

June 2020 Session

Report of the webinar of the *Education and Culture Committee*

What lessons could be drawn from Covid-19 on the theme of education and the digital age?

Date : Tuesday, June 23, 2020, 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The webinar is divided into 5 sessions of 30 minutes of discussion.

Place: KUDO online discussion platform

1. Moderators

- Mrs. **Claude VIVIER LE GOT**, FEDE, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee.
- Mr. **Karl Donert**, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee.

2. Speakers on Topic 1: "Reliability of data and hate speech".

- Mr. **William Acker**, lawyer, blogger, "traveller" of gypsy origin (Sinté).
- Mr. **Henri Braun**, lawyer, specialist in minority law and the fight against racism.

3. Speakers on Topic 2: "Is the current health crisis, with its heavy toll on human lives and the transformation of society, likely to destroy civil liberties? »

- Mr. **Gilbert Flam**, Honorary public prosecutor and President of the International Commission of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (Licra).
- Mr. **Henri Braun**, lawyer, specialist in minority law and the fight against racism.

4. Speakers on Topic 3: "The right to connection as a fundamental right".

- Ms. **Sandra Coulibaly Leroy**, Assistant Director, Head of Monitoring, Analysis and Forecasting, Programming and Strategic Development Department, International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF).
- Ms. **Mona Laroussi**, Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation (IFEFF).
- Ms. **Lune Taqqiq**, author, lecturer, founder of Freebip, member of the Association for Volunteering in Europe (AVE).

5. Speakers on Topic 4: "Gender Equality".

- Ms. **Isabelle Collet**, professor at the Education Sciences Section of the University of Geneva and Director of the "Revue GEF", Genre, éducation, formation (*Gender, education, training*).

6. Speakers on Topic 5: "The education industry: between democratization and content control".

- Ms. **Janice Richardson**, expert to the Council of Europe on digital citizenship and education issues.
- Ms. **Sandra Coulibaly Leroy**, Assistant Director, Head of Monitoring, Analysis and Forecasting, Programming and Strategic Development Directorate of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).
- Ms. **Mona Laroussi**, Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation (IFEFF).

I. Topic 1: "Reliability of data and hate speech".

1) Introductory speech by Mr Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee

Good morning everyone, it is very nice to be with all of you this morning, my name is Karl Donert. I am a former President of EUROGEO, and I am responsible for the Digital Citizenship Working Group within the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe.

The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the importance more than ever of digital education, online networks, digital data. Since the beginning of COVID, governments, schools, universities and companies have been making every effort to get online. Governments have hired researchers to gather all available data on Covid-19 to present it to the public, to establish evidence-based policies to combat the rapid spread of the virus.

We rely so heavily on our digital infrastructure to track movements, for contact tracing, for digital payments, and to keep in touch with family and friends. Nevertheless, education has struggled to adapt to this challenging situation, given the millions of affected pupils and students. They are unable to attend their classes, as extreme measures have become the new norm around the world.

The European Commission's Second Survey on Schools: ICT in Education showed that in 2019:

- Fewer than one in five European pupils attended a school with high-speed internet access above 100 mbps.
- More than 6 out of 10 European students were taught by teachers who had not received compulsory ICT training.
- More than 90% of European parents are convinced that IT will help their children find a job.
- Nevertheless, only 1 in 2 regularly school-going students talk to their parents about online training. This is evidence of the context in which Covid is being deployed and the challenge it presents to provide digital education. We know that much of the data produced online is personal data and therefore has a certain sensitivity. We must therefore seek to preserve the privacy of individuals while at the same time trying to ensure their safety and health. This is a delicate situation.

1) What solutions are available? Is the right to privacy absolute, if it prevents (many) lives from being saved? However, if it is agreed that this extraordinary period calls for equally extraordinary measures, the circumstances must be precisely defined as exceptional. They must not be a blank cheque to disregard people's right to privacy.

2) While states are quick to seize power, they often find it much more difficult to relinquish control afterwards and may even use backdoor means to retain those powers. These and other issues that we have identified form the basis of today's theme: "What lessons from Covid-19 should be drawn for teaching in the digital age? ». All this presents a considerable challenge, as Covid-19 began to spread in Europe and elsewhere, our populations have faced great difficulties in all dimensions of life. Normal life remains in brackets, whether it be for education, health centres, universities: all these places are affected and will only reopen very gradually in the weeks and months to come.

Nevertheless, this situation can be an opportunity to improve our education system; we will be able to learn from this experience. That was my presentation. I hope the webinar will be engaging. We will ask the speakers to speak for 4 minutes. Then we will analyse and take the questions in the messaging and invite the speakers to answer them.

2) Interventions by experts

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

We're going to start our first theme this morning, so I'm going to invite William Acker to speak. If Henri Braun is with us, please ask him to talk next. The issue of the reliability of data and hate speech was a matter for us in the Education and Culture Committee, and we decided to devote this issue to the Roma and Travellers population. I give the floor to William Acker and invite you to ask your questions on the messaging part. Hello William, I am delighted that you can speak. I would like you to tell us a little bit about yourself, introduce yourself, and tell us about the difficulties you are facing and have experienced with Travellers.

[William Acker, lawyer, blogger, "traveller" of gypsy origin \(Sinté\)](#)

Hello everyone, I am a lawyer, I am myself a "Traveller", or at least categorised as such. I am working on the reception system for Travellers in France. I am making an inventory of all the stopping places to establish data that do not exist on the environmental quality and the quality of the stopping places, which are systematically relegated from the cities and polluted.

So today we're going to talk more specifically about the issue of online hate, and that's good because for the past year I've been tweeting all the hateful tweets online. I've been counting about 30 of them a day for the past year, which makes an average of 10,000 tweets that explicitly quote the expression "Travellers", I don't count those that quote the words "gypsy", "manouche", "tzigane", but we can estimate that there are several tens of thousands of them on Twitter alone. Also, there are thousands of hate tweets targeting Travellers without naming them. Either in reaction to an initial tweet mentioning one of the qualifiers, or implicitly by using rhetorical recourses easily identifiable as "invaders", "chicken thieves"... The algorithms can't do anything about it since each qualifier concerning these collectives has a correct usual meaning. The words "gypsies", "Roma" or "travellers" can be used in both positive and negative contexts. Tens of thousands of racist messages a year are

published on Twitter alone. And on online media sites that do not moderate comments, there too there is a considerable amount of anti-Gypsy commentary.

Anti-gypsyism, what is it? It affects all Romani peoples in Romania and Europe, but not only, but it also affects the "travellers" in Great Britain or the Yenish. They are not considered by the human and social sciences as gypsies in France, because of a categorisation that is encompassing in French Law. French Law has led to the perception of a single Traveller community, tending to reduce all persons thus qualified to the unique theoretical and political reference system of "Gypsy nomadism". This context is unfair and leads in France to a vast ignorance of realities. The opposition between Roma and Travellers (even though there are Roma among Travellers, also though not all of them are), reduction to nomadism when the majority of people live in a sedentary way and are qualified as "sedentary Travellers", a very revealing oxymoron on the essentialising effects of the Law.

There are hate speeches that are very specific to France, and that crystallise around four main themes:

- The installation of the Travelling People
- The delinquency of Travellers
- Money and Travellers
- More generally, the incompatibility of Travellers with the rest of society

During the coronavirus crisis, online anti-Gypsyism was expressed in a slightly different way but on the same basis, but crystallised around comments about Traveller mobility as a danger in an epidemic setting. And what's quite incredible is that when I was doing archival research, I found articles from 1907 that were already talking about Gypsies as "epidemic propagators", so you can see that these are clichés that go back a long way.

This argument, which for 135 years in France has consisted of making the so-called "nomadic" way of life suspect or criminalised, has strongly marked the collective consciousness, and local politicians today use this rhetoric as an opportunistic political tool in the post-COVID period. The end of confinement thus marks the return in force of expulsions of "Travellers". One constant always: territories that do not respect reception patterns, weak areas, abuses in periods of administrative closures. In short, a truncated presentation of realities and an organised spatial exclusion, motivated by the pre-electoral context at the local level. Thus, a clear will is expressed to make Travellers disappear from the communal territories, and local political authorities assert their authority as elected representatives before voters go to the polls. Naturally, these actions are accompanied by stigmatising speeches and press articles that are only repeats of official versions without questioning the people concerned.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there is a very significant lack of knowledge in society about "Travellers", about the reception system. Many people think that living in one area is free and that it is enough to move to another area when you want to. Many people believe that Travellers do not work, that they are intrinsically incompatible with society, that they are intruders, everywhere, all the time.

Several explanations can be put forward for this:

A historical and legal context-specific to France

- Historical context first of all since the first censuses of gypsies in 1895, France, in turn, promulgated a nomadic status in 1912 implicitly targeting "gypsies", placed under house arrest and interned nomads, participated in the deportation of gypsies and thus in their genocide, did not recognise the role of nomads in the Resistance, plundered families without compensation and only recognised their historical role very belatedly in the 2000s.

- A legal context then creates an administrative category of "travellers" to succeed the nomadic status whose essentialist and reductionist aims lead to a process that the social sciences and humanities describe as racialisation. It should be remembered that Travellers did not obtain the right to vote until 2012 and that before 2015 there was still a quota per municipality set at 3% of Travellers. It should also be recalled that Article 1 of the Besson Act defines the individual "known as a Traveller" as one who lives in a "mobile residence" in a "traditional" way, this word implying the existence of a form of heritage. Thus, a person selling his or her house for the benefit of nomadic life in a motor home will never be subject to the legal framework of Travellers and will never be obliged to live in a reception area. Moreover, the "departmental reception and housing schemes for Travellers" (which, it should be remembered, are signed by the Prefects representing the State) always explicitly mention "Gypsy" origins in a recurrent paragraph entitled "Who are the Travellers? ».

An artificiality of the category "travellers" and an essentialisation to nomadism

- It is the result of an ethnic and tribal conception inherited from the status of "nomad", so it is neither singular nor feminine. However, among the persons categorised as "Travellers" by Law, there are a considerable number of different groups, sometimes unrelated to each other. The racialising nature of French Law is also reflected in the creation of administrative sub-categories that result in oxymorons such as "sedentary Travellers", qualifying individuals even though their lifestyle is similar to that of the majority. The consequences of the tribal conception of GDVs lead to daily discriminatory repercussions for these families.

- Essentialisation by "Gypsy nomadism" (see the work of Henriette Asséo), a theory that served as a matrix for the development of the nomadic status in 1912, then the GDV category in 1969. However, the vast majority of people categorised as GDV adopt a perfectly sedentary lifestyle.

The role of the media in the treatment of information concerning Travellers and the semantics used

- A lack of awareness of anti-Gypsyism in the press: the media play an essential role in spreading anti-Gypsy hate messages, especially the local press, which still too often use the only institutional sources to relay information specific to the GDV. But also by certain racist and reductionist practices, such as the fact of saying that the perpetrator of a crime is "a man from the Traveller community", the character of an individual is then denied in favour of collective responsibility for each individual act. Obviously, if you were to commit a crime tomorrow, I could not mention that you belong to the "community of local people". Last year I counted over the months of June, July and August that 90% of the articles published using the words "Travellers" dealt with illegal parking or crime, you can easily imagine the stigmatisation processes at work here.

Anti-gypsy political speeches

- The press release from the town hall of Voisenon is a perfect example of the extent to which anti-Gypsyism is now at ease. But this local episode has its national counterpart and I will enlarge on this later.

The social representation of Travellers

- In the social description of Travellers: here too, the tribal concept is in full swing, Travellers are either never consulted because, in my opinion, their conception is dehumanising or even animalising, or they are asked through "representatives" who are often not even "Travellers" themselves. It should also be pointed out that there are mainly inconsistent consultations of Travellers in institutions. At the level of the departments responsible for drawing up reception schemes, some representatives are appointed based on questionable criteria, and at the level of the "National Consultative Commission for Travellers" 8 representatives of associations are appointed. These representatives are always in a minority position in these bodies, which issue a single opinion, which makes them today legitimising bodies without any real space for representation. (Note for William Acker: You should demand the application of the Revised Code of Good Practice for civil participation in the decision making process & its template)

The place of Travellers in the territories

- Thus the French reception system can be summed up as the unilateral expression of a law enforcement agency on those who are receptioned, who have no other possibility than to live where the State decides, i.e. stopping places, monitored by a security guard, where many illegal practices have been documented and which are systemically located outside cities and near polluted sites. Thus, according to my work, and for the moment on a sample of 47 departments analysed (i.e. nearly 700 areas), for more than 81% of the regions the sites are located outside any residential area, and 62% are located in the direct vicinity of a polluting site (waste disposal site, wastewater treatment plant, hazardous industrial site, etc.). This public and spatial separation of Travellers from the rest of society only reinforces anti-Gypsyism. And I could extend anti-Gypsyism to all sectors of society, talking about its manifestations in schools, in public services, in the relationship between the GDV and the police... We will always come back to the same problem, in a country that does not recognise the existence of minorities, where individual sensibilities confuse republican universalism with uniformity, the mechanisms of production of anti-Gypsyism cannot be effectively combatted.

The fight against online anti-Gypsyism is still in its infancy in France and will require resources and in-depth work in society at all levels. Initiatives exist, such as the joint initiative of the European Union, the ERGO Network and Google, which are launching the PECAO programme (Peer Education To Counter Antigypsyist Online Hate Speech) at the start of the 2020 school year, aimed at training young people in the fight against online anti-gypsyism and making recommendations in this area. In France, this programme will be implemented by the association La Voix des Roms, and I will participate in it. But without a real national will, without questioning the Law, without broad and coordinated mobilisation, without efforts from the media, the fight will be tough. Travellers are not intruders. They

are Europeans. They are French, their history, their ways of life, their different cultures, their knowledge is part of our shared heritage.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, William. You mention a problem that concerns France explicitly, and France is indeed one of the few European countries that do not consider the Roma community. It also finds France, and understandably so, as an entire nation. I would also like to give the floor to our second expert, Mr Braun. I invite you to introduce yourself and to speak more specifically about the Roma community.

[Henri Braun, lawyer, specialist in minority law and the fight against racism](#)

Hello! Henri Braun, I am a lawyer, and I have specialised for several years on the issues of racism, discrimination and hate speech, particularly, but not only, towards Romani populations. What we have seen with the confinement that we have recently experienced is that the ideological differences have hardened. In particular, we have a relatively apparent resurgence of the old phenomenon of opposition between sedentary and nomadic people, since obviously, we were all sedentary, more than usual during this confinement.

Several old fantasies have therefore emerged about Travellers as propagators of epidemics, etc. With on the one hand a desire linked to a way of life perceived as freer, and on the other, a real distrust. The problem in France is the existence of status for Travellers which is a legislative status, and which has subjected Travellers to specific legislation on what I consider to be a racial basis. I have developed this point of view before the Constitutional Council on several occasions, I was not heard, because it is not audible in a system of republican universalism, yet it is the case. So, there is a flaw in the Republic. It is not constitutional principles that need to be changed. French law must be accorded to these republican principles, and republican universalism must be combined with the defence of minorities, because there are minorities in a large part of the world, and there are minorities in France.

The problem is, therefore, the specific status of Travellers, which means that Travellers who travel are not subject to the same rights and practices as, for example, retired people who go on holiday in a camper van. This poses a real problem, which is accentuated by long-standing administrative traditions, by media discourse, i.e. there has been, and it has calmed down a little because since then Roma associations have taken the floor and filed lawsuits. There was a very typical case in 2005 where France 5 had devoted one hour of debate to the following theme: "Delinquency, the Roma route". Beyond the somewhat dubious play on words, there was a whole presentation of racialising theories linking ethnicity and alleged delinquency. This programme was condemned, and since then the media have understood that one cannot say just anything about Travellers, and anti-Gypsyism is now recognised as a form of racism, and one of the most damaging forms of racism at present in France and Europe. Because for a long time, in France as well as at the European level, the question of Travellers was treated only for misery, of poverty: we must help these people to emancipate, to integrate. That's not the problem!

Because when you belong to the Travelling People, you have a way of life that depends on economic data, you travel for work or as a fairground trader, or as a craftsman in the building industry where you look for your own type of client patient, as all traders do. So, the problem is not a problem of poverty, misery, exclusion, but rather that this poverty and misery that does exist is linked to a system that does not allow for example the schooling of Travellers and Roma. And when I talk about the Roma, I am not just talking about the few thousand people who live in shantytowns. I am talking about all the people of Romani culture in France.

This problem of schooling is essential: we have a few mechanisms that exist at the primary school level, which are entirely insufficient despite the action of associations that do what they can, and at the secondary school level, we have nothing left. People are told to "register with the CNED" (French National Centre for Distance Education), and that's why, unfortunately, very few travellers have a diploma, and William is an exception. What happens to a traveller who is a graduate and therefore has access to an accepted status? We can see that for the past year he has managed to produce exact data on the stopping places, their location and their problem, which has not been done at all for 50 years by the French State, by all the plethoric administration, by all the associations that are subsidised at French and European level. And here comes this boy, and he does it in his spare time since he earns his living elsewhere. We have a denial that is typically French, and this denial must stop. Things are changing, but a lot remains to be done, for example, concerning social networks. Last year, for example, there was a particularly violent wave of anti-Gypsyism against the Romanian Roma living in the shantytowns, all of which developed on social networks, and this was made possible by the whole political-media system that presents the Roma as a problem, and we saw extremely violent actions.

We are therefore dealing with structural racism, racism maintained by media discourse, racism authorised and developed by administrative practices and an exceptional status, so we have to take this problem head-on. I am going to make a rather sharp criticism of the Council of Europe, even if its action is admirable in many respects, where there is a real concern about this issue. First of all, the Roma and Travellers are amalgamated in a way, as William has clearly shown, which is not at all valid. Above all, it is said that this population as a whole, to admit that they have common characteristics, beyond the differences in lifestyle between Travellers and Romani culture with its language and identity, which are systematically linked. So, it consists of taking this population as a whole, as a group that poses a problem, and saying we will bring them together, we will integrate them, and we will solve their problems. But we will not! What I am asking is that the republican principle of equality is applied and that strong anti-Gypsyism policies be implemented. The problem is not Gypsies. The problem is individual and institutional racism. The question has been posed, and now we must solve it together.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, Maître Braun, I will pass the floor back to William Acker since I see that Maître Braun quoted you. You are precisely the young "traveller" who has studied and who has given data. I have a request to speak from Gilbert Flam, but we will talk at the next round table that Karl will present. I'll give the floor to William.

[William Acker, lawyer, blogger, "traveller" of gypsy origin \(Sinté\)](#)

We need to talk briefly about the census, thank you, Maître Braun, for these compliments, I am not the only traveller to have made studies, there are a few of us, but indeed it is hugely marginal.

What I am doing today is a study of all the French departments. It is a census. There have already been censuses of stopping places in France, but very often it was done by the department, or on a very localised scale. The numbers are startling. Today, out of a sample of 47 departments with nearly 700 stopping places, we have more than 80% of the stopping places that are located outside inhabited areas, outside cities, as far as possible. Of these 700 areas, 63% are subject to industrial or environmental pollution, which also partly explains - and the human sciences have also shown this very well - why travellers have a life expectancy of 15 years less than the national average.

There is a relegation that is, therefore, systemic. The choice of the location of stopping places is systemic. Above all, the reception system is particularly unbalanced, contrary to what the legislator presented in France, that is to say, that travellers have extremely few recourses, rights, and above all obligations. We are obliged to live in a reception area. We cannot live outside unless we become owners of our land, and we can even be subject to municipal planning bans that prevent us from staying there for more than three months, for example. We are forced to live in a system where the places where people are accommodated are the subject of public choice, and public power is exercised without any possibility of responding. The second problematic thing is that, before the French reception system, before the Besson laws of 2000, it should be remembered that in France there was the possibility, however precarious, and it was extremely fragile, of settling down and staying in almost every French commune. Today, out of the more than 36,000 French municipalities, less than 4% accept the passage of Travellers. This means that in departments such as Aisne (02), you have eight cities that take Travellers out of more than 850 cities. There are less than 1% of communes in the Aisne that legally accept Travellers. In all the others, they are parked illegally. This poses a problem on the question of the principle of equality, and Henri answered very well. We don't necessarily have to change the purpose of the French Constitution, it's, in any case, a bit illusory to believe in it, but we have to bring the texts into line with the Constitution. Today, it is clear that the more we work on the issue, the more we realise that there is a definite problem with the constitutionality of these texts. That will be the future of legal work on the issue.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, William. Gilbert, it's your turn.

[Gilbert Flam, Honorary public prosecutor and President of the International Commission of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism \(Licra\)](#)

Thank you. I agree completely with what William Acker and Henry Braun said. We must ensure respect for equal rights in France.

But the situation of Roma and Travellers is not only problematic in France. In the framework of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), we have carried out a survey of all the INGOs working on these issues. We found that during the most difficult period of the Covid, the situation of the Roma has been detestable, practically in all European countries, particularly in the countries of central and eastern Europe. The state authorities have taken discriminatory measures against them, with considerable restrictions, greater than for the rest of the population, on movement and access to education and health care. We have seen in Europe, on social networks, the multiplication of hate speech targeting these populations, establishing a direct link between the spread of the virus and the Roma, but also Asians, migrants and Jews. This leads us to affirm that today the regulation of networks is a real challenge because of the echo they give to racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic hate speech and its consequences, such as the use of violence against the populations that are victims of such speech.

[William Acker, lawyer, blogger, "traveller" of gypsy origin \(Sinté\)](#)

Last year I carried out a small internet study on the months of June-July-August: there were about 3-4 articles published per day in the local press, in all the media, about Travellers. 90% of the materials posted, so more than 200 items, mentioning Travellers, were either about illegal settlement or delinquency. And the abusive use of the phrase "a 27-year-old man has burgled a house. This man is from the Traveller community" is problematic. We can't make a counter allegation. We can't say "this man is from the "local community". It has a detestable effect, because a person who commits a crime that has absolutely nothing to do with his official categorization, not only commits that crime individually, but it drags a collective behind him. This treatment of information deserves a moratorium in press editorial offices, that journalists are aware of this, and that it is often a question of the editorial staff. Here too, the press has a fundamental role to play in anti-Gypsyism, it plays a vital role in spreading the message of hatred, through lack of training, clearly, and through articles such as I recently read in the French newspaper La Montagne: "My life near the wild camp of la Souterraine", comparing travellers to animals, with people who would take the local people for prey, with an extremely violent, degrading, dehumanizing semantic field.

You also have a specific type of press, both local press with individual journalists, but also extreme right-wing press like Valeurs Actuelles or newspapers like Causeur, you have incredibly racist articles inside, and which are shared on the networks in a significant way. There is a lot of work to be done to raise awareness in the press editorial offices.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, William, I would like to say to Henri who wishes to speak that he can turn on his microphone and react.

[Henri Braun, lawyer, specialist in minority law and the fight against racism](#)

I wanted to respond to what Gilbert Flam said by saying that, yes, obviously, the European dimension is essential, and I think that two issues need to be distinguished: travellers and the Roma. The question of travellers is an issue in France, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Switzerland, but it is limited to Western Europe, and even then, only in certain countries.

The question of anti-Roma racism, anti-Gypsyism in its culturalist, and sometimes even racist, version, is indeed an issue throughout Europe. We have countries like Viktor Orban's Hungary, where neo-Nazi discourses are circulating and are taken up by leading political actors. We do indeed have a problem that exists at the European level, and which calls for a European response. However, I would not want people to think that the problem is more important in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe, because when Romania and Bulgaria wished to join the European Union, they were told, quite rightly, "you must first treat your minorities properly and launch several programmes to address the misery of the Roma in your respective countries". I would also like us to have the opposite process, and to have anti-Gypsyism experts from the footsteps of Eastern Europe. They come to the countries of Western Europe and begin to see how things are going because this culturalist anti-Roma dimension is also present. It is a scourge that also exists at the European level for a whole series of historical reasons, mainly because the genocide of gypsies by the Nazis was partially and belatedly recognised. That is to say, in Germany, after the Second World War, the social services that looked after the gypsies were the same people who had led them to the gas chambers, and the racial situation of the genocide was denied for a long time, explaining that gypsies are not a race, but a group of **antisocial** people. So we do have a long history, which must also be seen in the long history of population control that began in the middle of the 19th century in all European countries, so we have something that goes back to the very constitution of Europe.

Rather than questioning the misery and supposed behaviour of the Roma, we should ask ourselves what the treatment of the Roma tells us about the construction of European states and the construction of Europe, whether in its community dimension or its "Council of Europe" dimension. It is this reflexive return that we must make, and we will realise that, in asking the question of the control of Romani populations, we are asking the issue of the power of everyone, because Gypsies have often served as a laboratory for control and monitoring systems, which were then generalised. I am afraid that the plight of the Roma in Europe will spread to large sectors of the population.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, William. I wanted to say that on the right-hand side of your screen there is an icon called "Documents". You'll find a lot of documents there. They're indexed by discussion number. I invite you to read them.

[William Acker, lawyer, blogger, "traveller" of gypsy origin \(Sinté\)](#)

Yes, we've already talked about quite a few things, we've talked about the political and legal context in France. You should know that in France there were quotas for Travellers per city, per commune, barely 5 or 6 years ago, so we are starting from a very long way off. My mother did not obtain the

"real" right to vote until 2012. I was talking earlier about the media, but in terms of political speeches, we heard a former President of the Republic say, "I have every intention of being able to ask questions to people who have never worked in their lives and who drive cars that many workers in our country could never afford after a lifetime of hard work". We heard the mayor of a large city in southeastern France say: "These people have to be accountable, explain where their caravans and big cars come from. Nicolas Sarkozy in power will have them all controlled and expelled." A former Prime Minister said that our fellow European citizens "Roma were not meant to stay in France", while the current President said of a Yeniche man "he doesn't have the words of a gipsy", which shows either a profound lack of culture at the highest level of the state, which is possible or a discourse that is purposefully consistent with the racialising nature of French law towards Travellers. Which in any case seems to mean that a gipsy cannot be able to express himself in correct French.

This has a powerful effect on social representation. The only times that Travellers are consulted in France is at the departmental level for the reception scheme, where 5 to 6 representatives are accepted, who are not even Travellers, or who are not, in any case, people who live in stopping places. At the national level, there is a "National Consultative Commission Committee of Travellers" where Travellers are not only a minority but also the assembly gives different opinions, which makes them today instances of legitimisation without any real space of representation. We have aberrations such as the "Travellers" study group in the National Assembly, which is made up mostly of right-wing deputies who are known for their virulence towards Travellers in their territories. There is a social blackout of the voice of travellers, and institutional deception of their representation, which means that the bodies responsible for legitimising reception policies do not consult Travellers, and that is extremely serious. That is why working on the issue of minorities, and on a European level, is very important today.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, William, for the intervention. There is a comment in the mailbox from Elisabeth Dietrich who says that in Austria there are equal rights for the Roma and that they enjoy autonomy like other minorities. If Elisabeth wishes to intervene, she should not hesitate. What I am proposing, because here we have somewhat derived from the subject of hate speech, and the question of the resurgence and reliability of data on the Internet, that we can continue with our second theme, which is related: "Is the current health crisis, with its heavy toll on human lives and the transformation of society, likely to destroy our civil liberties? ». So I will hand over to Karl if he agrees. I am going to invite Henri, William and Gilbert to participate again and to speak also on the subject of hate speech.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, Claude, and thank you to the speakers for their presentations. Some questions appear in the messages, so maybe you could answer them directly in the chat. I propose that you move on to the following topic: "Is the current health crisis, with its heavy toll on human lives and the transformation of society, likely to destroy civil liberties? »

II. Topic 2: "Is the current health crisis, with its heavy toll on human lives and the transformation of society, likely to destroy civil liberties? »

Henri Braun, lawyer, specialist in minority law and the fight against racism

The health crisis we have recently experienced has inevitably led, temporarily, to a drastic reduction in fundamental freedoms: freedom of movement, freedom of association, and also slightly, freedom of expression. And the risk, when a state of emergency is created, even if it had to be created, is that it will tend to become part of ordinary law. We have seen this in France in the anti-terrorist state of emergency, and we risk seeing it in the state of health emergency as well. Several provisions that had been adopted temporarily are tending to become part of ordinary law, which is leading us increasingly towards a surveillance and control society. And from that point of view, the coronavirus crisis risks acting as an accelerator and undermining the defence of freedoms. Because of security, particularly health security, is the primary concern of governments, or the major concern that governments give to citizens, we have a real problem. We have the feeling that phenomena that existed before, such as police violence or abusive identity checks, have been amplified to the extreme during the confinement.

What are the answers we need to make to that? And here I am talking about France, but we could talk about all European countries, about all the restrictions on freedoms in European countries. This calls for particular vigilance to preserve fundamental freedoms, the old humanism that forms the basis of European civilisation. We are sliding towards a society that is less and less democratic, less and less a state governed by the rule of law, and increasingly a culture of surveillance, control and repression. The progressiveness of this slide means that we are not aware of it. But we have a nibbling away at freedoms that have accelerated in recent years, with no doubt a strong trend for the months and years to come, so we must react to this.

If we are talking about freedom of expression, we must repress racist comments on social networks, while maintaining the cardinal nature of freedom of expression. I believe that in France, hate speech must be dealt with in a specific way, by particular jurisdictions, and with specific procedural rules to guarantee freedom of expression. Under no circumstances should the administration or the GAFAM be allowed to act as a court or police force. Fortunately, this temptation has been rejected by the Constitutional Council, and here I am not talking about the French example, but about a magistrate a few days ago, who considered that this was not possible, not constitutional, happily. I think that there is a real problem because, under the guise of combating racist statements, there is a risk of undermining freedom of expression. I could perhaps be called "old school", but I am what is called, in terms of public liberties, a repressive regime, which is, in fact, the liberal system, which means that I think everyone is responsible for their actions. We must also look at the social weight of those who speak out. Indeed, when Mr Dupont or Durand makes a hateful statement on a social network, it is hugely damaging, and that must be condemned. But when an elected official like the mayor of Cholet a few years ago said, concerning the Travellers, "Hitler did not kill enough of them", that he was condemned, but that he is still a member of Parliament and mayor, then I think we have a real problem. We will not be able to combat all hate speech, and that is where education plays an important role. I am thinking of the recognition of the Romani language and culture at European level. The Romani

Language must be recognised as a fully-fledged European language, which is not the case at present. And when these words and actions are made by people who are elected representatives, who carry weight, that is when these actions must be corrected retrospectively and under no circumstances must they be controlled in principle by people who are not trained to do so. The fight against racism should not lead to freedom of expression being controlled.

[Gilbert Flam, Honorary public prosecutor and President of the International Commission of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism \(Licra\)](#)

I am an honorary magistrate, currently working in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis and I am in charge of crime prevention at the honorary public prosecutor's office.

I agree with what Mr Braun has just said about the need to ensure the repression of the authors of hate speech on the Internet. I would add that we must also make progress on the responsibility of the major platforms in the dissemination of these speeches.

I would like to make a three-point speech. Firstly, I shall refer to the legal framework and the conditions that are laid down for the exercise of emergency measures. Next, I will talk about the challenges of deconfinement and the exit from the crisis. Finally, I will conclude on what we can do to influence the public policies that will be implemented in the post-Covid-19 period.

On the legal regime, I would first of all like to remind you that the European Convention on Human Rights provides for a derogation system. It is a regime which allows, in certain circumstances, when the national interest, the security of populations, public order or the public health of populations are threatened, to limit or sometimes even suspend part of these public freedoms. A number of European states have, with containment, prohibited or restricted the gathering and movement of populations to prevent the spread of the virus.

However, it should be pointed out that the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights lay down extremely strict conditions which have been recalled by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. These clarifications are important for NGOs working in countries with authoritarian or illiberal regimes. Any derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights may be subject to assessment by the ECHR, which implies that national judges remain able to exercise their judicial control over government decisions.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe recalled that the European Convention, during this derogation period, prohibits standards which would create or aggravate discrimination and challenge inclusion policies. The rights to privacy, data protection, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association must also be respected. Finally, she recalled that "the pandemic should not be used as a pretext to silence whistleblowers or political opponents". In short, I would echo an expression of the French Minister of Justice: "The rule of law is not quarantined during the Covid-19 epidemic". When we take stock, we will have to look at the way in which Council of Europe member states have met their obligations?

We have noted that a number of European governments, particularly in Hungary, Poland, Turkey and Russia, have taken advantage of this period of crisis to change the way institutions functioned to the

benefit of the executive alone. Above all, these and other governments have taken discriminatory measures against Roma and migrants. They also took decisions designed to weaken counter-powers, such as the judiciary, and NGOs saw their means and capacities for intervention limited during this period.

We are now witnessing a decline in the epidemic and we are gradually entering a transitional phase where all institutions are starting to work normally again, especially the judiciary but also parliaments. In this period we are faced with a twofold risk:

In the name of security, governments may decide to maintain some of the measures taken as a matter of urgency by enshrining them in positive law. This is what we experienced in France after the attacks of 2015.

Governments may forget to remove some of these measures, including the use of surveillance technologies that have been proposed and implemented in the name of health security. Historian Yuval Noah Harari explained in an article in the Financial Times on March 20 that decisions normally take years of discussion and whilst prevarications were made in a matter of hours during this period. There were immature and even dangerous technologies that were used because the risk of doing nothing was too great. The balance between the right to life, the protection of human life and infringements of individual freedoms has tipped in favour of these emergency measures. Thus, in the name of health security, we have seen doctors, including epidemiologists who know their subject well, consider that electronic tracing was indispensable in the fight against Covid-19, while computer scientists, who were perhaps a little more attuned to the issue, were not.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you very much, we have a request to speak from Harry Rogge of EUROGEO.

[QUESTION: Harry Rogge, EUROGEO](#)

In addition to what the experts have just said about freedom and the restrictions that have been placed on it, yesterday I participated in the webinar on migrants and refugees, there was discussion about what was happening on ships and in ports. It was recalled that the law of the sea had been suspended throughout the Mediterranean. I would like to remind that it is not only individual countries that are concerned, those with authoritarian regimes, but even in the Netherlands, where I live, we have seen that the measures taken temporarily by the executive tend over time to turn into legislation. There have been demonstrations in the Netherlands demanding that these temporary provisions should not become permanent legislation. In the Netherlands, I managed to mobilise, through the Conference of INGOs, we sent a letter to all parliamentarians present at the Council of Europe and the members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. We wrote to them on behalf of 40 Dutch members of the Conference of INGOs to make them aware of their obligation to ensure respect for the Strasbourg Convention and its three pillars: democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The responsibility to communicate with parliamentarians and executives is incumbent on all of us. We must remain vigilant.

[QUESTION: David LOPEZ, Lifelong Learning Platform](#)

Hello, I was indeed very interested in the interventions of William Acker and Henri Braun, but of course, I think we have to deal with the issue from the legal point of view, as you have asked it. I represent the Lifelong Learning Platform at the European level, and it seems to me that we have to deal with this issue from an educational point of view. Combating racism, anti-Gypsyism, all these forms of exclusion, still involves the issue of education, and it seems to me that, in this period of the health crisis, education has been pushed to one side a little. In any case, in my country, France, the issue has been dealt with by the fact that children do not go to school, which is a disaster, and we need to rethink education for the fight against racism. We must also deal with it from a European point of view, because it is not only up to states to discuss fundamental issues of education, as William Acker and Henri Braun said very well on the question of rights.

[QUESTION: Bénédicte Colin, FAFCE](#)

Thank you, I am part of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. I would like to thank Mr Braun and Mr Acker for their exciting presentations, and I will join Mr Lopez in this idea of state restriction of freedoms and non-economic activities, which I think were considered non-essential activities during this crisis. As a Catholic association, I wanted to point out the double standards that the state applied to freedom of association and the practice of religion during this period. I think that in the context of the respect of the restriction of Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, on this freedom of religion, there is a principle of proportionality which could, in my opinion, have been better appreciated. I am talking today about Belgium, where it was possible to go and drink a beer in a bar without a mask and with very little respect for safe distances, before being able to meet up with 30 people in a vast cathedral. I think it is essential to take note of this somewhat arbitrary appreciation by governments of the activities that may have been set aside, as well as education and others. Thank you very much.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you very much, maybe Henri or Gilbert want to react? We also have a whole series of compelling messages in the chat window. Perhaps you could reply afterwards. We're coming to the end of this debate, Henri, and I'll give you the floor.

[Gilbert Flam, Honorary public prosecutor and President of the International Commission of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism \(Licra\)](#)

I would like to comment on the issue of social networks and hate speech, which is racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic and conspiratorial speech. The position taken by the European Parliament is extremely interesting. It was taken in the context of its plenary session and says that hate speech cannot be regarded as opinions, and I therefore conclude that these are offences, which must be dealt with under criminal law. I believe that this is, moreover, perfectly compatible with the case law of the European

Court of Human Rights: it is necessary to regulate social networks as quickly as possible in order to obtain both the conviction of the perpetrators when they can be identified, which is not always possible when they are hosted on platforms in Russia, for example. This also raises the problem of the role of platforms and a certain form of complicity. I will give just one example, and I will end on this point: in terms of press law, publishers are responsible for the texts that are published by their newspapers.

[Henri Braun, lawyer, specialist in minority law and the fight against racism](#)

I am speaking very briefly, to pick up on what has just been saying. The pandemic has indeed raised the question of what the essential activities were, which are not only economical, and the fact that culture has been sacrificed is a real problem. Also, the question of refugees is a dramatic issue for Europe at a time when the Mediterranean is becoming a veritable graveyard. We must take this issue head-on, and the COVID crisis has helped to conceal this issue, which is nonetheless essential. Afterwards, when it comes to political-legal decision-making concerning scientific data, we must be cautious. Experimental data are produced in an emergency, they do not have a sufficient degree of certainty, and above all, they must not dictate the law. We must not move from scientific-medical data to a legal dimension: the legal and political aspect must be safeguarded. Decisions must be made per our values.

The last word in 30 seconds on education against racism is essential, and those who need to be educated first and foremost are not the children in schools, but those who are in charge: elected representatives, police officers... Because we have, all over the world, and this has recently been rediscovered, we have a problem of structural racism in the police in the United States, in France, and many European countries and all over the world. So this education against racism should not only be done at school but in a much more global context, and I think that makes a transition to the next discussion.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Karl, I'll let you take over.

III. [Topic 3: "The right to connection as a fundamental right"](#).

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Yes, we do have Sandra and Mona online for this 3rd session of the webinar. The theme of the third session is "the right to connect as a fundamental right", with three speakers. I do not doubt that this is in line with the themes addressed in the previous discussions. Without further ado, I give the floor to the next speaker.

[Mona Laroussi, Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation \(IFEFF\)](#)

Hello, I am Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation (IFEFF), which is a subsidiary body of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) based in Dakar. I am an academic, I have always worked on distance education, with all the problems of connection, content, ethics and what you said earlier. I am convinced and aware of the significant role of education in eradicating all forms of stigmatization and hatred.

I'll try to introduce you to the OIF quickly. The OIF is an intergovernmental organization present on five continents and which brings together 88 countries. The OIF implements multilateral cooperation alongside other operators such as the "Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie" (AUF), TV5, the Association Internationale des Maires Francophones (AIMF), the Senghor University of Alexandria, and the Association of French Parliamentarians. The primary mission of the OIF is to promote the French language and cultural and linguistic diversity, to promote peace, democracy and human rights, and to support education, training, higher education and research. The OIF and the Council of Europe are linked by a joint declaration on the strengthening of cooperation in areas of common interest: human rights, democracy, education, youth, media, and gender issues.

I will now try to answer the question of connectivity. The Covid-19 crisis has served as an amplifier and a revelation of existing inequalities in digital, in general, and in connectivity, in particular, within countries. According to figures provided by the International Task Force on Teachers, an alliance coordinated by UNESCO, and based on data from its Institute of Statistics, during the COVID crisis "some 826 million pupils and students, or half of the total number of learners, do not have access to a computer at home and 43% (706 million) do not have Internet at home, even though digital distance education is being used massively to ensure continuity of education in the vast majority of countries. Disparities are particularly marked in low-income countries: in sub-Saharan Africa, 89% of learners do not have access to home computers, and 82% do not have the Internet". Even when there is a computer in the home, it is used by about ten people, so the learner does not have access to it. "Also, while mobile phones can enable learners to access information, connect, and with their teachers, about 56 million learners live in places not served by mobile networks, almost half of them in sub-Saharan Africa. »

From this perspective, the French-speaking world is characterized by a substantial heterogeneity of countries, less and less connected. According to UNICEF figures, more than 29% of young people across the globe, i.e. 346 million people aged 15 to 24, are not connected to the Internet. The French-speaking world is, unfortunately, one of the areas where young people are the least connected. Connectivity has emerged as a fundamental need, increasingly essential to daily life, so integrated into the Maslow pyramid. We can see that it is now part of the base of this triangle. Today, this generation, referred to as the "digital natives", consider the Internet as vital, like access to water or electricity. Each technological innovation indeed makes us more and more dependent on the Internet.

Connectivity is recognized as a fundamental right by the United Nations through reports and special procedures. Access to the Internet is indispensable not only for the exercise of the right, freedom of expression but also for the use of other rights: the right to education, the right to free association, the right to assembly, to participate in social, cultural and political life, the right to participate in economic

and social development. A resolution adopted within the "HRC" emphasizing the importance of bringing a human rights-based approach to the establishment and development of Internet access, so that the Internet is open, accessible and enriched by the participation of all actors.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

We are going to ask Lune to step in now.

[Lune Taqqiq, author, lecturer, founder of Freebip, member of the Association for Voluntary Action in Europe](#)

Hello, my name is Lune Taqqiq. I am CEO of a start-up which is a new media. I am a prospective, plastic artist. Finally, I am a multi-potential profile, and I am interested in societal design via new technologies for over 30 years. I am going to bring you a slightly different perspective from what was observed during the coronavirus crisis, the famous COVID crisis. There is a new culture that is being established in the world. It is enthusiastic, extremely mobilized: civil society has shown its ability to adapt remarkably, and that is what I am going to propose to you, to try to show you all the beautiful avenues that are opening up to us to be able to deal with all the issues that have been raised for years in this institution, which is the Conference of INGOs. I am going to read because the subject is so radial that if I do not have my notebook, I may go off in all directions.

Madam President, thank you for this conference, and for asking these questions at a time when our view of the world is changing, and a new culture is being initiated. Education, etymologically, means "guided by". Our world will never be the same again, it has changed, and a new culture is taking shape, and we must accompany it. It is the hand on the cradle that governs the world. Our civilization emerging in this new era is discovering itself in this new spatiality, and a new temporality: time and space are folded up in the digital age. The Coronavirus crisis is a powerful projector of this new culture that is taking shape at the dawn of the 21st century. It is an indisputable fact that new technologies have become an inescapable part of our way of life, our way of interacting and thinking. The man-machine interface is present in almost all our actions. Think about it for a moment. Virtual reality is a dimension, a space that merges with our material existence. Virtual reality is almost an oxymoron. "reality" and "virtual" are two antonymous words as a definition of the digital age. How not to feel schizophrenic in this contradiction, "where am I?" "who am I in this world?" and yet it is in this space that we now shape our world, society, our lives.

There is an urgent need to be able to think about this territory in a free, equitable and accessible way for all. This can be compared to access to drinking water. It has become vital, or at least it's on the way to becoming so. However, this territory is currently managed by a tiny part of a society whose objectives are not political or social, but rather, let's not forget, the conquest of the market and ever-increasing profits. The governance of data flows the 6th power. Also, access to connection and free and respectful interfaces is a fundamental right. There is no doubt about this for anyone, and immediate changes must be made now because it is today that our future is being played out. "The twenty-first century will be spiritual, or it will not be," André Malraux aptly predicted. I am a spiritual

being, like all of us here, by which I mean that I am not just an organic being destined to produce, my very nature as a human being is to live fully with my heart, my mind, what vibrates in my soul. I'm not just destined to survive organically to produce.

In this commission, the Conference of INGOs, it is this aspect of our humanity that brings us together. We are living through a turning point in the history of humanity, and the stakes are colossal. The question that arises is: what does it mean to be human in the 21st century? Paradoxically, the fractalization of society has been accentuated with the emergence of new technologies, even though its original objective was to bring us together.

The tool itself is not an obstacle. This tool, which has become an indispensable extension of our anatomy to exist in this new era, must be unanimously understood in what it offers, how it is used, and for what purposes. Connection for all yes but why? For whom? How? And the right to connection is a fundamental right in our time and our civilization. For without connection, this reality does not exist. The thought created, and the understanding of this new reality that is offered to us offers us many solutions and opportunities. Our sovereignty as human beings depends on it. It is the basis of our social contract. A new civilization is emerging, but for the moment, we have not yet been able to establish the cultural characteristics of this "common reservoir" initiated by virtual reality. The discovery and fascination of the tool are over. What it offers us today appears to us, we are beginning to realize its limits, its constraints, how it can alienate us, and its fragilities. The tool is not perfect. It too is sensitive to viruses and predators of all kinds. Currently, the spectre of "code is law" is very present. Law is code" has always been the basis of our social contract. We live in a society that thinks and projects itself exclusively in terms of figures, management concerning balance sheets, valuing only the material assets of our company that are profitable in a short time. Our culture has become one of crisis, lack, fear, inciting us every day more and more to give our consent to restrictions in our lifestyles, in our resources and to give up our power to solutions that are supposed to optimize our lives. After a few years of experience, it is clear that they optimize scarcity. The velocity of the intrusion of technology into our lifestyles has now surpassed the uses we can make of it. It is increasingly penetrating. It is embodied. Shaping our ways of thinking, going so far as to conquer our corporeality. Spirit, are you there? Technology via virtual reality is the source of a real economy even though it is immaterial. Without our collaboration and participation, it cannot exist. The intangible asset is us, our way of thinking, of communicating, our way of being in the world: a genuine individual carries everything. All these interactions generate value. We have all the resources to shape this new culture. This understanding can define our new social contract.

The confinement has masterfully demonstrated how quickly civil society has taken hold of the technology. It has been shown its maturity, its sincere and disinterested desire to collaborate, to be useful, to participate, and this desire has been forcefully expressed. We have been able to see it, to measure it, to see the richness of its diversity, broadening the definition of the word value, which was reduced to the financial perspective. And the real question is there! Who governs? For whom, for what? So, the how appears. The establishment of a culture of sharing in the era of 3.0 is visible, a society in the spirit of the generalized "creative commons" is not a utopia; it is a political choice! We have everything in our hands. All the solutions are there to answer the questions raised here. Everything is ready, and to make it happen, many people have been working for many years to offer solutions, create tools and technologies and the accompanying ways of learning how to use them. We

cannot imagine solutions if we do not position ourselves from this perspective. It is from this point of view that the answers and resources are available. It is from this point of view that they can be implemented.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you. I am going to give the floor to Sandra.

[Sandra Coulibaly Leroy, Deputy Director, in charge of Foresight, Analysis and Strategic Intelligence within the Programming and Strategic Development Department of the International Organisation of La Francophonie](#)

I wanted to thank Claude and Karl for their invitation and to remind them that the links between the OIF and the Council of Europe are old and have existed for more than 20 years. As my colleague said, we are bound by a joint declaration of interest in the fields of democracy, human rights, youth, cultural and linguistic diversity since La Francophonie brings together 88 countries and more than 30 are members of the Council of Europe. Mona recalled that connectivity is for us a fundamental right, recognised by the UN and its subsidiary body the Human Rights Council. More broadly, before the 2016 HRC Declaration, we already find this intrinsic link of human rights of interdependence, inalienability, and imprescriptibility that constitutes the right to connectivity linked to the right to education, freedom of expression, and finally the right to individual liberties. I also believe it is important to recall that this issue of connectivity is not only a fundamental right but ultimately a need and beyond that a matter of human security. Not only on the topic of this Maslow pyramid, which reminds us of the essential requirements of human beings to flourish and feel secure, but we can also see that the acceleration of the omnipotence of the Internet makes connectivity a fundamental need that is fully integrated by generation Y, in terms of human security.

To come back to our subject: what can we learn from this COVID crisis, which is not over yet? It is not only a revealer but also an amplifier of inequalities in digital technology. Connectivity, yes, but as far as education is concerned, and Mona will undoubtedly come back to this, yes, connectivity to the Internet is essential but not sufficient, it should be remembered that access to educational resources is the result to this question of connectivity, one does not go without the other.

The numbers from the COVID crisis make us dizzy. I am basing myself on the figures of UNESCO and the IUT: more than 800 million pupils and learners are not equipped, more than 700 million do not have access to the Internet at home, whereas the solution adopted, with the closure of schools in more than 191 countries, is that of digital distance education. As we can see, the disparities between countries and within countries, both in the North and in the South, are very significant.

What are the possible answers to this dual problem of connectivity and access to digital resources? La Francophonie has tried to provide both a political and operational response in terms of cooperation in the field. It did so before the COVID crisis, but also developed during it.

The political response is to reaffirm the importance of digital technology in the Francophone project, which is shared around the French language, but which must coexist with the partner languages of the Francophone countries. Recall that French is a minority language in the French-speaking world, and it is up to us to take this into account in the development of educational content, to ensure that the material is accessible and consistent with local reality and cultural environment.

Reaffirm also the principles of solidarity that La Francophonie places at the heart of its multilateral cooperation project. These may be big words, but I would like to translate them into concrete terms: this working group on digital chaired by our Secretary-General is an inclusive working group with States and governments, civil society, the private sector, taking into consideration the educational community because we talk a lot about connectivity among learners, but there is also the component of teachers, parents and public service executives to accompany this Covid-19 schism in terms of digital divide.

Five themes have been selected to affirm the importance of a French-speaking Internet strategy: connectivity and access to digital resources, digital for and through education, and other corollary subjects since digital is a cross-cutting issue even if connectivity is the fundamental basis, it is the issue of everything that concerns employability, entrepreneurship around digital and education (and this famous *édutech*)— and finally, the question of regulation and more generally of Internet governance. I am going to hand over to Mona for feedback from the "field" to illustrate what the Francophonie has done and continues to do to guarantee connectivity at the field level, to ensure this right and this fundamental need for our populations and the educational community.

[Mona Laroussi, Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation \(IFEFF\)](#)

We can always complain about connectivity, but we are still much better off than others in Sub-Saharan Africa. Not only is the connection here in Africa not stable, but it is also costly. To see an order of price, you pay 10 MB, which is nothing in Europe, 45 euros a month, with an average salary of 350 euros. Not counting the mobile Internet... Its rate is very high.

To come back to connection, although it is a fundamental right, although during the Covid-19 crisis everything went through the Internet, very few radio or television programmes replaced school. The Internet remained inaccessible in no small part of the population. At the IFEFF, we were aware of this reality even before COVID, and we tried to find a solution long before. There are autonomous servers that allow access to a certain number of resources without being connected to the Internet. We have equipped a set of digital campuses to enable people to come, to connect, to take the pedagogical measures they need on their mobile phones, on their computers, to consult them offline, and even to do the exercises offline. This solution costs 150 euros per small box and can connect about fifty people.

At the same time, many small African start-ups have been trying to find a solution. A lot of little projects have emerged, such as the "Last mile", which is a solution where we assume that 80% of the messages, we exchange are messages between us that do not necessarily require internet access. On this principle, we can connect a village to the intranet without being connected to the Internet. There is

another solution proposed by a young Cameroonian woman who is working on offline coding that allows young people to communicate while being disconnected from the Internet.

However, these are just solutions to get around the practice. We need to find answers so that Africa in particular and other countries are better connected because it is a fundamental right and everything is now done over the Internet: we do our shopping over the Internet, we grow up over the Internet, we book our holidays over the Internet... Several countries are now introducing electronic voting. All that can be done is to find solutions, but only in the short term.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you. Thank you. I'm going to ask Lune to come back because I interrupted you earlier. Would you like to speak? I see there is another request for the floor.

[Lune Taggiq, author, lecturer, founder of Freebip, member of the Association for Voluntary Action in Europe \(AVE\)](#)

All these problems of connectivity, of access to communication, to the tool, to digital support. It's a problem. By understanding how the machine works, we can make it our own, and all the resources generated by our actions will be able to benefit and make us utterly autonomous in the management of our life management tool. It is also a way to be able to control the communication flows. Today it is social ties that decide who sees what as information, and when. Managing the amount of data that will be delivered, to whom it will be given, and when it is delivered, shapes the way we see the world and interact.

I have always asked myself the question: "Who finances fake news software? ", " Who benefits from it? ». It doesn't benefit citizens. It helps people who use it because it creates a flow, it can change societal behaviours, it can impact the reflection we have of ourselves through social networks, through the media, have nothing to do with the consideration of reality. That's what COVID has shown; the way citizens have taken hold of COVID: they have brought solutions everywhere, they have gone out into the field, they have been able to connect, take charge of a whole bunch of things, use 3D printers. They've been a tremendous asset, they've taken care of the essentials, they've taken on a lot of responsibility when our government was just ordering drones and worrying about technology. The emergency was on the ground: food, helping people, finding tutorials to facilitate schooling, etc. Civil society is capable of doing that. It has taken charge of itself. It has shown it. It has demonstrated its power of action and its capacity to act.

However, social networks, the media and how they are used are fragmented, and specific categories of the population are given certain information and others are given others. We live in a fractalised world, and the information that is sent back to us is practised. In other words, we do not have the same data according to who we are, when we look at our news feeds, and you want us to be able to have a healthy democratic vision under these conditions? Who owns social networks? Who supports them? Where is the money? The money generated by technology can be accessible. There's a whole bunch of people around the world who have worked on all the free software solutions. They

can get their hands on them now; they're just asking for it. Why have states never chosen those solutions that are much cheaper, that are a guarantee for our fundamental rights, that allow us to interact healthily and have a real reflection of who we are? All of these questions are essential.

Today there are two types of culture taking shape: either one that has been strongly demanded by society for many years, that is inclusive, participatory, that has this vision of a common good as one, being each in his individuality with respect, or we accept a technology that shapes and robotises us. That's it. It's not complicated. Virtual reality offers us this possibility of freeing ourselves from a whole bunch of servitude and being able to recuperate a little bit of breath. It is an outstanding choice. It is a democratic choice. I am astonished that in the exceptional, unlikely situation we are living in, decisions are being taken at governmental, European level, without our sovereignty as a people being called into question. We are deciding our shared future, not for the next five years, for several hundred years. Everything that is going to be put in place at the technological level today, there will be no turning back. Look what happened with Google, the GAFAM. Some countries have sent ambassadors to GAFAM, we consider them as states. We have to understand that these tools cannot work without us. We are as powerful as human beings, only by the fact that we exist.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

We have two questions, and we'll move on to the next topic. I'm going to give the floor to Bénédicte Colin.

[QUESTION: Bénédicte Colin, FAFCE](#)

I want to thank Mrs Laroussi, Mrs Taqqiq and Mrs Coulibaly, for their inspiring speeches. I want to add a few European elements regarding digital inequality during this pandemic. As a federation of family associations, we have had a lot of feedback from our members. Mrs Coulibaly, you said, incidentally, that this pandemic constituted an amplifier of inequalities. At European level, even if we have much higher quantitative access, the question of the quality of access arises. I want to address the idea that for a household with one or more children, to follow an online education when there is only one computer in the living room when we are a family with 2, 3, 4 children, it becomes very complicated knowing that a child needs a quiet environment to study. It's tough to explore on your phone even if you have access to the internet, it's a question of equal access to education, and online and digital education brings a lot, great opportunities. Still, internet access is not the same for everyone. So there are inequalities between families, and this is the observation I wanted to bring to this fascinating discussion.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

We lost our speakers.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Karl, I propose that we move on to the next topic. The link that can be made between the two topics is that the COVID has highlighted gender discrimination: girls have been bruised on the question of access to education, because when there is only one computer in the family, we must be aware that it is the boys who use it first and the girls second, that it is the father who has it first, before the mother. So I would like us to be able to use this transition to move on to the fourth round table with Isabelle Collet.

IV. [Session 4: "Gender Equality"](#)

[Isabelle Collet, professor at the Education Sciences Section of the University of Geneva and Director of the "Revue GEF", Genre, éducation, formation \(Gender, education, training\)](#)

I'll start by briefly introducing myself. I am from the University of Geneva; I am a former computer scientist, and I work on gender issues in education. I train primary and secondary school students on gender issues in education in a compulsory and evaluated way, and my talk today is more specifically about the problems of the digital divide, especially with a gender issue, but also how to train teachers on these issues.

There is no digital divide in terms of usage, by which I mean that men or women, boys or girls use digital, even if they don't do the same thing. The digital divide is not in access either, but it is on the side of digital literacy. That is to say, at present, the digital world is designed, developed, parameterized, and maintained by white men from higher socio-professional backgrounds. That's where this divide exists. The consequence is, first of all, a problem of social justice, mainly because there are substantial power issues linked to digital professions: good salaries, good careers, secure jobs, etc. The digital world is a world where people have to be able to work and live in harmony with their environment. Secondly, digital developments tend to focus on concerns that are constructed as socially masculine. Finally, this results in the exclusion of women from the digital transition, and decisions to be taken on the increase of technoscience. So, what are the solutions?

Of course, as a teacher trainer, I prefer to work with teachers rather than with students and young people directly, because that makes it possible to multiply the solution. We must teach impartially from kindergarten to university. In principle, everyone agrees with this, and the European Union has produced many texts on the subject. Still, I would like to make it clear that it is not just a question of deconstructing stereotypes, and in particular stereotypes about science and technology, as we often hear. Of course, we have to deconstruct stereotypes, that is the basis. If we are convinced that women have pink brains and are incapable of doing science, we are not going to get away with it. Above all, however, we need to train both male and female teachers of to realize that equality can be learned because we are raised to inequality. And it is also transmitted through professional gestures, the distribution of speaking time between boys and girls, the content. I find it surprising that we are still discussing sexism in school textbooks. It should be a non-subject because it's so easy to find out.

Vigilance regarding gender violence: we are only beginning to become aware in universities that there is harassment of LGBT students, again it should be a non-subject, we are not on subtle elements.

Strictly on the digital issue, since in some countries we are beginning to train primary and secondary school students in digital effects, it is precisely the teachers who work on digital issues which need to be trained in gender issues, to be sure that what they will transmit is a "gender-friendly" vision of the technique. And here again, it is much more than a fight against stereotypes.

And finally, not everything is in the hands of men and women, not everything is in the hands of male and female teachers, there must be an awareness of institutions, whose very functioning reproduces inequalities, for example when they turn a blind eye to teaching content that would be unequal, and reliable measures must be taken to change unjust situations. For example, the introduction of quotas is not a discriminatory measure, it is a voluntary catch-up measure, and we can now seriously ask ourselves whether we can be satisfied with 15% of women in the digital world indefinitely or whether we want to take resolutely voluntary action if we're going to move towards equality.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

We have two speakers, Benedicte and then Moon. If Janice wishes to speak, she may speak as well.

[Bénédicte Colin, FAFCE](#)

Thank you very much for this fascinating analysis. I am not going to speak on behalf of FAFCE, but as a young graduate, a young professional, because I want to talk about the limits of positive discrimination. It seems to me that under a particular approach, the idea of constantly "cocooning" young students by considering that they need to be helped is to approach them as passive victims in the system. I think that the most important thing for women in education is to provide them with caring and to encourage the education system. I agree that there is still work to be done in this area. Again, I think it is good to give women the idea of being successful young professionals, not because they have been helped, it is something that will always come back in their careers, in their studies, but based on their merit alone. I agree with you in many aspects, but I think it is essential to make this nuance.

[Lune Taggig, author, founder of Freebip, member of the Association for Voluntary Action in Europe \(AVE\)](#)

Technological uses and tools are also created by male thinking. It is a particular way of thinking and reacting with interfaces. It is essential that this way of interacting with the tool corresponds to the feminine style of thinking, it would allow a much easier inclusion of the feminine in this technological world. It is also harmful that our updates are continually changing the way we navigate with the tools because we spend our time working for the technology, always learning to adapt to it, while at the same time we are losing work for ourselves. That's another point that I thought was important.

[Sandra Coulibaly Leroy, Deputy Director, in charge of Foresight, Analysis and Strategic Intelligence within the Programming and Strategic Development Department of the International Organisation of La Francophonie](#)

I wanted to pick up on Isabelle's words, on the crucial question of the increasingly important use of artificial intelligence in the support and elaboration of pedagogical processes and contents.

One of the foundations of the OIF is the question of intercultural and linguistic diversity, and consequently, the question of the danger of formatting by the prescribers of this artificial intelligence. Indeed, the issue of gender dominance was recalled, in those who code, build the architecture through these algorithms, through the use of artificial intelligence. This translates into biases in learning, cognitive biases. Beyond the "gender" issue, we must be aware of the "linguistic" dimension, not only of the relationship between the domination of English and the mastery of language. There is a crucial word, inclusiveness, which goes far beyond the "gender" issue.

My second observation is on the importance of what technology allows, perhaps escaping from the commercial sphere, with, of course, the question of open educational resources. In the digital age, there is an absolute necessity to rely on the development of these resources to enable inclusiveness.

[Isabelle Collet, professor at the Education Sciences Section of the University of Geneva and Director of the "Revue GEF", Genre, éducation, formation \(*Gender, education, training*\)](#)

I never use the term "positive discrimination" because "to discriminate" is not what we want. This is why Europe talks about "affirmative action": it is not a question of discriminating against men so that there are more women... At the same time, when we are in the digital world, women represent 15%, I find it hard to believe that we discriminate against men if we go to 20 or 30%. And I fully agree with the first speaker, of course we have to stop making women bear the brunt of all the effort, because after a while women will wonder if it's not their fault. No, we have to realize that we are in a system that discriminates, obviously, with institutions that are unequal and that are embarrassed to deal with it. I often say that if the game were "fair play", we would be 50/50 in the digital world, with as many men as women. So the question we have to ask ourselves is: what are the 30-35% of men who are in the digital world for reasons that have nothing to do with questions of competence, and everything to do with questions of discrimination. There is currently ongoing positive discrimination in favour of white men in the higher socio-professional categories, which is pushing them into the digital age. All the actions that we are going to take to make the institutions aware of this positive discrimination and correct the situation will enable men and women to make freer, more autonomous choices and move towards a more egalitarian society.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee.](#)

We'll move on to session five, and I'll ask Janice to speak.

V. Session 5: "The education industry: between democratisation and control of contents"

[Janice Richardson, expert to the Council of Europe on digital citizenship and education issues](#)

I am a member of the digital citizenship education working group at the Council of Europe and also work in the Insight network of digital citizenship experts. I have been invited to speak about the democratisation of content. First, we need to see what we mean by educational content, or rather "good educational content". We must think about the tools being used to educate children, their real level of capability, and the level we dream of. Literacy is a key goal of education, and we have to integrate all current communication means to develop this; in other words, digital technology is an essential tool. Given the very rapid evolution of knowledge, all content should integrate and adapt to the use of the latest technologies. Critical thinking, too, is a central issue today, and educational content must aim to help children differentiate between "information" and "infox" to ensure that they conceive information intelligently. Research shows that during the covid crisis one of the main learning resources students used were videos and other user-generated content. Yet few young people are able to create quality content. It is up to us to teach them what quality content is, and how to create content in schools.

In the digital citizenship education working group, we underline the importance of competencies being based on values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical thinking. I believe that this knowledge and these attitudes must be strengthened because they are the cornerstone of responsibility and mutual respect. We need more, better content, and we need to focus on ensuring that it incorporates the values and attitudes that democratic societies are built on.

And finally, quality and inclusion. A lot of content is designed for the mainstream, the silent majority. I think we should think more about the very young, the elderly, people with special needs. What criteria are used for defining quality learning content? What can be done to ensure that schools are equipped to access this content and prepare citizens for the future by developing competences fit for 21st century society. Figures from a 2019 EU survey, for example, show that primary schools on average have just one computer per 18 students, and that 60% of teachers have to pay for further training themselves. We simply don't know how to choose and use educational content wisely.

On the other hand, there is also a lack of sense-making practice shared across the education sector and insufficient exchanges of experience. Unfortunately, the school remains a microcosm, closed to many of the learning opportunities available in the virtual environment. As for school curricula, of course, school learning is largely bound by the curriculum, yet current curricula do not anticipate the learning needs of the 21st century, they do not meet contemporary learning needs, and assessment methods are not up to date. We need to create content with five criteria in mind: literacy, critical thinking, creativity, values and attitudes, and inclusion. But our schools are far from achieving this. I give you the floor again, Karl, thank you.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, I'm going to give the floor to Sandra and Mona.

[Mona Laroussi, Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation \(IFEFF\)](#)

I want to mention distance education in this theme No. 5. I have been working on distance learning for more than 25 years, and I cannot put it on trial. With distance learning, I have learned how to teach face-to-face. I'll explain why: when working at a distance, we never got feedback from the learners, so we always put in place mechanisms to connect them and to be able to work in such a way that the whole course is structured in a way that is understandable to the majority of learners. So, we put in prerequisites, post-requisites, complementary exercises, the learner's viewpoint that we lose when we do distance learning has to be remodelled by implementing distance learning.

Now, do the platforms disseminate or support a particular model of education? Of course, they do. Because all platforms say: we are on the theory of socio-constructivism. If we are on the Moodle learning platform, which is the most used learning platform in the world, all the designers say that it is based on socio-constructivism. But isn't face-to-face teaching the way it is? It's transmissive: the teacher is there, he does his lesson, the learners religiously write his words and his words, there is very little collaborative work behind it. So, I don't want to put distance learning on trial. I find that distance learning takes over what the teacher does in his daily life and his teaching.

Let me give you a concrete example that we tested during the COVID crisis. At the IFEFF, we set up a mini-group in the Francophonie, on this same mini-group we taught and set up courses so that the teacher could put his course at a distance and deliver it to these students. And we have identified several tools that allow this teacher to teach, and on these tools, we have always explained that technology does not guide the teacher. Still, rather it is up to the teacher to model the technology for his or her purposes. And these teachers, most of whom are novices, have set up their pedagogical scenario, have chosen the most appropriate tools for them, they have used them, they have innovated. These teachers who are in their classrooms and who are very often demotivated because they do the same thing every year have innovated, have taught more attractively, have set up interactivity with their students. They used tools that were not necessarily adapted or intended for teaching at the grassroots level, so I don't want to put distance learning on trial. Distance education, like face-to-face teaching, inherits shortcomings and ethical practices.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I would say that it's the tools and it's the use of the essential tools. Does Janice want the floor or a participant?

[Sandra Coulibaly Leroy, Deputy Director, in charge of Foresight, Analysis and Strategic Intelligence within the Programming and Strategic Development Department of the International Organisation of La Francophonie](#)

We must remember that this is a compelling technology that we are dealing with, mainly because of artificial intelligence. Still, we must trust teachers in their ability to develop strategies for innovation and contextualization concerning traditional teaching and the possibilities offered by distance

education for renewal and adaptation. I think it is indisputable that Covid-19 is an absolute tragedy but that it has forced teachers and public authorities to recognize that there was an essential shift to be made in the use of these technologies to renew educational practices and educational content if only to better respond to this generation of "digital natives" and new technologies users that are the learners.

The second thing is that we must be aware of our shared responsibility as civil society, or indeed as States, governments, international organizations working on the development of public education policies, to promote strategies for diversity and for avoiding formatting that is real, through the massification of data, through scaling up, and the dark side of these technologies. We must be vigilant.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, Sandra. Janice, would you like to speak?

[Janice Richardson, expert to the Council of Europe on digital citizenship and education issues](#)

I think we have to take the children's point of view into account as well; some countries have conducted studies to find out what happened when schools were closed. What did the young people, the children, do? In general, they picked up and reinforced bad habits. For a high percentage of students, Wikipedia and Google were their main tools. Very few gave priority to resources recommended or expected by teachers.

I have done several interviews in recent weeks with teenagers, who say they are having difficulties with remote schooling because they aren't used to working this way. They hope that in the future there will be blended learning and that it won't be 100% on the internet as it was during the pandemic. There was no transition. They would also like access to a single website that shows their work schedule, explains the platform, the teacher's comments, etc. They think everything should be on one platform. These are the results of my interviews with young people.

[Jean-Claude Gonon, European Association of Teachers \(EAT\)](#)

I just wanted to pick up on what Sandra Coulibaly was saying, that COVID was a real-life experience, the teachers were forced to embark on this experience of distance learning, they adapted to it extremely quickly, and we saw considerable development of the tools during those two months. I think that things will not be the same afterwards. Even with the return to face-to-face teaching, this experience is behind us and will undoubtedly lead to an evolution in teaching.

In our association, we surveyed within the 21 European sections. We found that what comes is that what we were trying to put in place, therefore child-centred teaching, is something that comes back as a result of this COVID experience. I think that we can be optimistic, but that it is through the combination of face-to-face and distance that the solution will be found because they will not forget that what we have also found is that during this distance education, it is the dropouts who have

dropped out the most, and who have not been recuperated by education. Those who had already dropped out of the classroom were not picked up by distance education; that was an illusion we had at one point.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, as President of the European Federation of Schools \(FEDE\)](#)

Karl, if you agree, I would like to speak as president of the FEDE. Our organisation brings together more than 530 institutions of higher education. The FEDE produces exams, and the COVID experience has placed the FEDE before they need, even though we have digitised forms of assessment, to reinforce this digitisation and to change our practices. Not everything can be evaluated at a distance. Not everything is conceivable in distance evaluation. We want to work closely with our colleagues in civil society on a way of rethinking these evaluations, which tools primarily dominate today in a somewhat transatlantic conception. We have a slightly more European understanding of taking assessments into account, which is more interested in taking into account the collaborative aspect. Then I would say sentimental character, which is involved in the human being in the evaluation. It is possible to evaluate expertise and skills evaluations remotely, online, and it is a little more challenging to develop the construction of the democratic citizen. I have finished my speech on this subject.

[Gilbert Flam, Honorary public prosecutor and President of the International Commission of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism \(Licra\)](#)

I would just like to bear witness to a reality in Seine-Saint-Denis, a department where there is a very high proportion of people and young people of foreign origin or 2nd or 3rd generation immigrants. I am going in the same direction as my colleague Mr. Gonon: dropouts who were already identified before the crisis have dropped out all the more. The crisis has reinforced what I was already thinking before, that is to say that children who have a difficult relationship with teachers or with school in general, who do not have parents behind them to support them, these children are not making progress in this context. So there is a real difficulty: you have to address teachers, pupils, children and also parents. The family context is going to play a big role because it will impact the way the teaching is received and the interaction between teachers and children.

Moreover, this is a question that I ask like a bottle in the sea. Schools today, whether distance or face-to-face, are in competition with social networks. Yet we have no control over the way in which social networks organise information, and the way in which social networks are meticulously designed and implemented, with the biases that Mrs Coulibaly Leroy pointed out earlier. How can this be done?

[Mona Laroussi, Deputy Director of the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Education et la Formation \(IFEFF\)](#)

I want to come back in two aspects. At one point, we talked about norms and standards on distance education. So there is a panoply of criteria such as SCORM or IMS LD, which are very difficult to put in place. I worked on the IMS LD where you intervene, you set up a theatre stage to mobilize the scenario,

and finally, you don't do it because distance learning is intuitive. I don't know who intervened, but someone said that the teacher found himself obliged to do it, and he did it, he created, he set up the learning scenarios, which probably allowed students to follow. The students who dropped out were drop-outs, but they were students who were able to work at their own pace, and they may have been students who were out of the norm in the classroom, but who were able, with distance education, to work at their own pace and hold on. Of course, there were drop-outs, but there were also some who hung on to school because they were able to work at their own pace.

There is a set of working groups on standardization, including the "JTC 36", where we work on standardization with a feminine spirit, multilinguistic, integrating other languages in addition to French, and open to other innovations. For those who advocate feminism and gender equality, it is also necessary to work on the standardization of education.

To come back to point four also, we are working on a gender equality portal at IFEF where resources for teachers will be set up, so that they can teach how to integrate the notion of gender in their classrooms, in the development of tools and good practices in the field. We want digital technology to be inclusive of all people, educational continuity is not going to stop with the COVID, and we hope that after the crisis, all those who were excluded from education will be able to resume with all the measures that we have put in place with the educational continuity of the COVID. Thank you.

[Sandra Coulibaly Leroy, Deputy Director, in charge of Foresight, Analysis and Strategic Intelligence within the Programming and Strategic Development Department of the International Organisation of La Francophonie](#)

Very briefly, I think this whole conversation is leading us to a protean response. Mr Flam asked how do we respond to all of these challenges? There's a question of adaptation, and that's one of the lessons of the COVID crisis. We are moving towards a "phygital" model, i.e. a hybrid model, both school and education systems, which can rely on two legs: face-to-face teaching and digital.

I think that Anne has raised a critical question that relates to the issue of students dropping out of school: how can education be brought to third places? And not to focus on standardized space. Bringing, as digital technology allows, education to third places of learning to target these young people who are on smartphones and social networks rather than on books or traditional supports. There is a question of emancipation on the orthodox patterns we have. I also think that we need to reflect on the subject of content: as Claude reminded us, there are evaluation issues which are really important. I always refer to the question of diversity. "The technique at the service of" and not the opposite, with attention paid to formatting. I also believe that there is a responsibility for the content, with vigilance concerning the integrity of knowledge and the epistemology of education. Avoid the risks of "drifting", "infoxing" and "manipulation" towards the community of learners, especially young people. There is a risk amplified by the use of digital technology and, finally, which is the responsibility of us all, I shall end with this word: "inclusion, inclusion, and inclusion". Thank you very much.

[Janice Richardson, expert to the Council of Europe on digital citizenship and education issues](#)

I think it is essential to promote a multi-stakeholder approach, involving all relevant stakeholders. I see that it is necessary to help build such partnerships, as we cannot do anything without the technology industry nowadays. The Council of Europe is developing guidelines for schools, which will also promote partnership between industry and schools. They must learn to work together.

[Karl Donert, Vice-Chairman of the Education and Culture Committee](#)

Thank you, Janice, and thank you to all the participants, all the speakers. I'm going to give the floor to Claude to conclude the session.

[Claude Vivier Le Got, as President of the European Federation of Schools \(FEDE\)](#)

Karl and I are a good team since between us we both fulfil the two objectives of the Council of Europe, which are to maintain equality between the French and English languages. Our session proved that it is quite possible to maintain a coherent and consensual dialogue between French and English. I thank all the participants for their willingness to do so. I would also like to thank the interpreters, who had the challenge because it is not easy to translate when you are not in the room, at a distance, with people where, as you can see, even in our language, there are disconnections. We have difficulty understanding each other. I can imagine the interpreters how difficult it was. I would also like to thank all the speakers who have given us most of the texts. We have recorded everything, and Karl and I will do our best to be able to produce the record of this session. A big thank you also to the young people since we have asked young people from universities in both Great Britain and France to help us prepare. I want to thank them very sincerely for drawing our attention to the problem of young people in this post-COVID education in the digital age. Thank you all, thank you, Karl, thank you, Anna Rurka, for allowing us to organize this webinar. Thanks to all the INGOs. Bye!