



Smart eDemocracy Against Fake News
(SMARTeD)

This is not a fake news – workshop on fake news
(Fake news and disinformation workshop report)

Partner: Institute for Electronic Participation (INePA)

Date of the event: 14th May 2019

Country, city: Postojna, Slovenia

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SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

I. Information about event

Venue (location & country)	Youth Center Postojna, Vilharjeva ulica 14, Postojna, Slovenia
Start date	14th May 2019 at 14:00
End date	14th May 2019 at 19:00
Type of event	Plenary discussion and workshop
Website	http://www.mcp.si/program/5/Delavnica-o-lanih-novicah-2019-05-14 (Slovene language) http://www.inepa.si/institut-inepa/novice/273-smarted-workshop-this-is-not-fake-news.html (English language)

II. Participants of event

	Participants by target group*						Total no. of participants	No. of involved countries	No. of people indirectly reached
	Distribution by age			Disadvan. participants	Women	Men			
	< 30	30 - 65	> 65						
Planned	66 % 22	33 % 8	0	6,6 % (2)	33 % (10)	66 % (20)	30	1	1000
Realized	70 % (24)	30 % (10)	0	2	50 % (17)	50 % (17)	34	1	1000
Difference	+ 2	+ 2	0	0	+ 7	- 3	+4	0	0

* The following documents are required as an appendix in order to verify participants of the event:

- 1) A list of attendance signed by participants
- 2) An anonymous questionnaire on participants demographics and event evaluation

III. Short description of event

Briefly describe how the methodology for SMARTED events was implemented and what was the content (activities: getting to know each other and topic of the workshop, discovering the phenomenon of fake news, analysing sources of information and media content, how to counter fake news, partners online meeting, evaluation and workshop closure)*

Event targeted youngsters, youth workers, educators, students and others interested in disinformation topic. The main goal was to share knowledge on practical tools for identifying fake news and various methods and strategies for addressing them in everyday life environments (school, media etc.).

The following learning objectives were set up for the SMARTeD workshop in Postojna:

- to raise participants awareness and understanding on online disinformation and consequences caused by this phenomenon on European and local level;
- to develop participants critical thinking skills;
- to foster and develop a sense of European citizenship based on an informed debate on European issues.

The event programme included the following three sessions:

OPENING PLENARY DISCUSSION with dr. Sonja Merljak Zdovc (Časoris youth on-line media). She presented fake news issue in the context of digital space and technologies. She also introduced an on-line game Bad news (<https://getbadnews.si/>). Participants tested the game by playing the role of fake news-monger.

DISCUSSION WITH GUESTS

Slovenian member of the European Parliament Mrs. Tanja Fajon (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) took part in the event. Before becoming a politician, she worked as a journalist. She shared a case of intentionally created disinformation targeting her personally as MEP and referred to fake news impact during election campaign in France. Mrs. Fajon appealed young participants to check out credibility of information because there are lots of disinformation in social media, newspapers etc. Especially before the elections, the number of fake news increases. She agreed with young participants that there should be more emphasis on learning media literacy in schools.

Young candidate to the European Parliament, Ms. Irena Joveva (ex. TV speaker and journalist) and young journalist Ms. Klara Škrinjar, who is a local from Postojna and well known journalist in Slovenia, both shared their views on fake news interference in everyday life. Ms. Joveva was a victim of hacking her Twitter profile and she shared her personal experience. Ms. Škrinjar advocates for truthful journalism. She introduced a new Slovene fact-checking portal www.razkrinkavanje.si. Both guests advised participants not to believe in everything they hear or read, but to check before judging.

WORKSHOP

Various cases of fake news were presented by facilitator Mr. Matej Delakorda. Mr. Delakorda introduced the E.S.C.A.P.E. method to participants, who later analyzed particular cases following the method. In the second part of the workshop, participants designed proposals on how to combat fake news and presented them to SMARTeD project partners from Czech Republic and Latvia via Skype call.

* The following document is required as an appendix:
3) Programme of event

IV. How citizens were involved during event and which target groups / representatives of stakeholders were present?

Participants were actively involved in all parts of the event. They contributed questions and comments during discussions with invited guests and Skype conversation with project partners. Youngsters were very active sharing their experience and ideas as well improving their knowledge and skills. They learned the E.S.C.A.P.E. method and used it for analysing current media news.

The participants were coming from the local high school. Some students joined from the local student club, youth workers from the youth centre and unemployed youth also took part in the event.

V. Which dissemination channels were used to inform target groups about event?

[Please respond in accordance to the dissemination plan:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/131uG8_IVp2Sf2IYVwkjGoNaU5AFfqKXOwYlr3Ac9c_Y/edit#gid=0

The event was disseminated using local partner [Youth Center Postojna web site](#), Regional NGO hub [Boreo web page](#), [FB event](#), Boreo newsletter reaching 675 people, direct e-mailing, follow up calls and personal invitations. In addition, some other web sites shared information about the event:

<https://dogodki.today/dogodki/2307>

<https://www.zmaj-ma-mlade.com/program/5/Delavnica-o-lanijh-novicah-2019-05-14>

<https://krog.sta.si/2631255/v-postojni-sredi-maja-delavnica-o-laznih-novicah-za-mlade>

The Facebook event was shared by different profiles including:

<https://www.facebook.com/MladinskiCenterPostojna/posts/2514711408552939>

<https://www.facebook.com/MladinskiCenterPostojna/posts/2513240728700007>

<https://www.facebook.com/MladinskiCenterPostojna/posts/2513009272056486>

<https://www.facebook.com/VisitPostojna/posts/2417426305205500>

<https://www.facebook.com/institut.inepa/posts/10156970414756675>

SECTION 2: DISCUSSION ON FAKE NEWS AND ONLINE DISINFORMATION TOPIC

VI. What were the general consideration and observations made by participants on the topic of fake news and its consequences on local, national, regional and European level?

Participants highlighted the following concerns on the topic of fake news:

- 1) Social media and web portals are under pressure to attract as many users / readers as possible. To get their attention, they generate big news and catchy headlines for people to read them. By doing this, they often spread fake, partial or biased news.
- 2) Young people are dissatisfied by the way how reporting spam or fake news is being handled by social media platforms and web portals. Reporting inappropriate content in many occasions does not result in removing it or the process of removing it is very slow. Social media and web portals are reluctant to remove content which was advertised since it generates revenue for their business model. However, young people believe that fake news can hurt economy, personal profile, image of someone and therefore it is not a joke.
- 3) Young people think that building up knowledge on how to recognize fake news must start by learning children in the elementary school. They proposed introducing media and news classes in the school curricula.
- 4) The European Parliament should take a stand on fake news topic. It should establish some kind of punishment for those media who spread fake news and make a profit out of them.
- 5) We need a continuous debate about the topics. And we have to talk about the topic with our children and older people to protect them from the violence of fake news.

VII. What were the considerations made by participants on the analysis of different sources of information and media content?

The most difficult thing for workshop participant's was to check the veracity of the news in terms of their implementation. The most useful step in verifying the credibility of the news were the sources. The challenge participants faced was the example of news on the import of migrants by NGOs. Part of the participants thought the news was false and some did not. Through the discussion, participants exchanged facts and tried to find out the truth. They focused more on the purpose of the article and the discourse style of the article. They also noted that knowledge of the political orientation of the media was also important. These political orientations are often determined by the manner and motive of media coverage.

VIII. Which considerations were made by participants on possible ways how they personally tackle the issue of online disinformation?

The following considerations were made by participants on how to tackle on-line disinformation:

- When in doubt, do an on-line fact check if the information is reliable and genuine.

- The numbers are important factor to check if the news are real or fake.
- It is important to recognize the purpose behind the information.
- We are surrounded by hundreds of news every day from different media (TV, radio, internet...) and so, we have to expect in advance that some of them will be fake. Therefore, we have to have an obligation to check them.

IX. What already pre-existing tools and EU initiatives were considered valuable to address the issue of fake news online disinformation?

dr. Sonja Merljak Zdovc (Časoris youth on-line media) introduced an on-line game Bad news (<https://getbadnews.si/>). Workshop participants tested the game by playing the role of fake news-monger.

Ms. Klara Škrinjar (journalist) introduced a new Slovene fact-checking portal www.razkrinkavanje.si ("exposing.si")

X. What were the recommendations to the European Commission on measures to be taken to combat fake news?

Workshop participants created the following suggestions for the EU countries to focus on:

- Raising awareness about fake news in elementary schools and among the elderly people through intergenerational cooperation.
- More emphasis on media literacy in elementary and high school (suggested also as a school subject)
- Youth exchanges on topic of fake news.
- Supporting national fact and reliability check portals such as: www.razkrinkavanje.si.
- Raising awareness about fake news through different workshops.
- On local level there should be media ambassadors who would spread the information about recognizing fake news.
- Wider use of E.S.C.A.P.E. method for easier recognition of fake news.

The participants gathered some additional suggestions how to reduce fake news:

- more flexibility on what is being read as a school literature (more freedom in the school system),
- raising awareness that disinformation is part of our daily lives,
- talk more about disinformation on social networks,
- wider use of E.S.C.P.E. for easier identification,
- better information on disinformation.

XI. Please indicate media reporting, photo and video material from event*

There were no media reporting about the event. Photos from the event were shared on Facebook by local partner Youth Center Postojna ([photo 1](#) and [photo 2](#)) and [MEP Tanja Fajon](#). Photos below were taken by project partner INePA.



Opening plenary discussion with dr. Sonja Merljak Zdove



Discussion with Slovenian member of the European Parliament Mrs. Tanja Fajon



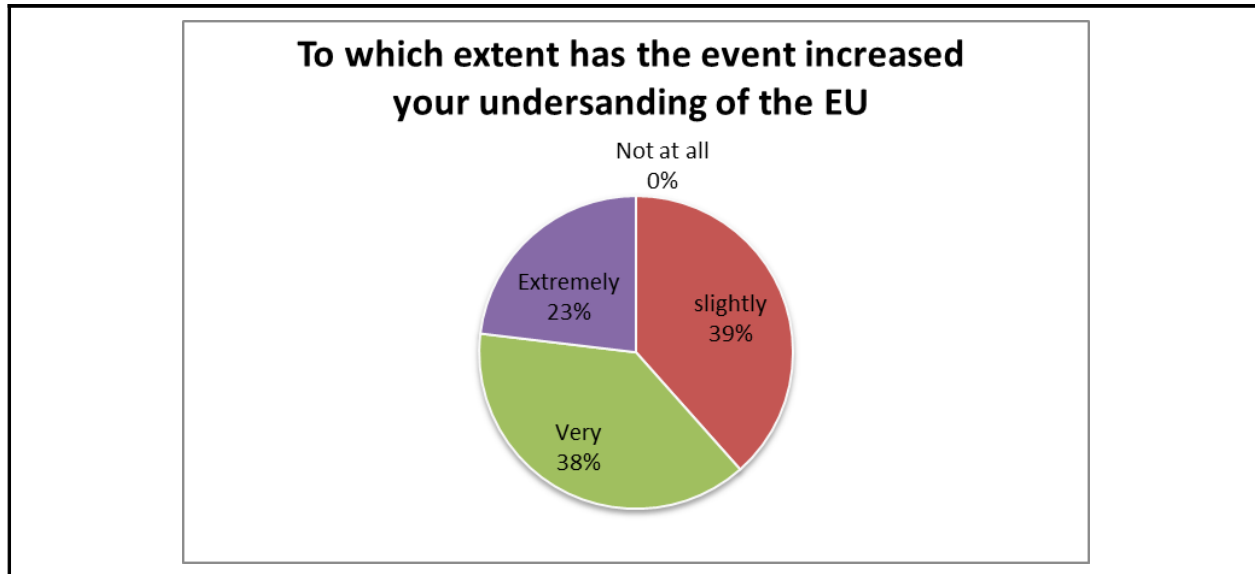
Workshop with participants analyzing media news in line with E.S.C.A.P.E. method

** The following document is required as an appendix:*

4) All (including social media) dissemination activities should be archived in PDF formats in google drive project folder & in your personal folders

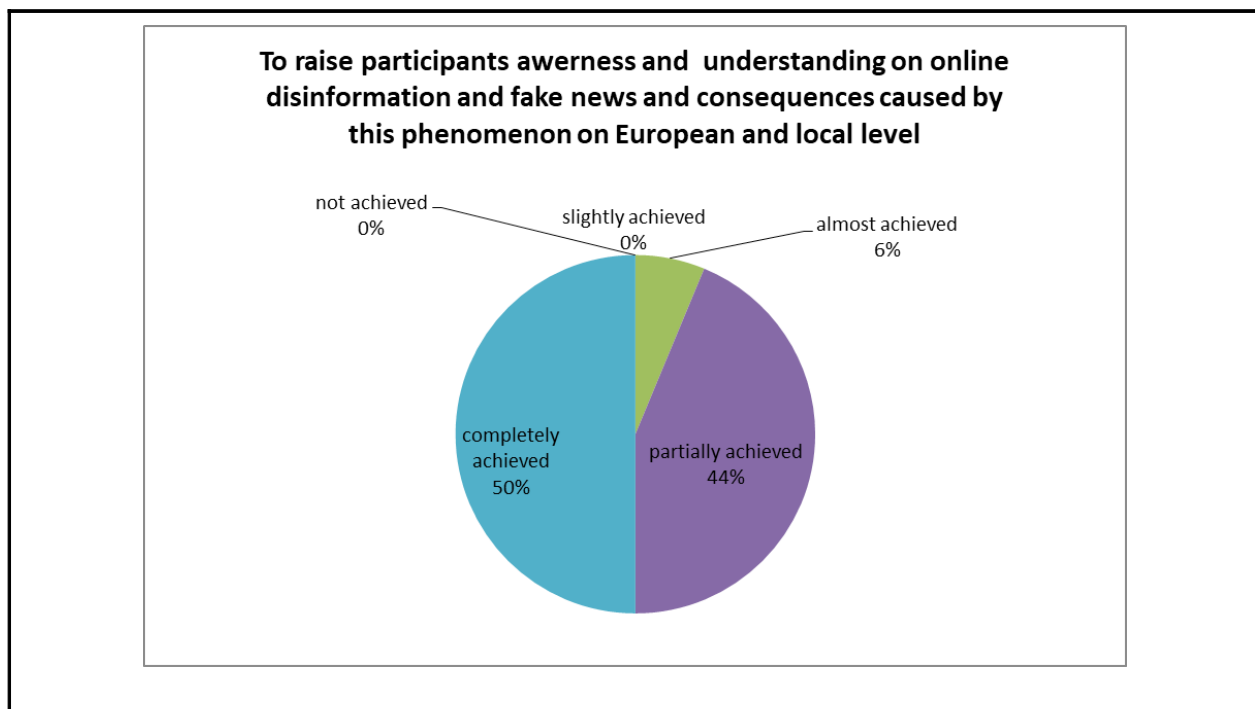
SECTION 3: EVALUATION OF THE EVENT

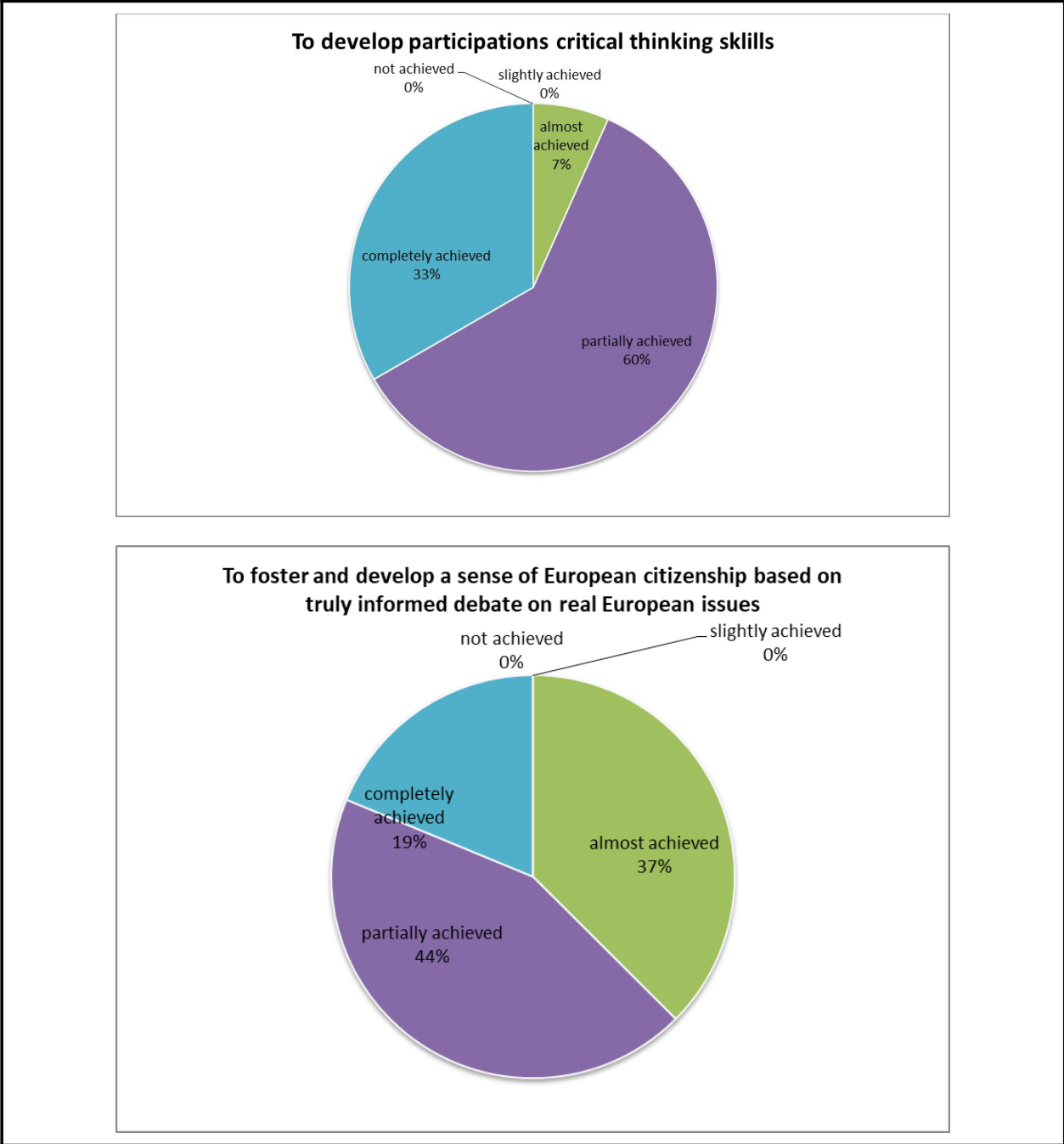
XII. To which extent has event increased participant's understanding of the EU?*



* The following documents are required as an appendix:
5) An anonymous questionnaire on participants demographics

XIII. To which extent has the event achieved the workshop objectives?*



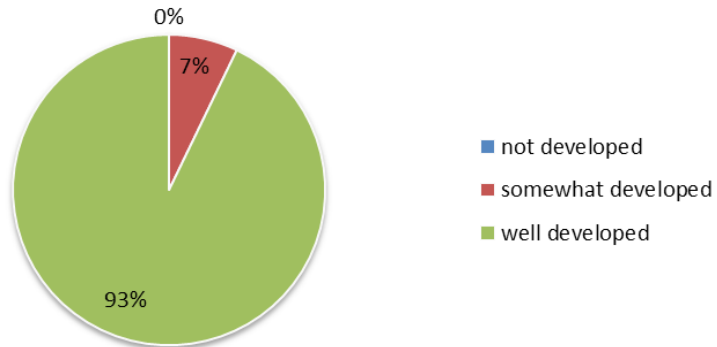


* The following documents are required as an appendix:
 6) Workshop evaluation form

XIV. To which extent participants have developed their competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes)? *

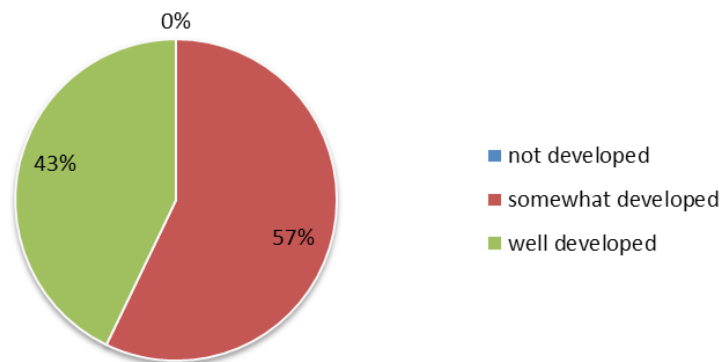
Knowledge

Understanding of fake news phenomenon and its consequences

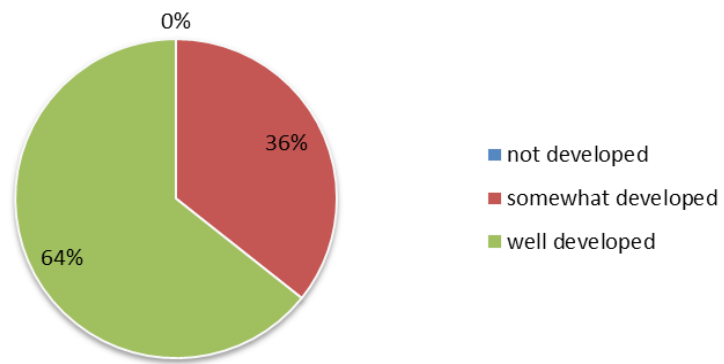


Skills

Ability to analyse informations and communication messages

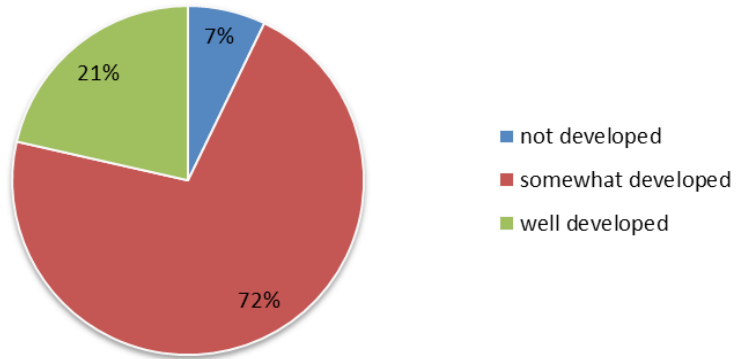


Ability to evaluate informations and communication messages in a wide variety of form

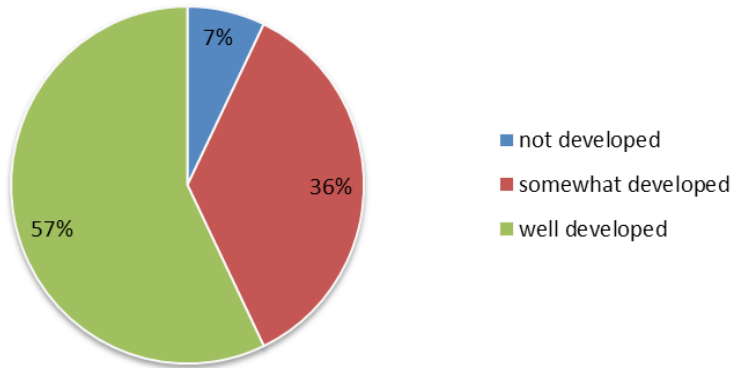


Attitudes

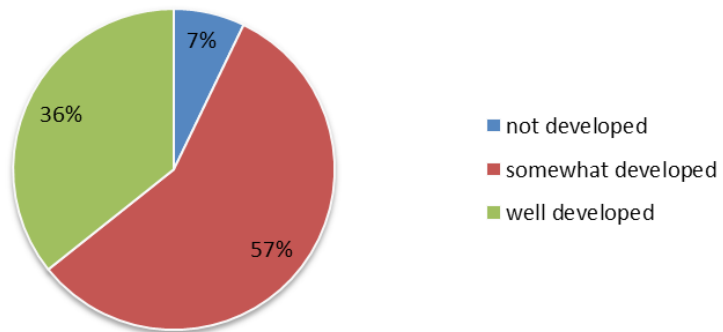
Curiosity about current European issues



Sense of responsibility as European active citizen



Ownership of European values and a shared vision on the future of Europe



** The following documents are required as an appendix:
6) Workshop evaluation form*

XV. Were the minimum indicators/results of the workshops achieved? (Total number of people reached (directly), Ideas/suggestions/needs collected, Profile of participants)

The total number of participants reached surpassed originally planned (34 out of 30). The only thing that bothered us was that there were no local journalists present. We were also successful in attracting young people with a bright idea how to save the world :)

Ideas and suggestions collected were mostly relating to fake news on the context for social media (Facebook) and strengthening media literacy within school curricula.

The participants' socio-demographic profiles were mixed, composed mostly from young people from suburban areas.

XVI. What was the impact of the event in relation to the aims of SMARTeD project?

The project was very well accepted among students. Their opinion was that only now did they realize how the media is affecting our daily lives and how important e-literacy is for identifying fake news. Throughout the workshop, students were introduced to the ESCAPE method, which they can use also as their studying method.

The students said that they were very pleased to learn about the role of journalistic work and their messages to the public in terms of not believing everything the media has to offer and that there is a portal where we can check it all out. They were very pleased to learn first-hand (Member of the EU Parliament) how the system of the European Parliament and the European Commission itself works. On the other hand, the opinion of a candidate who is still running for this position. They wanted to know what draws her to this action, why she has decided to do so and how (if elected) she will defend the views of young people in the European Parliament. We are very pleased that young people have recognized that they are not the only ones targeted by the media for spreading fake news. They have warned that information on identifying fake news should be disseminated to the elderly, who are less familiar with the technology.