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CYBER ACTIVISTS: Understanding digital rights in the artificial intelligence era

Report of the study session held by
the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU)
in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe



European Youth Centre Budapest
17-21st of March 2025

This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the main discussions, results and outcomes of the OBESSU study session '*CYBER ACTIVISTS: Understanding digital rights in the artificial intelligence era*', which took place at the European Youth Centre in Budapest (Hungary) from March 17 to 21. It contains: a background note including the need for the study session, an overview of the issues and topics discussed, the main learning outcomes for the participants, the links between the study session and the Council of Europe's programme or instruments, as well as the follow-up actions foreseen by OBESSU, its member organisations and the Council of Europe.

OBESSU is the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions, the platform for cooperation between national school student unions active in general and vocational secondary education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland, and brings together Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations from all over Europe. All member organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic student organisations. The overall aim of the study session was to provide participants with the tools to understand rights in the digital age, especially in relation to artificial intelligence and internet governance processes, while building the capacity of youth organisations for advocacy and activism in a digital environment.

Finally, both the educational programme and the objectives of the study session intersected well with the priorities outlined in the programme Youth for Democracy of the Council of Europe, specifically to **Revitalising pluralistic democracy**. The study session has contributed to priority number 1.2. "*Understanding the impact of artificial intelligence and supporting youth participation in artificial intelligence and Internet governance processes*", as the activities provided participants with the tools to understand rights in the digital era, especially in the artificial intelligence and Internet governance processes, while at the same time building capacity in youth organisations and unorganised youth for advocacy and activism in a digital environment and using digital tools. This activity also links with priority 1.1. "*Advocating for and advancing young people's participation in political processes*" by considering the effect of AI on education and creating activities to support the education of youth groups (unions) on how to continue to mandate for quality education and how to ensure equality in access to technologies within educational institutions.

The programme was based on the principles of non-formal education, human rights-based education and intercultural learning. We aimed for active, inclusive and direct communication and knowledge sharing. Sessions were balanced between theoretical inputs, simulations, debates, small group discussions, reflection, role-playing and other participatory learning methods.

About OBESSU and its Member Organisations

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is the platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland and brings together 35 Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations from all over Europe. All Member Organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic school student organisations.

For almost 50 years now, OBESSU has been representing school students as stakeholders of their educational systems, and in issues concerning their lives, by providing the national school student unions with assistance and support the development of school student representative structures. OBESSU also fosters and enables the exchange of experience and good practices among the national school student unions, and seeks to promote equal access to education, striving to end all discrimination and injustice within the educational systems. By doing so, OBESSU wants to contribute to the development of democratic educational systems in Europe, that promote active citizenship in all forms, and promote solidarity and understanding between young people, as well as new teaching methods in learning and healthier and more innovative teaching environments.

OBESSU is composed of three main bodies: the General Assembly, or the highest decision-making body of the organisation, composed by the OBESSU Members, Affiliate and Candidate organisations, which reunites once a year to elect its representatives and take decisions connected with the organisation's main priorities and activities; the Board, composed by 5 elected representatives from the OBESSU membership; and finally, the Secretariat, which handles most of the financial, administrative and technical matters connected with the proper functioning of the organisation.

Introduction

Background to the study session

Technology has, during the last decades, changed our life in every sense and education and activism are no exception. With the speeding of changes caused by technology, particularly with Artificial Intelligence, it has been a priority for our organisation to make sure that this does not happen at the expense of raising inequalities within schools, but it is done ethically and with careful consideration of the potential impact this will have on learners and the wider society.

This has been a central topic to us. In our recent School Student Manifesto towards the upcoming European Parliament Elections, “Europe Needs Us”, we made it clear that we demand that the European institutions guarantee policies around digital technologies and AI in education in cooperation with school students representatives, that a student-centred approach to digitalisation in education is taken and that bigger steps are taken in terms of enhancing the accountability of big tech corporations, to strip them of the monopoly they hold on accessing digital tools. We have also already conducted several projects in this field, such as Innovation Station (two-year project that finished in March 2024) that strives to create a support system for both teachers and students to adapt to the digital challenges they are facing in online education.

This activity allowed us to bring together all the ideas we have been gathering during the last couple of years in these topics and to train and empower a new generation of school students leaders, with the help of the Council of Europe and some other organisations working in the field, such as [Connect International](#), a Brussels-based international network of organisations formed with a mission to create innovative European projects ensuring mainstreaming of digital rights and digital agenda with young people and other active citizens.

Connection to the work of the Council of Europe

The objectives of the study session were linked to the *Revitalising pluralistic democracy* priority outlined in the programme Youth for Democracy of the Council of Europe. Specifically, the study session activity has contributed to priority number 1.2. “Understanding the impact of artificial intelligence and supporting youth participation in artificial intelligence and Internet governance processes”, as the activities provided participants with the tools to understand rights in the digital era, especially in the artificial intelligence and Internet governance processes, while at the same time building capacity in youth organisations and unorganised youth for advocacy and activism in a digital environment and using digital tools. This activity also links with priority 1.1. “Advocating for and advancing young people’s participation in political processes” by considering the effect of AI on education and creating activities to support the education of youth groups (unions) on how to continue to mandate for quality education and how to ensure equality in access to technologies within educational institutions.

At the same time, the study session supported and complemented OBESSU’s engagement in other initiatives the Council of Europe developed around these topics. From 22 to 23 January 2025, OBESSU was involved in the Consultative Meeting on Artificial Intelligence and Young People, which was held in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg and provided useful

resources and approaches for the development of various study session activities. Moreover, the engagement in the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education, from its Launch Conference at the end of January to the upcoming Forum in May, is for OBESSU both a source of information and materials useful for the preparation of the study session and a platform where to ensure the sustainability of its outputs.

The working methods used within the study session were based on NFE; as such, they are interactive, inclusive and tailored to both group and individual needs. The working methods were developed and then adapted by the pedagogical team, which involves youth educators and activists, and which aims to support and empower each participant to take an active role in every discussion, thus creating space for mutual learning and understanding. Concretely, the planned working methods included, among others: role-play games, simulations, plenary discussions, working groups activities, online lectures and panel discussions.

Finally, the pedagogical approach and working methods used for the study session heavily relied on Council of Europe resources, especially the COMPASS. Such resources were also formally introduced to participants to support them in their role as multipliers later on, once they go back to their own organisations and disseminate the outcomes of the activity.

Aims and objectives of the study session

The primary aim of the activity was to give young people the tools to understand their rights in the digital era, especially in connection to artificial intelligence, while at the same time building the capacity of youth organisations and unorganised youth for advocacy and activism in digital environments and through digital tools.

The specific objectives of the activity were:

1. Understanding rights in the digital era and reflecting on how to promote accessibility of education for all young people based on the opportunities provided by the new digital tools
2. Discussing and sharing good practices and different examples from around Europe on digital participation and the incorporation of artificial intelligence in the school system
3. Building capacity in School Students Unions for advocacy and activism in a digital environment and using digital tools
4. Supporting the advocacy of School Students Unions through a digital advocacy toolkit

Profiles of participants

The study session was held in the European Youth Centre Budapest, from the 21st to the 27th of March 2025. It gathered a total of 34 participants, including 5 from the Pedagogical Team. The 29 participants counted 1 member of OBESSU's Monitoring Committee and the 28 active members and/or representatives of the following OBESSU member organisations: [AKS \(Aktion Kritischer SchülerInnen\)](#), [AS \(Aliancia Stredoskolakov\)](#), [BSK \(Bundesschülerkonferenz\)](#), [CANAE \(Confederación Estatal de Asociaciones de Estudiantes, Spain\)](#), [CNE \(Consiliul Național al Elevilor, Romania\)](#), [CSU \(Česká středoškolská unie, Czech Republic\)](#), [FSS \(Finlands Svenska Skolungdomsförbund\)](#), [ISSU \(Irish Secondary Students' Union, Ireland\)](#), [MAKOSZ \(Romániai Magyar Középiskolások szövetsége, Hungarian speaking minority in Romania\)](#), [OKÉ \(Országos Középiskolás Érdekképvisel\)](#), [SIF \(Samband Íslenskra Framhaldsskólanema\)](#), [SRSS](#)

(Študentská Rada Stredných Škôl), [SSUNI \(Secondary Students Union of Northern Ireland\)](#), [UNSCG \(Unija srednjoškola Crne Gore\)](#), [UNSHM \(Union of High School Students of North Macedonia\)](#), and [USO \(Union der Schülerorganisationen CH / FL\)](#). 13 out of 34 participants identified as females, 19 as males, and 2 as non-binary. Participants' age ranged between 14 and 28 years old, with an average age of 17 for the participants and 22 for the Pedagogical Team. Many participants stated that the study session was the first opportunity they had to engage actively with OBESSU.

Below a table of the participants' countries of residence (Pedagogical Team included):

Signatories of the European Cultural Convention							
Albania		Estonia		Liechtenstein		Serbia	
Andorra		Finland	3	Lithuania		Slovak Republic	3
Armenia		France		Luxembourg		Slovenia	
Austria	1	Georgia		Malta		Spain	2
Azerbaijan		Germany	1	Republic of Moldova		Sweden	
Belarus		Greece		Monaco		Switzerland	2
Belgium		Holy See		Montenegro	1	North Macedonia	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina		Hungary	2	The Netherlands		Türkiye	
Bulgaria		Iceland	3	Norway		Ukraine	
Croatia		Ireland	4	Poland		United Kingdom	2
Cyprus		Italy	1	Portugal	1		
Czech Republic	1	Kazakhstan		Romania	5		
Denmark		Latvia		San Marino			
Other countries:							

Programme: inputs and discussions

Overview of the topics

The study session was originally composed of 22 sessions and 4 evening activities (Welcome Evening, OBESSU Olympics, City Tour, and OBESSU Party). Excluding the Welcome and Introduction (Session 1.1), the Team Building (Session 1.2), and the Closing and Evaluation (Session 5.4), the remaining 19 sessions were organised around three main clusters, generally moving from more general to more specific topics, and from more theory- to more practice-oriented activities.

Cluster 1: From human to digital rights

- Human Rights: Understanding Rights in Everyday Life (Session 1.3)
- Human Rights-based team building & presentations of CoE & OBESSU (Session 1.4)
- A Digital World and Your Rights (Session 2.1)

Cluster 2: Digitalisation: from impact to policy

- What is AI? Challenges and Opportunities, with Ron SALAJ: “What is AI: Myths and Truths” (Session 2.2)
- Ctrl+Alt+Teach: Reimagining education with AI & digital tools (Session 2.3)
- The role of AI and the Rise of Misinformation in Education (Session 2.4)
- Ethics and AI (Session 3.1)
- Digital Policies, with Zia PERKO ROGELI: The AI Framework Convention and the Advisory Council on Youth (Session 3.2)

Cluster 3: Digital Advocacy: from theory to practice

- Understanding Activism, Advocacy & Lobbying (Session 4.1)
- Cyberactivism: tools, skills, & safety for digital advocacy (Session 4.2)
- Exchange of Practices in AI and Digital Advocacy (Session 4.3)
- Online Campaigning 101 (Session 4.4)
- Toolkit 101 (Session 4.5)
- What Should AI Education Look Like? (Session 5.1)
- Toolkit Drafting: Self-organised Workshops (Part 1) (Session 5.2)
- Toolkit Drafting: Self-organised Workshops (Part 2) (Session 5.3)

For each session day, excluding the free afternoon on the third day (Wednesday, 23 March), the Pedagogical Team foresaw Reflection Groups, where participants were engaged to reflect on the activities of the day and thus better retain the related learning outcomes, while also giving the pedagogical team members a chance to receive feedback on their work and further refine the study session programme accordingly.

During the study session, the pedagogical team revised the structure of the last two days. Namely, the team merged Sessions 4.2 (Cyberactivism: tools, skills, & safety for digital advocacy) and 4.4 (Online Campaigning 101) together, to improve the flow of the digital advocacy cluster. For the same reason, the team also modified the order of the activities of the last day and put the “What

Should AI Education Look Like” session as the last activity (Session 5.3) before the “Closing and Evaluation” (Session 5.4).

Aim and flow of the programme

The Preparatory Team was selected after an open call was launched through OBESSU’s internal channels and sent to the OBESSU Pool of Trainers as well as the OBESSU membership. The educational programme of the study session, including non-formal education methods and pedagogical approaches, the objectives and learning outcomes of the Session, administrative deadlines and financial rules, the roles of the members of the Pedagogical Team, the link with the Council’s work and resources on digital issues, was developed and discussed by the Preparatory Team in a first online meeting on the 13th of December 2024 and during the preparatory meeting of 29-30 January 2024 in the European Youth Centre of Budapest.

The programme was developed as a joint effort between the members of the preparatory team. It was conceived keeping in mind the target participants, i.e. student activists and representatives of OBESSU organisations of different ages (between 15 and 22), with different degrees of engagement with OBESSU and its activities, and from different backgrounds and educational systems.

Below is more information on the three clusters, including more details on the most important sessions. Their main outcomes and conclusions are illustrated in the following section.

Day 1

The first day aimed to set the conceptual and teamwork bases for the whole study session. The activities thus focused on introducing participants to each other and to the pedagogical team members through some ice-breaking and team-building activities (Sessions 1.1, 1.2, and 1.4), also allowing them to share fears and expectations for the study session. Similarly, participants were familiarised with the programme’s agenda, OBESSU, and the Code of Conduct, including safe persons. Thanks to the collaboration of the Educational Advisor and Marcos Andrade, Deputy Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest, participants were introduced to the European Youth Centre, the concept of the study session, and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe (Session 1.4). At the same time, day-1 activities tried to ease all participants into the topics of the study session by introducing them to human rights and the Council’s approach to human rights, including non-formal education methods (Session 1.3).

A highlight of the first day was Session 1.4, “Human rights-based Team Building & Presentations of CoE and OBESSU”, which aimed to develop inclusive, rights-based teamwork skills through interactive activities and a learning-by-doing approach rooted in human rights education principles from COMPASS. This allowed participants to better connect with each other within the human rights framework which the whole study session was based on. Participants engaged in real-life simulations and interactive exercises to experience privilege, power dynamics, and teamwork challenges firsthand. Moreover, the final presentations built a link with how this human-rights based approach is implemented in the Council of Europe and OBESSU, thus properly positioning

participants within the context and background of the study session in view of the activities of the other days.

Day 2

Having defined a common, human rights-based framework, day-2 activities dwelled into the core topic of the study session, that is digital technologies and their impact on rights and education. Participants started from a general understanding of what digitalisation is, how it could impact existing human rights, and how it can lead to the emergence of new rights and forms of harm. Participants then were introduced to artificial intelligence with the support of Ron Salaj, whose input provided a historical and critical perspective, especially debunking some of the myths surrounding this technology. The second part of the day was devoted to bringing in digital technologies into education. Participants were involved in a very interactive activity where they had to reimagine, both conceptually and visually, their digital schools, from infrastructures to curricula. Finally, they focused on misinformation and disinformation as AI-related issues that particularly affect learning, learners, and their personal and civic development. In the evening, the OBESSU Olympics were held, contributing to creating a positive, team-building, and friendly environment for the participants.

The main highlights of Day 2 were Sessions 2.3, “Ctrl+Alt+Teach: Reimagining education with AI & digital tools”, and 2.4, “The role of AI and the Rise of Misinformation in Education”. The first aimed at engaging students in critical thinking about AI’s role in education, balancing innovation with real learning through hand-on activities for designing an AI-driven school. Participants’ feedback was particularly positive, as they were tasked with drawing, building, and describing their vision of the ultimate AI-powered school (from the curriculum, overall architecture, activities, clubs, etc.), including by usage of cardboards, playdough, etc. The last session of Day 2 focused on combating the rise of misinformation and AI deepfakes with non-formal educational methods: it was also particularly interesting, as it revealed an important digital and media literacy gap among the participants, contrary to the “digital native” narrative and to the expectations of participants’ themselves. Additionally, a special mention goes to the OBESSU Olympics, held at the end of the second day, and very much appreciated by the participants who attended.

Day 3

Having gained a general understanding of digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and their impact on education, the third day concluded the “digital” cluster by engaging participants in activities that aimed at fostering their ethical thinking and providing them with knowledge and resources on the ethical and regulatory frameworks currently available in the digital field. Therefore, in Session 3.1, participants had to discuss real-life and fictional scenarios where AI did or could pose ethical concerns. Session 3.2 introduced the EU approach to digital policies, especially focusing on the GDPR and the AI Act, in conversation with invited guest Zia Perko Rogelj, who talked about the Council’s Framework Convention on AI and the work of the Advisory Council on Youth, sparking a fruitful comparative discussion on different digital policy frameworks. The rest of the third day included a free afternoon: some participants took part in a City Tour organised for free by a local NGO, Association of Civilians (Civilek Szövetsége), that one of OBESSU’s member organisation, Országos Középiskolás Érdekképviselő (OKÉ), is part of.

Both the first and second sessions of the third day obtained great engagement from the participants. Both sessions complemented the other introductory sessions on AI, its risks, and opportunities of the previous days, by focusing on how to address them ethically and at the policy and legislative levels. In Session 3.1, “Ethics and AI”, participants discussed potential ethical implications in the everyday usage of AI and were then presented with real-life cases to complement their expectations and further reflect on AI ethics. In Session 3.2, “Digital Policies”, looked at some of the protections set in place to defend our lives as users of digital technologies, comparing the European approach to digital policies (including GDPR and AI Act) with the Council’s approach (especially the Framework Convention on AI) through a series of presentations and an online lecture by Zia Perko Rogelj, expert of digital policies at Connect International and member of the Advisory Council on Youth at the Council of Europe. Despite the online format and usage of PPTs, participants remained engaged throughout the whole session and it allowed to open topics of discussion that were not foreseen in the preparation.

Day 4

Equipped with an understanding of digitalisation and AI, their impact on rights and education, and an ethical and regulatory mindset, participants had been prepared to work on digital advocacy, the third cluster. The activities again started from a more general and theoretical understanding of advocacy, lobbying, and activism, to then move to more practice-oriented activities. The latter included the definition and realisation of an online campaign, as well as a world-forum exchange where OBESSU’s member organisations showcased their own experiences and practices related to digital matters and digital advocacy. This first part of the third cluster aimed at preparing participants to work on the digital advocacy toolkit, the main deliverable of the OBESSU study session. This is why the last activity of Day 4 was devoted to explaining to the participants what an advocacy toolkit is and what was expected from them on the last day, and tasking them with drafting a structure of the toolkit.

The main activities of Day 4 were Session 4.2, “Cyberactivism: tools, skills, & safety for digital advocacy”, and Session 4.3, “Exchange of Practices in AI and Digital Advocacy”. The first session aimed at building capacity for digital advocacy through the development of online campaigning roadmap and guidelines with a co-creation approach, where participants could connect what they had learned in the previous days with their extensive advocacy experience in their respective student unions. After having learned about activism, advocacy, and how to do them with digital tools, in the second session, participants got to know, and themselves share, best and worst practices related to AI and digital advocacy in their own schools, unions, and countries. Volunteers from the participants were given a stand where they could showcase projects, activities, and initiatives of their respective organisations, while the rest of the students could participate in the “exhibition” in a word-cafe format. At the end, everybody was invited to discuss the exhibits and assess whether they could be replicated in their own countries or organisations.

Day 5

The last day completed the “advocacy” cluster by taking stock of all the previous activities and implementing them into a toolkit aimed at empowering school student unions and organisations

with the knowledge and resources to do digital advocacy and advocate on digital matters. Day-5 activities thus followed a co-creation approach, where participants could directly feed their past experiences and new knowledge into the work of OBESSU. After reflecting on the draft prepared on the previous day, participants were split into groups to do research on specific sections of the toolkit, with the support of the pedagogical team. After sharing and discussing the results in plenary, attendees were asked to start drafting the various sections of the toolkit. After lunch, the draft structure and main points of the toolkit were well-defined, allowing the pedagogical team to take a stronger focus on one specific element of the toolkit.

The contribution of guest speakers

Two lecturers joined the study session:

- Ron Salaj, independent expert on the impact of AI, led Session 2.2, “What is AI? Challenges & Opportunities”: he provided an historical and critical perspective on AI, debunking many of the myths surrounding this technology within mainstream media
- Zia Perko Rogelj, member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe, co- led Session 3.2, “Digital Policies”: she contributed with the presentation of the EU approach to digital policies with that of the Council, dwelling into the Framework Convention on AI and human rights, democracy and rule of law

Due to difficulties in getting hold of potential lecturers during the preparatory phase, both lectures had to happen in an online format. This was not ideal in terms of participants’ engagement. This was especially true for the lecture of Session 2.2, as it was particularly dense of information: while some participants appreciated the depth of the lecture, others complained about the lack of participatory moments and the format. Unexpectedly, this was not the case for the other lecture, although it was also online: participants were more engaged with the lecturer Zia Perko Rogelj, probably due to the fact that her lecture was accompanied by an in-person lecture and moderated by the Course Director.

All the presentations from the speakers are made available in the annex section of this report.

Results and conclusions

Learning outcomes for participants

Results and conclusions of the study session can be seen as threefold:

- tangible results;
- theoretical achievements;
- capacity-building outcomes and exchange of practices; and
- general takeaways.

In terms of tangible results, all participants went home having contributed to a Digital Advocacy Toolkit, which was finalised together with the present report and then shared with all participants and OBESSU Member Organisations. Throughout the whole last day of the study session,

participants were engaged directly on researching, conceptualising, and drafting the toolkit: this was meant to ensure participants could have ownership of the tool, and with the theoretical and practical bases built in the previous days, they were also able to contribute in an informed manner. Therefore, based on the needs and interests of the participants themselves, the Digital Advocacy toolkit will foster the capacity of school student unions and organisations to do digital advocacy and advocate for digital policy matters. Furthermore, another tangible result will be a policy paper on AI. The study session provided OBESSU with valuable resources and inputs from its member organisations, that will help shape the organisation's stance and political objectives around artificial intelligence. OBESSU is drafting the policy paper based on the inputs and insights gathered from all the activities of the study session and will then present it to its member organisations at the 2025 OBESSU's Council of Members.

As the study session addressed complicated topics, the pedagogical team paid much attention to ensuring participants gained the knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in their advocacy activities. Based on participants' evaluations, their main theoretical achievements were:

- understanding digital rights and policies: participants learned the connection between human rights and digital spaces, the importance of digital rights in education, and the EU digital policy landscape, especially highlighting understanding “what GDPR actually is in practice”
- understanding AI: while gathering various information on the role of artificial intelligence in the modern world, its positive impacts, and its risks, participants were particularly receptive to the differences between disinformation and misinformation and how to identify them, the definition of AI, the history of AI, and debunking the misconceptions often embedded in mainstream narratives – such as, the fact that there is a huge variety of artificial intelligence systems beyond ChatGPT, or that the history of AI is way older than it is often believed.
- understanding organisations and institutions: participants valued the possibility of learning about OBESSU, the Council of Europe, and its work on digital issues.

All the capacity-building outcomes are tightly connected to these theoretical achievements. The latter indeed included practice-oriented knowledge and resources. In learning about the Council of Europe, for example, participants were also taught about its funding mechanisms and the European Youth Foundation, which can be very useful for their organisations' activities at the international, national, regional, and local levels. Moreover, participants learned about different opportunities for using artificial intelligence in their lives, school life, and youth work, in a responsible and ethical manner. The exchange of practices among the participants was extremely important in this regard, as they had the opportunity to learn about other student organisations and how different countries address AI in education, showcase their initiatives and receive feedback on them, and reflect on how to implement practices from other countries and contexts in their own organisations or schools. At the same time, learning about disinformation and misinformation also allowed participants to understand the tools and tips on how to critically assess online information. Finally, participants were given the knowledge and tools to foster their advocacy in the digital realm and for digital matters, especially understanding the difference between advocacy, lobbying, and activism, and learning how to build an online campaign.

Main takeaways and results achieved

- Digital Advocacy Toolkit – finalised after the study session
- Policy Paper on Artificial Intelligence – to be finalised
- Understanding digital rights and policies
- Understanding AI and its impact on society, youth, and education
- Debunking AI myths
- Understanding OBESSU and the Council of Europe
- Exchange of student organisations' practices in digital advocacy and artificial intelligence
- Understanding disinformation, misinformation, and how to spot them
- Understanding advocacy, lobbying, and activism, and online campaigning workshop

Evaluation of the study session

The study session was designed to familiarise participants with digital rights. Digital rights remained a central theme throughout, as all activities encouraged reflection on the impact of digital technologies on students' lives and education. Participants confirmed this objective's success, with 38.5% rating it 4 and 42.3% rating it 5.

Activities focused on the incorporation of AI in schools and its impact on education were the highlights of sessions 2.3, 2.4, and 5.1. At the same time, OBESSU offered a dedicated space for participants to showcase their organisations' work on digital advocacy and AI during session 4.3. The successful results are reflected in the participants' evaluations, where almost 70% of them ranked this objective at 5 points.

OBESSU's study session also increased participants' capacity for digital advocacy and activism through dedicated sessions (4.1, 4.2, and 4.4), and with the co-creation of a toolkit for school student unions' digital advocacy and access to digital rights (Sessions 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3). While most participants ranked this objective between 4 (ca. 42%) and 5 (ca. 42%), the achievement of this objective will be complete when the toolkit will be finalised.

Contribution to the work of the Council of Europe's Youth Department

Many of the activities developed and delivered throughout the Session raised awareness amongst OBESSU's membership of the work of the Council of Europe and the Youth Department, including funding mechanisms of the EYF, thanks to the interventions of the Deputy-Director of the ECYB and the Educational Advisor. Participants had also the opportunity to become familiar with the Council's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, as well as the role of the Advisory Council on Youth, thanks to the involvement of Zia Perko Rogelj.

As previously stated, the objectives of the study session were linked to the *Revitalising pluralistic democracy* priority outlined in the programme Youth for Democracy of the Council of Europe. Specifically, the study session activity has contributed to priority number 1.2. "Understanding the impact of artificial intelligence and supporting youth participation in artificial intelligence and Internet governance processes", as the activities provided participants with the tools to understand rights in the digital era, especially in the artificial intelligence and Internet governance

processes, while at the same time building capacity in youth organisations and unorganised youth for advocacy and activism in a digital environment and using digital tools. This activity also links with priority 1.1. “Advocating for and advancing young people’s participation in political processes” by considering the effect of AI on education and creating activities to support the education of youth groups (unions) on how to continue to mandate for quality education and how to ensure equality in access to technologies within educational institutions.

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The working methods implemented during the study session were based on NFE; as such, they are interactive, inclusive and tailored to both group and individual needs. The working methods were developed and then adapted by the pedagogical team, which involves youth educators and activists, and which aims to support and empower each participant to take an active role in every discussion, thus creating space for mutual learning and understanding. Concretely, the planned working methods included, among others: role-play games, simulations, plenary discussions, working groups activities, online lectures, and panel discussions.

Finally, the pedagogical approach and working methods used for the study session heavily relied on Council of Europe resources, especially the COMPASS. Such resources were also formally introduced to participants to support them in their role as multipliers later, once they go back to their own organisations and disseminate the outcomes of the activity.

OBESSU will continue to provide support to its members and to disseminate opportunities coming from the Youth Department to the study session participants, although they now have the tools to interface themselves directly with the Council of Europe.

In terms of logistics and administration, the experience of the study session was a fruitful one as it provided the Council of Europe Youth Department with plenty of feedback regarding some of the current arrangements and how to improve the experience of the Youth Centre for events’ participants.

Follow-up activities

Dissemination

During the study session, OBESSU made various posts on its Instagram account, while participants posted and reposted in the channels of their respective organisations. Moreover, articles were posted on the Council of Europe's website and on OBESSU's external newsletter. Finally, a professional video-maker hired by the Council was present throughout some of the activities to collect materials for an upcoming documentary on the Council's work.

Please find the links below:

- Article written on OBESSU's External Newsletter: [OBESSU Newsletter April 2025 Edition](#)
- Article written on the Council of Europe's Website: "[CYBER ACTIVISTS: School Student Unions explore digital rights in the AI era](#)"
- [Instagram Posts on the OBESSU Account](#)

The Digital Advocacy Toolkit

As a direct follow up of the study session, the pedagogical team planned the development of the toolkit "Advocacy in the Digital Era: Toolkit for School Student Unions". While the programme dedicated a whole day of the study session on activities focused on conceptualising, structuring, and drafting the toolkit, all the inputs received from participants throughout the whole study session were taken into consideration in its development. This allowed for a co-creative approach that will directly reflect the concerns, needs, and interests of OBESSU's membership in terms of digital advocacy and advocacy for digital rights. In its final form, the toolkit will be an informative and practical guide for school student organisations and for all learners in secondary and vocational education in Europe on how to practice digital advocacy and how to advocate for digital matters in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The first part of the Toolkit is mainly informative, aiming to provide users with the information to critically reflect on digital technologies and especially AI and to assess their impact on young people and education. This part also contains digital policy resources to empower users' capacity to address digital matters in their advocacy work and better advocate. The second part of the Toolkit is dedicated to fostering users' capacity in digital advocacy with strategies and tips for online campaigning, including recommendations on how to responsibly use AI.

The skeleton of the Toolkit is synthesised in the table below:

1. Introduction	- Background - Purpose - Content Summary
2. Understanding AI	
2.1 Definitions & Concepts	- CoE, EU AIA, & OECD Definition - Essential AI concepts
2.2 Debunking Myths	- Critical Understanding of AI
2.3 Impact: Opportunities & Risks	- Understanding AI risk for youth and education: data, information, mental health, accessibility, overreliance - Understanding how AI risks can affect online campaigning and tips on how to avoid them
2.4 International Digital & AI Policy Frameworks	- Awareness of main digital policy frameworks in the EU and at the international level, especially focusing on AI policy and ethics - Awareness of OBESSU's policy positions and recommendations
3. Advocacy in the Digital Era: How to	
3.1 Introduction	- Explanation on how to use the toolkit
3.2 Online Campaigning Roadmap	- Resource to facilitate online campaigning's action plans, from research to evaluation
3.3 AI Use	- Tips and examples for AI prompting - Tips and examples on how to use AI throughout the

	online campaigning roadmap, while preventing negative impacts - Communications and engagement tips for online campaigning
4. Resources	- Thematic essays and articles addressing the topics of the informative sections - Websites and Documents with various useful resources - International AI & Digital Policy Frameworks referenced - Examples of Successful Online Campaigns & Campaigning Practices referenced

Appendix 1 - Final Programme

Sunday, 16 March 2025

Arrival of participants

19:00 Dinner

21:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 17 March 2025

09:30 Welcome & Introduction: welcome address by Marcos Andrade, Deputy Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest, introducing each other, understanding the code of conduct, understanding and sharing expectations about the topic, the programme, and the agenda

11:00 Break

11:30 Team Building – creating strong working and friendly relationships among participants, fostering trust and confidence between the participants and the trainers, creating a strong base for the rest of the week

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Human Rights: Understanding Rights in Everyday Life – encouraging raising awareness of human rights principles, understanding their everyday impact and their relevance to different communities, building a common understanding of the overarching framework of the issues addressed by the **study session**

16:00 Break

16:30 Human Rights-based team building & presentations of CoE & OBESSU – developing inclusive, introducing participants to the work of OBESSU and the Council on AI and digital citizenship

18:00 Reflection Groups

19:00 Dinner

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

09:30 A Digital World and Your Rights – building a common understanding of human rights in the digital age

11:00 Break

11:30 What is AI? Challenges and Opportunities with Ron SALAJ – building a common understanding of artificial intelligence and its impact on society; recognising the myths of the mainstream narratives around artificial intelligence; understanding the Council of Europe's definition of artificial intelligence

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 Ctrl+Alt+Teach: Reimagining education with AI & digital tools – engaging students in critical thinking about AI's role in education, balancing innovation with real learning

16:00 Break

16:30 The role of AI and the Rise of Misinformation in Education, "Risks and Opportunities of AI in Schools" – understanding how AI contributes to the spread of misinformation; developing critical thinking and media literacy skills to navigate

	digital content responsibly
18:00	Reflection Group
19:00	Dinner
21:00	OBESSU Olympics

Wednesday, 19 March 2025

09:30	Ethics and AI – understanding how AI can be biased and how ethics can play a role in AI
11:00	Break
11:30	Digital Policies – building a common understanding of the current legislative and policy landscape in the artificial intelligence field, with Zia PERKO ROGELI Advisory Council on Youth (Visio)
13:00	Lunch break

Free Afternoon, with optional City Tour hosted by local organisation Association of Civilians (Civilek Szövetsége)

Thursday, 20 March 2025

09:30	Understanding Activism, Advocacy & Lobbying – building a common understanding of student engagement, understanding the differences between activism, advocacy, and lobbying, understanding how to use these approaches to drive social change
11:00	Break
11:30	Cyberactivism: tools, skills, & safety for digital advocacy – building capacity for digital advocacy, understanding the opportunities and risks of cyberactivism, especially focusing on online campaigning
13:00	Lunch
14:30	Exchange of Practices in AI and Digital Advocacy – exchanging examples, resources, and ideas on how to (or how not to) run digital advocacy initiatives among participants and organisers
16:00	Break
16:30	Toolkit 101 – introducing participants to the work for the deliverable of the study session
18:00	Reflection Group
19:00	Dinner
21:00	OBESSU Party

Friday, 21 March 2025

09:30	Toolkit Drafting: Self-organised Workshops – collaborating on a toolkit focused on understanding digital rights and education in an AI era; providing feedback on self-organised participants' presentations
11:00	Break
11:30	Toolkit Drafting: Self-organised Workshops - finalising the toolkit draft
13:00	Lunch
14:30	What Should AI Education Look Like? – exploring the role of AI in education;

	collaboratively working towards OBESSU's policy paper on the future of AI in education
16:00	Break
16:30	Closing & Final Evaluation – allow participants to reflect on their learning about digital rights and Artificial Intelligence, fostering an understanding of their role in advocating for digital rights in the AI age.
19:00	Dinner

Saturday 22 March 2025

Departure of participants

Appendix 2 - List of references used during the Study Session

References to OBESSU work

- [The Declaration of School Student Rights](#)
- [Policy Paper on Twin Transition: Transforming the Future Of Education with Students and for Students](#)
- [Position on the Next Phase of the Digital Education Action Plan \(DEAP\) Implementation Process](#)
- [Policy Recommendations of the Innovation Station project](#)

PRESENTATIONS during the study session

- Session 1.3: Human Rights: Understanding Rights in Everyday Life – Mohammad Naeem
- Session 1.4: The Council of Europe, the EYCB, and the EYF – Gubaz Koberdize
- Session 2.1: A Digital World and Your Rights – Andrew Victory
- [Session 2.2: What is AI? Challenges and Opportunities – Ron Salaj](#)
- [Session 3.2: Digital Policies – Daniele Sabato](#)
- [Session 3.2: The Human Side of AI – Zia Perko Rogelj](#)
- Session 5.4: the Council of Europe, the EYCB, and the EYF – Gubaz Koberdize