



Stand Up for Europe

Argumentation training against undemocratic slogans:
European extension and updating

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Exchange and Best Practices

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1. Current State of Argumentation Training in 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 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 (Stražičar, 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

¹ An example of the video: Ministrstvo za digitalno preobrazbo. (2023, January 3). *Barbara Lazovič - kampanja “Ugrizni se v sovražni jezik”* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/LALHwdvn4Ys?si=crITLpQOCGcxqY2x>

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>

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:

- **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.

2. European Values in the Slovenian National Context

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,

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/>

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

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)

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

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:

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. Prispadniki 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.

3. Gaps and Limitations

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.

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5. Best Practices from Slovenia

Best Practice 1: “Dates” of political opposites

<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"> • Youth Activity • Online Education Resource Activity • International Project Implementation
<p>Title</p>	<p>“Dates” of political opposites</p>
<p>Target group</p>	<p>Teachers and youth workers Young people (15-30) It can be used also in adult education</p>
<p>Type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning activity • Application
<p>Date released</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
<p>Partners / Network</p>	<p>Socialna akademija, Slovenia (leading partner) Documenta, Croatia KatHaz, Hungary InicativAngola, Austria</p>
<p>Level</p>	<p>International/EU project partnership</p>
<p>Description of the method / approach, the theory</p>	<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 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>



<p>Purpose / Goal</p>	<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>
<p>Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)</p>	<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>
<p>Overview of the relevant aspects that are important for this project</p>	<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>
<p>Weblink</p>	<p>https://hardtopics.eu/</p>
<p>References/ online sources</p>	<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



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Education Resource Activity • National/International Project Implementation
Title	Outside In – Transforming Hate
Target group	Youth workers engage with young people who express hateful speech and/or behaviour in youth settings.
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum/ Course/Lesson plan/Learning activity • Handbook/ Guidelines
Date released	December 2018
Partners / Network	National Youth Council of Ireland, Ireland Ljubljana Pride, Slovenia Interfaith Scotland, United Kingdom Ha Moment, Portugal Rauhankasvatus instituutti, Finland
Level	International/EU level
Description of the method / approach, the theory	<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>
Purpose / Goal	<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> <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.</p>
Evaluation (result), re-search (if available)	<p>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</p>



	<p>youth workers, making this a flexible guide for transforming challenging behavior and promoting inclusive environments.</p> <p>In 2018, around 500 people, active in youth work, were trained through the project.</p>
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