across the partner countries is the presence of conflicting cultural and social norms that can hinder the effective transmission of European values. In Germany, the abundance and diversity of political education programs make it difficult to determine the most effective approaches, while the criticism from right-wing populist parties adds another layer of complexity. Similarly, Türkiye's traditional and conservative social structure in some regions can make it more challenging for young people to adopt European values, especially in comparison to those living in large metropolises.

Another shared limitation is the lack of practical instruction for teachers to implement values education effectively. In Italy, teachers often struggle to find the time to access the available information and courses, and the training they receive can be too theoretical. UNESCO's survey also revealed that teachers in Italy feel less confident in teaching behavioral learning and socio-emotional perspectives. Similarly, in Türkiye, there is a need for more interdisciplinary studies and practice-based resources to support teachers in developing argumentation skills and integrating them into their teaching processes.

The research in Slovenia highlights the rigidity of the school system as a significant obstacle, noting that it adapts slowly to changes and changing trends. This can limit the inclusion of non-curriculum topics, such as European values. Additionally, the over-saturated market of programs concerning European values can make it challenging to compete for participants and reach a wider audience, especially when some programs are based on competition or only target "good" students.

In Türkiye, the limited studies on argumentation techniques in social sciences, history, and philosophy, as well as the lack of qualitative research on in-class interactions and individual effects of argumentation, present gaps in understanding how to effectively promote European values through education. Moreover, the country's long-standing candidacy for EU membership and increasing social and political polarization can create distrust or negative perceptions of European values, making it more difficult for educators to defend these values.

The comparative analysis of the gaps and limitations in promoting European values through education in Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Türkiye reveals several common challenges, such as conflicting cultural norms, lack of practical training for teachers, and the need for more targeted research. However, each country also faces unique obstacles shaped by their specific educational systems and socio-political contexts. To address these gaps and enhance the effectiveness of values education, the partner countries must develop tailored strategies that consider their specific needs and challenges. This can include providing more practical and accessible resources for teachers, conducting targeted research

to better understand the individual effects of argumentation training, and fostering a more inclusive approach to values education that reaches a wider range of students. By learning from each other's experiences and collaborating through initiatives like Stand Up for Europe, the partner countries can work towards overcoming these obstacles and promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of European values among their youth.

The national reports from Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Türkiye provide valuable insights into the current state of argumentation training and the promotion of European values in each country. While there are similarities in the presence of populist and discriminatory slogans and the recognized need for argumentation training, the countries also differ in their legal frameworks, the prevalence of populist views, and the availability of educational programs.

All four countries report the presence of populist and discriminatory slogans targeting various groups, such as migrants, minorities, and activists. The need for argumentation training to counter these slogans and promote European values is acknowledged in all the national reports.

Civil society plays a crucial role in promoting and defending European values across all four countries, even when governments may act in contrast to these values. The reports also emphasize the importance of involving young people and youth workers in the development and implementation of argumentation training programs.

In Germany, the well-established "Argumentation training against regulars' table slogans" method has been widely used for 25 years, whereas in Slovenia and Türkiye, specific argumentation training is not as prevalent, although related areas such as hate speech prevention and debating are covered.

Italy and Türkiye have strong legal frameworks protecting EU values, but Slovenia faces challenges in the consistent enforcement of these laws. The proportion of populist views varies among the countries, with Germany reporting around a third of the population holding such values, while in Italy and other European countries, the proportion is often significantly higher.

Future Actions

The national reports suggest several future actions to effectively implement argumentation training and promote European values:

1. Adapt the methodology to each country's specific needs and challenges, considering cultural factors and the current social and political climate.
2. Engage young people and youth workers in the training development process, utilizing diverse case studies and promoting international collaboration among educational centers and schools.
3. Utilize open access digital educational materials and online resources to overcome challenges in countries like Türkiye, where social and political pressures may hinder the dissemination of critical thinking and argumentation culture.
4. Ensure that the specific needs of young people and youth workers are taken seriously in the preparation of the training and involve them in as many phases of the outcome development process as possible.

To further improve these actions, it is essential to create more good practices and platforms for young people and leaders to make their voices heard. Workshops and practical implementations should be organized to provide hands-on experience in argumentation and discussion. The integration of technology, academic research, and practical studies should be promoted to enhance the effectiveness of the training programs.

Collaboration among academics, educational sectors, and NGOs should be encouraged, and joint projects should be initiated to foster a comprehensive approach to argumentation training. Teachers should seek informal learning and collaboration opportunities to bring external and diverse argumentation and discussion platforms into the educational setting. Debates and discussion events can be supported for youth educational organizations and schools to provide a space for young people to practice their argumentation skills.

Various approaches such as Philosophy for Children (P4C), argumentation techniques, Maieutic methods, and inquiry-based learning techniques can be promoted as non-formal learning

opportunities at schools for teenagers. These approaches encourage critical thinking, questioning, and open dialogue, which are essential for effective argumentation and the promotion of European values.

By incorporating these ideas and expanding the scope of future actions, the project can create a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to argumentation training and the promotion of European values. This will involve engaging multiple stakeholders, leveraging technology, and providing diverse learning opportunities to empower young people to actively participate in discussions and debates that shape their communities and societies.

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11. Annexes: Best Practices and Successful Initiatives

11.1 Best Practices from Germany

Best Practice 1: CounterBUNT

Logo	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online education tool (app)
Title	CounterBUNT
Target group	Young people from 16, all interested parties
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital app, game/simulation • Game/Simulation
Publication date	2019
Partners / Network	Responsible coordination: Niedersächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, supported by numerous experts and specialist organisations. Scientific support: Prof. Dr Klaus-Peter Hufer, Wilhelm Heitmeyer
Level	National (German-language) APP
Description of the method / approach, the theory	The app is based on the concepts of argumentation training to counter populist slogans and group-focused misanthropy. Designed as a game, the app is aimed at young people, who can go through various real-life scenarios and select answers to typical populist slogans. There is also a "mini guide" in short form and a collection of typical slogans.
Purpose / Goal	Low-threshold and playful methods to raise awareness of the topic, increase motivation and learn easy strategies.
Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)	Scientific studies are regularly conducted on the theory of group-focused misanthropy and argumentation training (see Heitmeyer 2024 and the analyses by Hufer)
Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project	The game offers various scenarios and topics that have been intensively developed with the participation of the groups involved and can be used as a model for further development.
Weblink	https://konterbunt.de // App Stores Google / Apple
References, online sources	https://www.bpb.de/lernen/digitale-bildung/werkstatt/293715/konterbunt-app-gegen-stammtischparolen/
Additional remarks	The app can also be used in connection with argumentation training (e.g. preparation or follow-up).


Best Practice 2: Village Talk

Logo	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society activity
Title	Village talk
Target group	Members of a village community
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual, Guidelines
Publication date	2020
Partners / Network	Federal Agency for Civic Education Cooperation Foundation Bavarian Political Education Network University of Augsburg (scientific support, development) disKurs e.V. (realisation) Various districts and towns/villages (realisation)
Level	Regional
Description of the method / approach, the theory	<p>The 'village talk' concept is a preventative approach that brings together a wide variety of people in protected rural areas in order to prevent the emergence of slogans and derogatory slogans and thus contribute to constructive democracy.</p> <p>In a two-month preparatory phase, around 40 very different "key people" from each village are contacted and interviewed.</p> <p>On this basis, three dialogue evenings are planned, each lasting three hours, which will bring as many and very different villagers as possible into an intensive dialogue.</p> <p>A total of over 50 dialogue facilitators have received further training to support local volunteers as professional process facilitators. Village dialogues are mainly held in southern and eastern Germany</p>
Purpose / Goal	Promote understanding of other values, positions and perspectives as well as acceptance of plurality and diversity, prevention of radicalisation and promotion of democracy, promotion of the village community, appreciation, identification and self-efficacy
Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)	Realisation of a scientific model project, positive feedback from numerous applications in practice
Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project	Integration of argumentation training into a larger concept that takes all positions into account. The focus is not on fighting against regulars' table slogans, but on developing the ability to exchange opinions and look for solutions together in the local area.

Weblink	https://www.dorfgespraech.net/
References, online sources	Wenzel, F., & Boeser, C. (2022). Village dialogue. A contribution to the development of democracy in rural areas. Working aids for self-help and citizens' initiatives No. 53, Verlag Stiftung Mitarbeit. https://padlet.com/FlorianWenzel/hintergrundinformationen-dorfgespr-ch-e3vfuttl1xl5gvi
Additional remarks	Numerous recent publications in Germany, e.g: Wenzel, F. (2024). Village dialogue. Village renewal in people's minds. Democratic impulses and methodological suggestions. In: Hammer, Veronika (ed.) (2024). Learning democracy. Rural areas and adult education centres Weinheim, pp. 210-222


11.2 Best Practices from Hungary

Best Practice 1: Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Vitaakadémia

Logo	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Activity • National/International Project Implementation • Social/Cultural Activity
Title	Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Vitaakadémia
Target group	Students from upper secondary school (14-19 years old).
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game/Simulation
Publication date	2019
Partners / Network	MCC's regional network has grown significantly by 2023. MCC was present in 23 locations in the Carpathian Basin - 15 cities in Hungary and 9 cities abroad. MCC opened its first Western European center in Brussels in 2022. The year 2023 began with the start of the second training level of the University Program in rural university centers with a student population of 7,000. In 2023, MCC acquired a 90% ownership share in Vienna's Modul University.
Level	Regional
Description of the method / approach, the theory	In 2019, MCC also launched the Debate Academy as an independent training program to develop and pass on the knowledge and experience accumulated within the walls of the institution. The MCC Debating Clubs were established and operated under the Debating Academy throughout the Carpathian Basin, which has now become a network and welcomes those who wish to debate in eight centers. It provides individual mentoring assistance to the best debaters, conducts competition preparations in English for the Debate Academy's own British Parliamentary debate team and participates in international debate competitions. In addition, it provides

	uniform, high-quality logic education for all participants of the Junior program. In addition to skill-building training, education and mentoring, continuous professional workshops take place within the walls of the Debate Academy: follow-up of the latest scientific trends and methodology, curriculum development, writing manuals for debate leaders. The Polemia blog of the Corvinák website features analytical essays related to the world of debating, and the Polemia podcast promotes rational debate through various talk and debate programs.
Purpose / Goal	During its more than 25-year career, MCC has always paid special attention to the formation and development of the basic skills of logic, reasoning and rhetoric, as well as the ability to debate in all programs of its complex training range. Rational debate as a method serves as an essential tool in MCC's two main endeavors: talent nurturing and community building.
Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project	Networking Development of communication and argumentation skills Language learning Talent management Community building Preparation for competition Improvisation
Weblink	https://vitaakademia.mcc.hu/kepzeiseink
References, online sources	https://real.mtak.hu/72830/1/genezys_02.pdf https://vitaakademia.mcc.hu/index.php/vitaklub-halozat

Best Practice 2: Title / Name


Logo	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Activity • Lesson Plan/Activity • National/International Project Implementation • Social/Cultural Activity
Title	Elte vitaklub
Target group	University students
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game/Simulation
Publication date	2013
Partners / Network	Central European University (CEU), Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem
Level	International
Description of the method / approach, the theory	The Elte debate is modeled on the British parliamentary debate, but at the same time trainings and public debates are also organized. During the public debate, a group discussion is built



	on the presentation of an invited specialist. The ELTE Debate Club together with the Corvinus Debate Club organized speech and debate skills development training for university students and high school graduates.
Purpose / Goal	The purpose of the Elte debate is to increase the level of dialogue, to develop the debate culture and communication skills of university students. The purpose of the ELTE debate is also to develop students' critical thinking and to shed light on social problems.
Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking • Development of communication and argumentation skills • Language learning • Talent management • Community building • Preparation for competition • Improvisation • Exploring social problems, broadening horizons
Weblink	https://www.elte.hu/content/tanulj-vitazni.e.12090 https://alumni.uni-corvinus.hu/topics/32825/feed

11.3 Best Practices from Italy

Best Practice 1: Debate Italia


Place the logo of the project/ initiative or other image of the best practice	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Activity • National/International Project Implementation • School Activity
Title	Debate Italia
Target group	Students from upper secondary school (14-19 years old) and teachers.
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game/Simulation
Publication date	The first Debate Olympics were held in Rome in November 2017. The project is ongoing.
Partners / Network	<p>Debate Italia is a project of the Ministry of Education</p> <p>Società Nazionale Debate Italia (SN-DI) manages and coordinates the activities</p> <p>The WeDebate network counts 270 Italian secondary schools</p>
Level	National and International/EU



<p>Description of the method / approach, the theory</p>	<p>The national championships are governed by a set of rules that takes as its reference the debate model practiced at the World Schools Debating Championships and includes prepared and impromptu topics, based on improvisation. A debate requires a team that agrees with the assumption under discussion (pro) and another team that doesn't agree (against). Before starting the debate, each team communicates to the judge the names of the 3 speakers who will speak and their order. During the discussion, speakers from both teams alternate. The team against the assumption is entitled to make a question to the opponents. Speakers can communicate only with each other. A timekeeper keeps track of the speech length: they can last 8 minutes, while the final one is only 4 minutes. When the debate is over, the judge decides which team is the winner, based on contents, style and communication strategy. All topics are decided by a specific committee, and they can deal with a variety of subjects. SN-DI shared a set of resources to train teachers, which were the results of DEUS - Dealing with Euroscepticism, a EU-funded project they took part in as partners. The Guide for Depolarisation for Debate Coaches is a set of exercises for educators to use the debate methodology. It is proposed to be used with the research paper The Polarised Landscape in Europe, an analysis of the concepts at the basis of the European Union.</p>
<p>Purpose / Goal</p>	<p>The purpose is to provide students with techniques and strategies to manage a debate and develop argumentation skills to communicate effectively, to know how to speak in public and defend their own opinions, to know how to respond to accusations or the other side based on valuable research. At the end of the project participants will gain awareness of the responsibilities, rights and duties involved in being a member of a community, pay attention and respect each other's point of view, critically evaluate information; recognize the values of Citizenship and the Constitution.</p>
<p>Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)</p>	<p>The debate is a mental sport capable of fostering awareness and participation, providing students with tools to independently understand reality and society. It also encourages teamwork. Developing interest in issues that affect society enables young people to take an active role in decision-making processes. Debating issues related to political, social, economic, scientific and cultural current events makes students grow, as they grasp the most concrete aspects of reality, beyond any easy populism. Teachers can consolidate more engaging and dynamic teaching methods.</p>
<p>Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project</p>	<p>The following insights can be drawn from the Debate Italia experience that can contribute to the effectiveness of argumentative practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the process and preparation steps; having a regulation, a clear structure and rules ● training in communication, public speaking and listening ● gamification; introducing healthy competition ● use of prepared and impromptu topics, based on improvisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> propose different themes; one for the Italian competition and one in English for the international competition refer to an international network; relations with other European countries
Weblink	www.debateitalia.it
References, online sources	Debate Italia, Regolamento, www.debateitalia.it

Best Practice 2: REACT – No Hate

Place the logo of the project/ initiative or other image of the best practice	 <p>Respect and Equality: Acting and Communicating Together</p>
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School subject Youth Activity Lesson Plan/Activity Online Education Resource Activity Civil Society Activity National/International Project Implementation Social/Cultural Activity
Title	REACT – No Hate
Target group	Students from 14 to 18 years old
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum/ Course/Lesson plan/Learning activity Toolkit Digital Device (e.g., mobile)/ Online Tool(s), Application(s), LMS or Platform Game/Simulation Report Handbook/ Guidelines Assessment (type e.g., self-, peer-assessment) process
Partners / Network	List of the partners/organization/institution involved, if applicable a) Name of the partner b) Country of origin c) Role in the practice
Level	
Description of the method / approach, the theory	<p><i>React - Respect and Equality: Acting and Communicating Together</i> is a project co-financed by the EU as part of the program “Rights, Equality and Citizenship” and it brings together partners from Italy, Spain, Germany France and UK to create resources to counter online hate speech. During the project, students from 14 to 18 were trained in 5 or 6 two-hour workshops in class over a period of about two months. In this way, participants had the chance to reflect, discuss and elaborate the work done, while exploring and further deepening their knowledge about the topics involved.</p> <p><i>Meetings were organised in two phases: the first was dedicated to reflecting on the possible consequences of prejudices and violent or aggressive online messages; the second was devoted to constructing a counter-narrative campaign together.</i></p>


	<p>In the project’s Educational Toolkit, a set of exercises for countering stereotypes is provided: activities meant to reflect on the stereotypes and prejudices we aren’t aware of replicating and to understand their impact on our and others’ lives.</p> <p>The strategy outlined to reach the objectives is based on a horizontal and multidisciplinary approach and on target groups active participation. It will be implemented through the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. systematic quantitative and qualitative monitoring of hate speech and recording of counter narratives effective examples throughout a selection of online media, including social media, in Italy, UK, France, Germany and Spain: recording through an ad hoc ICT tool, qualitative analysis and reporting; 2. mutual learning and exchange of best practices among key actors – teachers, youth operators, representatives of the targeted communities, researchers, policy-makers, social media platforms representatives, online press representatives and CSOs – on positive actions to foster tolerance, counter hate speech and on means and mechanisms to facilitate reporting and enhancing transparency of counter-speech; 3. capacity building and training activities focusing on media literacy both addressed to teachers and youth workers and directly to young people. Particular attention will be given in addressing the capacity building and training activities to different categories of youngsters, including with minority background. Workshops will adopt a highly participatory approach; in particular youngsters will be actively involved in the construction of a solid counter-narrative. The communication tools elaborated by the youngsters will be then spread; 4. dissemination and awareness raising campaign based on the use of the tools realised by the youngsters that will be presented at local level and spread thoroughly on social media and the Internet.
<p>Purpose / Goal</p>	<p>In order to contribute to monitoring and counter online hate speech based on (and determining) anti-Muslim intolerance and hatred, the proposed project aimed at collecting qualitative and quantitative evidences of online hate speech and of counter narratives effective examples; identify positive actions to foster tolerance, counter hate speech, facilitate reporting and enhance transparency of counter-speech and share it among key actors, promoting media literacy and spreading counter-narrative among youngsters.</p>
<p>Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops’ frequency <p>Spreading the workshops over a medium/long period of time might encourage reflection and help to develop a habit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary study on one’s own discriminatory and stereotypical beliefs (especially those of which we are unaware)



	Being capable of self-doubt and critical thinking is important when dealing with populist and discriminatory speeches, in order to find the best ways to respond and react in a constructive way.
Weblink	http://www.reactnohate.eu

11.4 Best Practices from Slovenia

Best Practice 1: “Dates” of political opposites


Place the logo of the project/ initiative or other image of the best practice	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Activity • Online Education Resource Activity • International Project Implementation
Title	“Dates” of political opposites
Target group	Teachers and youth workers Young people (15-30) It can be used also in adult education
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning activity • Application
Date released	March 2024
Partners / Network	Socialna akademija, Slovenia (leading partner) Documenta, Croatia KatHaz, Hungary IniciativAngola, Austria
Level	International/EU project partnership
Description of the method / approach, the theory	<p>HardTopics.eu is a web application designed to help youth workers to facilitate dialogue between individuals who hold opposing views on a particular topic.</p> <p>In a dialogical event, called “dates of political opponents”, participants are paired according to previously expressed opinions. The opinion pool is created by youth workers. The goal of the algorithm is that couples are made of people with the most opposing opinions.</p> <p>After being paired, couples engage in a conversation where they discuss the issues, seek common ground, and learn to accept differing perspectives.</p> <p>The application is suitable for use in groups of young people (as well as other age groups), typically ranging from 10 to 40</p>



	<p>participants (it can accommodate larger numbers as well), being together in one space or remote.</p> <p>It is utilized as part of structured activities, during which participants not only engage with the application but also take part in discussions that outline key guidelines for productive dialogue.</p> <p>These discussions emphasize the importance of adhering to rules of respectful communication and creating an environment conducive to meaningful, open exchange of ideas.</p>
Purpose / Goal	<p>The purpose of this app is to foster constructive dialogue between individuals with opposing viewpoints and to work against social polarization.</p> <p>By bringing people together in a moderate, structured environment, the app encourages respectful conversation, mutual understanding, and the identification of common ground.</p> <p>It is designed to help participants develop skills in critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to engage in civil discourse, especially on contentious topics. The goal is to bridge divides and promote a culture of tolerance and acceptance of diverse opinions.</p>
Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)	<p>The app has proven to be highly effective across a range of group settings, including schools, youth organizations, both coherent and mixed groups, as well as international youth exchanges.</p> <p>In each instance, it has consistently yielded positive outcomes, fostered meaningful dialogue and understood among participants. Its versatility in adapting to diverse audiences underscores its value as a tool for facilitating constructive conversations and promoting mutual respect in various contexts.</p>
Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project	<p>This app is particularly valuable for projects that focus on fostering dialogue with individuals who hold opposing views—people whom participants might typically avoid engaging with.</p> <p>By providing a moderate environment, the app goes beyond simple debate, enabling genuine dialogue.</p> <p>It allows for deeper understanding, mutual respect, and the exploration of differing perspectives, making it an effective tool for breaking down barriers and encouraging open communication between people with fundamentally different viewpoints.</p>
Weblink	<p>https://hardtopics.eu/</p>
References/ online sources	<p>Application: https://hardtopics.eu/ (in Slovenian, English, German, Croatian and Hungarian) About the project: https://socialna-akademija.si/tezke-teme/ Training of youth workers in Szeged: https://socialna-akademija.si/za-mladinske-delavce-tezke-teme-szeged-18-22-3-2024/ Example of an event, at which the app was used: https://socialna-akademija.si/navdusujoca-izkusnja-na-dogodku-evropske-dileme-v-okviru-evropskega-tedna-mladih/</p>



Best Practice 2: Outside In – Transforming Hate


<p>Place the logo of the project/ initiative or other image of the best practice</p>	
<p>Topic / Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Plan/Activity • Online Education Resource Activity • National/International Project Implementation
<p>Title</p>	<p>Outside In – Transforming Hate</p>
<p>Target group</p>	<p>Youth workers engage with young people who express hateful speech and/or behaviour in youth settings.</p>
<p>Type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum/ Course/Lesson plan/Learning activity • Handbook/ Guidelines
<p>Date released</p>	<p>December 2018</p>
<p>Partners / Network</p>	<p>National Youth Council of Ireland, Ireland Ljubljana Pride, Slovenia Interfaith Scotland, United Kingdom Ha Moment, Portugal Rauhankasvatus instituutti, Finland</p>
<p>Level</p>	<p>International/EU level</p>
<p>Description of the method / approach, the theory</p>	<p>"Outside In – Transforming Hate" was a two-year project (2017-2018) aimed at making youth work in Europe more inclusive.</p> <p>Five partner organizations from Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, and Slovenia co-created a European network of trainers and experts to help youth workers recognize, manage, and transform hateful speech and behavior.</p> <p>What makes this project unique is that the trainers were youth workers and equality experts from minority and marginalized groups. They underwent an intensive training-of-trainers program and co-created a practice manual for inclusive youth work.</p> <p>The process of addressing hateful behaviors addresses these phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizing hate, • tackling hate, • transforming hate. <p>It suggests both measures that can be applied on interpersonal as well as on organizational level.</p>
<p>Purpose / Goal</p>	<p>The aim of the project was to make youth work in Europe more inclusive by equipping youth workers with the skills and tools to recognize, manage, and transform hateful speech and behaviour.</p>



	Through collaboration among five partner countries, the project created a network of trainers from marginalized groups, offering training and resources to foster safer spaces and long-term change among youth with discriminatory attitudes.
Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)	The "Outside In" project resulted in the creation of a practice manual for youth workers , designed to address hateful speech and behavior in youth settings. The manual includes chapters on understanding youth work, recognizing and transforming hate, and practical methodologies applicable in both formal and non-formal settings. A Practical Tool Kit offers resources for youth workers, making this a flexible guide for transforming challenging behavior and promoting inclusive environments. In 2018, around 500 people, active in youth work, were trained through the project.
Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides youth workers with tools, methods, and approaches to recognize, manage, and constructively address hateful speech and behavior. • Addresses are different types of discrimination. • Works on situations: before the hate speech happens, in the moment as it happens and after it has already happened. • Methodologies in the manual can be applied in various settings to encourage long-term change in discriminatory attitudes – but are specialized into youth work.
Web link	https://transforminghate.net/
References/ online sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: https://transforminghate.net/ • Manual (digital): https://transforminghate.net/toolsandpractise/ • Manual (PDF): https://transforminghate.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/outside-in-manual-full.pdf

11.5 Best Practices from Türkiye

Best Practice 1: Demokleos Project (EU Erasmus+)

Place the logo of the project/ initiative or other image of the best practice	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission Erasmus+ KA201 Strategic Partnerships for School Education Program
Title	<p>DEMOKLEOS (Rethinking Democratic Awareness and Collective Responsibility for a Whole-School Approach)</p> <p>Ref. No: 2015-1-EL01-KA201-013930</p>

Target group	<p>DEMOKLEOS focuses on "target groups" in the field of education - mainly young people. The aim is to inspire them to actively contribute to European integration in the context of increasing intercultural and religious diversity.</p> <p>Another important target group is all educators and teachers in their role as facilitators. Teachers and researchers have worked together on the research, development and implementation of joint organisations' educational tools and resources to achieve this goal.</p>
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum/ Course/Lesson plan/Learning activity • Report • Handbook/ Guidelines
Date released	<p>Project Starting date: 01/09/2015 Project Ending date: 31/08/2018</p>
Partners / Network	<p>Directorate of Secondary Education of Piraeus (Greece, Coordinator)</p> <p>Learning For Integration RY (Finland)</p> <p>Ionidios Model Experimental Lyceum (Greece)</p> <p>9th Gymnasium of Piraeus (Greece)</p> <p>1st EPAL of Piraeus (Greece)</p> <p>University of Piraeus Research Center (Greece)</p> <p>European University of Cyprus (Cyprus)</p> <p>Doğa Schools (Türkiye)</p> <p>Agrupamento De Escolas De Pombal (Portugal)</p> <p>University of Leibniz (Germany)</p>
Level	<p>International/EU level</p>
Description of the method / approach, the theory	<p>DEMOKLEOS acknowledges the vital and crucial role of education professionals in prevention and change and builds on the convergence of competences: specialist and subject-specific Democratic Competences, according to the model of the Council of Europe, need to be complemented by transversal skills and attitudes of pupils, such as leadership, e-democracy skills, citizenship skills, critical debating and learning to learn.</p> <p>DEMOKLEOS is prepared as a follow-up, according to a needs analysis, data collected and the demands of the teachers of all the participant partners to be better empowered to the politics of despair, straightly affecting the educational community in Europe.</p> <p>The DEMOKLEOS project has a multi-perspective, multi-level interactive and intercultural, experimental and experiential approach based on continuous interaction between all partners.</p> <p>The DEMOKLEOS project utilizes a "whole school approach" methodology that addresses democracy issues at a number of levels, from teacher competences and classroom methodologies to school ethics and governance and the contribution of community partnerships. The whole school approach can be considered the gold standard for mainstreaming democratic awareness in education.</p>



	<p>In practice, developing a "whole school" approach to democratic education means combining formal and non-formal teaching with opportunities for democratic experiences in the classroom and in the school in general, and strengthening the school's links with the wider community.</p> <p>Throughout the three years of the project, a succession of alternating periods of work conducted by the partners in their own environments - for design experimenting and disseminating - and general meetings to bring experiences together, to study quality evaluations, to draw conclusions and to decide on further developments.</p> <p>The project's methodology is blended learning based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online training using e-learning platforms. • In-class training. • Face-to-face training for teachers and school teachers organized by the host partners in different countries. • Workshops and exercises facilitated by the trained teachers. • Public seminars and Conferences in various countries to present the DEMOKLEOS outputs and products.
<p>Purpose / Goal</p>	<p>The objective of DEMOKLEOS is related to current challenges to which European school has to adopt a proactive attitude and handle Democratic Awareness and Collective Responsibility as a s ethic. Achieving this implies the need for a sustained dialogue about a whole school approach. DEMOKLEOS aligns with the realities of the 21st century, where citizens demand greater participation in public decision-making processes with the emergence of new information technologies and social networks.</p> <p>DEMOKLEOS commits strongly to European integration and a special concern for issues and their related areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political literacy • History / remembrance and Democracy in historical perspective in Europe • Critical debating about Teaching of controversial issues • Digital democracy • School democratic governance • Challenges of democratic schools in a globalized and pluralistic world • Human rights and a sustainable environment • Teacher professionalism on democratic key competences conflict and consensus: the project recognizes that divergence of opinion may be inherent enhanced school engagement and tools should provide opportunities for negotiation, mediation and consensus building. <p>Other goals of the DEMOKLEOS are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping democratic and anti-democratic attitudes in European school education and presenting a picture of the




	<p>main populist and racist organisations operating in seven European countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To analyse hate speech communication strategies in order to understand how populist organisations have used new media in recent years to spread their violent messages to younger generations • Deconstructing populist hate speech against the "other" and raising awareness of young people and minorities: deconstructing stereotypes about race, gender, disability and sexual orientation through analysis of media produced by populist organisations and raising awareness of young people and minorities about how new media misrepresent them • Youth empowerment through e-participation: adopting a participatory and active approach to promote children's voice ownership and political literacy skills, in line with media literacy education perspectives that emphasize people empowerment over media censorship • To strengthen and increase the impact of the project, training for teachers on media literacy and populism/racism and the development of an online environment with resources on new media, hate speech against the "other" and racism
<p>Web link</p>	<p>https://dide-peiraia.att.sch.gr/index.php/menu-demokleos-about?view=article&id=5428:demokleos-about-eng&catid=122:eu-demokleo</p>
<p>References/ online sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demokleos Project Lesson Plans Link:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pinY679_jSvGZdoKYq8dprqoFTA7eJiC/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109975392430691324954&rtpof=true&sd=true • DEMOKLEOS - Best Practices Manual on Democratic Key Competencies for Teacher Professionalism by Constantina Spiliotopoulou, Vinatsella Dimitra and Modeas Ioannis, 2018. Link:https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/0B8jgbsboar4JbmY0eWhCYzJpdms?resourcekey=0-iMVwqj4uDv8aLQ3yCrshWw • Classroom Activity: Rights and responsibilities in a Democracy Link:https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8jgbsboar4JOG45dWFpOUlaZkE/view?resourcekey=0-9lq_akZwXbZuVO4PR6BB9g • Classroom Activity: Training for Digital Democracy by Dr Dimakopoulou Alexandra, 2017. Link:https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8jgbsboar4JNTBKNjFvUmV4U3M/view?resourcekey=0-05qk7CILZWMtz6JDfslmA • Conference Paper: Encountering The "Politics of Fear": Teacher Training for A Media Propaganda Education to Prevent Political Extremism, In The Context of DEMOKLEOS, Erasmus+ KA2- Project by Constantina Spiliotopoulou, 2019.



	Link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343632491_Encountering_The_Politics_of_FearTeacher_Training_for_A_Media_Propaganda_Education_to_Prevent_Political_Extremism_In_The_Context_of_DEMOKLEOS_Erasmus_KA2-Project
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Best Practice 2: CARMA Project (EU Erasmus+)

Place the logo of the project/ initiative or other image of the best practice	
Topic / Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Commission Erasmus+ KA2 Support to Policy Development and Cooperation
Title	CARMA (RMA and other non-formal learning methods for Student Motivation)
Target group	<p>The two direct target groups of the CARMA Project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in reading, mathematics and science including teachers on an entry level and, Students aged 11 to 15 identified as disadvantaged, low achieving and at risk of early school leaving <p>Moreover, CARMA project addressed the following indirect target groups: teaching staff and professionals within school education, community of stakeholders in the policy making process i.e. parents, school service providers, civil society organisations and policy makers in school education.</p>
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Plan/Learning Activity
Date released	Project Starting date: 01/01/2016 Project Ending date: 30/06/2018
Partners / Network	<p>CESIE (Italy, Coordinator)</p> <p>Uniersidad De Murcia (Spain)</p> <p>Pistes-Solidaires (France)</p> <p>Doğa Schools (Türkiye)</p> <p>UC Leuven (Belgium)</p> <p>Inovamais- Technological Innovation Consulting Services (Portugal)</p> <p>Verein Multikulturell (Austria)</p>
Level	International/EU level
Description of the method / approach, the theory	<p>The CARMA project introduce non-formal learning methods as a collaborative learning strategy to innovate school culture and transform classroom practices. The Project uses Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA) as an inclusive assessment tool for increasing teachers' skills. The results achieved by the partnership were applied for pushing policies towards the</p>

	<p>inclusion of disadvantaged learners and reduce early school leaving.</p> <p>Within the scope of the project, 8 techniques, including P4C (Philosophy for Children), have been implemented and tested in face-to-face through the project workshop sessions by participating expert teachers.</p> <p>Philosophy for Children (P4C) is created by Matthew Lipman according to his Community of Inquiry Method (CoI) and it is practiced for a few decades in different countries. It is broadly defined as any group of individuals involved in a process of conceptual inquiry into problematic situations. In P4C sessions, children are not seen as passive perceivers of knowledge, but as active agents and as philosophers, who produce, criticize, and inquire a philosophical issue or a real life problem.</p>
<p>Purpose / Goal</p>	<p>The CARMA project foresees a consolidated process of proposing, enriching, and piloting an innovative learning approach. The Project's objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase student motivation and participation by offering new form of teaching-learning using non-formal approaches to support disadvantaged learners and increase their achievements. • To integrate the RMA as an assessment tool within school curricula. • To expand teachers' skills through training and assessment framework with knowledge and resources on how to use inclusive and participatory practices and develop collaborative relationships in and out of school. • To provide policy recommendations for strategies to reduce early school leaving and increase basic skills.
<p>Web link</p>	<p>https://carma-project.eu/</p>
<p>References/ Online sources</p>	<p>P4C Lesson Plan - Island Republic P4C Lesson Plan - The Culture of Democracy P4C Lesson Plan - Heinz's Dilemma P4C Lesson Plan - Light Pollution P4C Lesson Plan - Kindness P4C Teachers' Workshop 1 - Let's Create Philosophical Questions P4C Teachers' Workshop 2 - Philosophy for Kids P4C Teachers' Workshop 3 - The Pit of Inquiry</p>
<p>Additional notes</p>	<p>P4C Awareness Training Seminar - Professional Development Program of the Turkish Ministry of National Education</p> <p>Philosophy for Children (P4C) https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/p4c</p> <p>Montclair State University IAPC and SAPERE Institution are the institutions, which provide educational material for P4C pedagogy. Books of Matthew Lipman, Peter Worley, Jana Mohr Lone, Peter Worley, The Philosophy Foundation: https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/resources</p>





**Argumentation training against undemocratic slogans:
European extension and updating**
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Partners



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Doğa Schools (Türkiye)
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Catholic Youth Foundation (Hungary)
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